

Penn-Harris-Madison Penn PALS Community Preschool



Handbook 2023 - 2024

Bittersweet Elementary School

Elm Road Elementary School

Elsie Rogers Elementary School

Mary Frank Elementary School

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This handbook is supplementary to Board policy. Should a provision of this handbook contradict Board policy, the Board policy will prevail. This handbook supersedes all prior handbooks and other written material on the same subjects. Board Approved Handbook: June 26, 2023

Penn PALS Community Preschool

Parent Handbook 2023 - 2024

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Penn PALS (Promoting Academic Learning Skills) Community Preschool where your child will imagine, explore and engage.

We are very excited to work together to make this year one of substantial growth and memorable experiences for your child. We will have many opportunities throughout the year for exploration and learning. It is our hope that your child's year in preschool will be a fulfilling one.

The parent/school partnership is an important part of your child's experience in the Penn PALS Community Preschool and open communication with our families is a top priority. You can contact the site coordinator by email, written notes, or telephone. Email is the preferred method of communication. However, if an emergency arises, you may call the school office between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. daily to leave a message for your child's teacher. (Please understand that we cannot take phone calls during the school day while we are teaching.) We will do our very best to return email and voice messages within 24 hrs. of your call.

Parents will receive a monthly newsletter with information regarding Penn PALS and about how to support your child's growth and development during their preschool experience. Classroom teachers will provide weekly information and photos so that you can see all of the wonderful things going on in the classroom. In addition, in the Fall and Spring, you will receive a progress report for your child. Please check your child's backpack regularly for important notes. We look forward to working with you and your child this school year.

School Hours

Staff members will begin **receiving** children for the morning session at 8:55 a.m., and for the afternoon session at 12:25 p.m. (Please note: Elsie Rogers is 12:10 p.m.)

Staff members will begin **dismissing** children from the morning session at 11:25 a.m., and from the afternoon session at 2:55 p.m. (Please note: Elsie Rogers is 2:40 p.m.)

School Closings & Delay Procedures

Safety is our first concern when a conversation about closing or delaying school takes place. If Penn-Harris-Madison decides on a 2-hour delay, there will be no morning preschool sessions and afternoon sessions will be held as usual.

If a decision is made to close the school, Penn-Harris-Madison has again been approved by the Indiana Department of Education to use eLearning lessons on the day of a school closing. ELearning stands for *electronic learning* that can be accomplished by students working on a computer from home through the internet. The Penn PALS Preschool teacher will post eLearning lessons for the preschool students to complete at home in the event of a school closing. The teacher will provide you with more details and

login information for this at a later date. If severe weather closes or delays school before the school day begins, our local radio and television stations announce that information. You may also check the PHM website at www.phmschools.org.

Arrival Procedures

You will be given specific information for where to drop off your child based on site. If needed, staff members will be available to help your child out of the vehicle. **Never drop off your child unless you see the teacher!** Parents should not park in the drop-off line nor leave the car unattended to walk students to the door. For the safety of our students, do not ever pass the car in front of you while in the drop-off line.

If you arrive late to drop off your child, please park your car in a parking spot and walk into the front office to sign in your child.

Bus transportation is not available for preschool students this year.

Dismissal Procedures

Please do not arrive to pick up your student more than 30 minutes prior to dismissal. This will allow lanes to be free for elementary dismissal. We ask parents to please secure students in car seats and boosters. We encourage parents to load children and then pull out of the line and park to secure students when possible to help keep the flow of dismissal. If you arrive late to pick up your child, please park your vehicle in a parking spot and walk to the office to pick up your child.

We do not release students to anyone who is not listed as the child's emergency contact unless we have received a note from the parent/guardian specifying the change in pick-up routine/schedule.

Attendance Policies

Regular attendance helps children establish a predictable routine, learn more, and form a positive attitude towards school. However, if your child is not well in the morning before school begins, please keep them at home. It keeps other students healthy, and it may save you a trip to school later to pick up a sick child!

ABSENCE –If your child will be out, please call the main office. An email to your child's classroom teacher is also appreciated. If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please let the school know as soon as possible. Thank you!

Health & Safety

Immunization Requirements (I.C. 20-34-4-2)

Each student should have the immunizations required by law or have a required waiver. **Students whose parents do not provide the required documentation within 20 school days of the opening day of the school year (or from the student's first day of enrollment in the district) will not be allowed to attend school.** This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with state law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the principal or the Health Office.

Minimum immunization requirements for entry into all Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation schools in 2023-2024 are listed by the Indiana State Department of Health at <https://chirp.in.gov>. For your reference, the schedule of requirements is listed below:

Indiana 2022-2023 Required and Recommended School Immunizations

Grade	Required		Recommended
Pre-K	3 Hepatitis B 4 DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis) 3 Polio	1 Varicella (Chickenpox) 1 MMR (Measles, Mumps & Rubella) 2 Hepatitis A	Annual influenza

Medication Administration at School

Prescribed Medications

In those circumstances where a student must take daily-prescribed medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- A. Parents should, with their physician's counsel, determine whether the medication schedule could be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- B. The Authorization to Administer Medication Form, available in the school Health Office or on the PHM web page, must be filed with the respective building Health Office before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during school hours.
- C. All medications must be registered with the school Health Office.
- D. Medication brought to the Health Office will be properly secured. Medication must be brought to school in the original container directly by the parent, guardian, or authorized adult. A two to four (2-4) week supply of medication is recommended.
- E. Any unused medication unclaimed by the parent will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is no longer to be administered or at the end of the school year.
- F. The parents shall have sole responsibility to instruct their child to take the medication at the scheduled time.
- G. A log for each prescribed medication shall be maintained which will note the personnel giving the medication, the date, and the time of day. This log will be maintained along with the physician's written request and the parent's written release.

Non-Prescribed (Over the Counter) Medications

A Medication Permit form, signed by a parent or guardian, must be on file in the school Health Office. Use of non-prescription medicine must comply with school regulations and will only be given in accordance with the directions on the label. This includes Tylenol, Advil, cough syrup, cough drops, herbal supplements/treatments, and any other over-the-counter medication. If a non-prescribed (over-the-counter) medication needs to be administered on a routine basis, a physician order will be required. If you have questions call your school Health Office.

Illness or Injury at School

Students who become ill or suffer a slight injury during the school day will be referred to the Health Office Staff. In many cases (complaints of headache, stomachache, etc.), the student simply needs to take a short rest (10 minutes) followed by a return to the classroom. The Health Office Staff can also distribute ice (for bumps or minor insect stings) and apply Band-Aids (on paper cuts, small scrapes or abrasions). The Health Office Staff cannot distribute any medication unless the parent supplies it and proper forms have been filed with the staff. In cases that are more serious the parent will be called to come and take the child home for further medical evaluation.

It is critical that the school can contact parents in an emergency. Please be sure to update information on your child's emergency card any time that information changes.

It is often hard to know when to keep your child home from school when they are not feeling well. Here are a few guidelines:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher: home until the student has been fever-free for 24 hours.
- Vomiting: home until the student can keep food down and is free of symptoms for 24 hours.
- Diarrhea: home until the student is free of symptoms for 24 hours.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis): home until the student has been on antibiotic eye medication for 24 hours.
- Strep Throat: home until the student is fever-free and has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Chickenpox: home for one week after the first pox appears or all pox are dry and crusted.
- Unexplained rash, blisters, or draining sores: their health care provider for a diagnosis should see children.

If you are ever in doubt, please call your health care provider for their recommendations. You can also call the school Health Office Staff with questions regarding school policy about the illness.

Control of Illness and/or Communicable Diseases

Because a school has a high concentration of people, it is necessary to take specific measures when the health or safety of the school community is at risk. The school's professional staff has the authority to remove or isolate a student who has been ill or has been exposed to a communicable disease. Specific diseases include diphtheria, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, mumps, measles, rubella, Varicella, and other conditions indicated by the Local and State Health Departments. Any removal will be only for the contagious period as recommended by State and local health departments.

Head Lice

Head lice are a common problem with school-aged children. It has nothing to do with cleanliness nor does it reflect poorly on you as a parent.

If live head lice or nits within one inch of the scalp are found in a child's hair, parents will be called to come and pick up their child and be provided with educational material. After treatment, the child will be allowed to return to school if no live lice are present or nits that are within one inch of the scalp. Please contact the school office if your child contracts lice. Feel free to contact our Health Office Staff for assistance in understanding and handling the treatment process. Once your child is treated, a parent or guardian must bring them to school to be checked in the Health Office before being sent to class.

Hoosier Healthwise for Children

Hoosier Healthwise is an affordable insurance program offered by the State of Indiana for children from birth through age 18. Benefit packages cover a wide range of medical services and are available to families who meet income requirements. More information can be found on the website [here](#).

Dress Code

- ***IMPORTANT:*** We ask that you PLEASE take the time to label clothing items such as coats, sweaters, raincoats, boots, hats, mittens, shoes as well as backpacks, and other items. Children often are not able to identify what belongs to them. Please print your child's name clearly with a permanent marker.
- Please provide a Ziploc bag with a change of clothes, labeled with your child's name, to be left at preschool.
- Dress your child in comfortable, durable clothing. Students will often be engaged in activities that involve paint, glue, clay, etc., and large motor movement. They should wear clothes that allow them to turn, jump and play!
- Also remember to follow the P-H-M dress code (***no flip-flops, high heels, spaghetti strap tops, spandex, ripped clothing, clothing with inappropriate words or pictures, or any accessories that might be a distraction***). Undergarments may not be showing at any time (even when bending over). The dress code will be strictly enforced, beginning the first day of school. All of this information can be found in the P-H-M Handbook which is available on the P-H-M Website at www.phmschools.org.
- Your child will also participate in gross motor activities, including playing on the playground. Please do not send your child in flip-flop style shoes (including Crocs) as these shoes pose a safety hazard. Also, please remember to use sunblock on days that it is sunny, as your child will be playing outdoors. As the weather turns colder, please keep in mind that we will go outside for recess as long as the temperature and/or wind chill does not fall below 20 degrees. Dress your child for playing out in chilly weather and snow, including a hat, gloves or mittens, boots, and snow pants.

Preschool Supplies Needed

Please send your child with a book bag labeled with his/her name, large enough to hold a 1.5 inch binder, for bringing home completed work and parent information.

Please also send an extra set of clothes in a plastic bag labeled with his/her name, in case of wet or soiled clothing, or toileting accident. Please include a shirt, pants, socks, and underwear.

Diapers or pull-ups should be packed if your child is not yet toilet trained. Please keep a supply in the book bag.

Curriculum Overview

This year in the Penn PALS Preschool we will be learning new skills including math, reading, science, social studies, writing, and social skills. We will be building routines in the classroom that will ensure kindergarten readiness. In addition to building foundational skills, our curriculum will challenge each student to achieve their highest potential. Ultimately your child will thrive in the classroom!

Three Cheers for PK

Three Cheers for PK is a literacy-based curriculum that helps prepare children for school success in kindergarten and beyond. The rich stories that are so relatable to young children help develop a sense of who they are and how they fit into their school, their community and their world. The thematic curriculum, which has nine 4-week units, uses stories that support children's development of academic concepts in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and more.

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness is designed to help children understand that spoken words are made up of individual sounds, which are called phonemes. The Heggerty lessons focus on auditory training and supports children in isolating sounds, manipulating sounds, blending and segmenting sounds into spoken and written words. Our younger children participate in the Early PK Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum that uses auditory and oral language play activities to prepare them to learn letter names and sounds. The Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program is used at the elementary level as well.

Foundations

Foundations is a multisensory and systematic phonics, spelling, and handwriting program. Beginning in Pre-K, this program benefits students in all P-H-M schools through third grade.

Student Records

The teachers, counselors, Health Office and administrative staff keep many student records. There are two (2) basic kinds of records -- directory information and confidential records.

Directory information can be given to any person or organization for nonprofit making purposes when requested, unless the parents of the student restrict the information, in writing, to the principal by October 1 of that school year. The Board designates as student "directory information": a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; listing on an honor roll; or scholarships; photographs; videotape; and other similar information and images.

Confidential records contain educational and behavioral information that has restricted access based on the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA). This information can only be released with the written consent of the parents, the adult student, or a surrogate. There are exceptions as provided in state and federal laws that may permit release without consent. For instance, confidential records may be disclosed to school officials with a legitimate educational interest in the records. A “school official” is a person employed by the Board as an administrator, supervisor, teacher/instructor (including substitutes), or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; person or company with whom the Board has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, or medical consultant); school psychology, a contractor, consultant, volunteer or other parties to whom the Board has outsourced a service otherwise performed by Board employees (e.g. a therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing their tasks (including volunteers).

Included in the confidential records may be test scores, psychological reports, behavioral data, disciplinary actions, and communications with the family and outside service providers. The school must have the parents' written consent to obtain records from an outside professional or agency. Confidential information that is in a student's record that originates from an outside professional or agency may be released to the parent through the originator and parents should keep copies of such records for their home file. Parents may also provide the school with copies of records made by non-school professional agencies or individuals.

Students and parents have the right to review all educational records generated by the school corporation, request an amendment to these records, insert addendum to records, and obtain copies of such records. Copying costs may be charged to the requestor. If a review of records is wanted, please contact the school in writing, stating the records desired. The records will be collected and an appointment will be made with the appropriate persons present to answer any questions. Parents and eligible students who wish to ask the school to amend a record should write to the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want to be changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

The Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education administers both FERPA and PPRA. Parents and/or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW 20202-4605
Washington, D.C.
www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index

Informal inquiries may be sent to the Family Policy Compliance Office via the following email addresses: FERPA@ED.Gov and PPRA@ED.Gov.

Tuition Payments & Late Fees

Tuition fees are set by the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation. During any absences, including sickness, holidays, vacation, and eLearning days, fee payments continue for each child. Tuition payments are due the first day of each month by 3:00 p.m. for the predetermined monthly fee. If payment is not received by the fifth of the month, a \$25 late fee will be added to your account and will be automatically due with your tuition payment. If payment including the \$25 late fee is not received by the 15th of the month, your child's enrollment is suspended and can no longer attend. If the balance is not paid by the 20th your child's slot in Penn PALS will be filled by the waiting list. Outstanding balances will be turned over to collections. Do not send cash tuition payments with your child. Cash tuition payments must be given directly to the school office secretary by the parent/guardian. If withdrawing your child, we require a minimum of a two-week notice.

Communication Folders

A communication folder will be used to send important papers home. The guardian is responsible to check their child's backpack and communication folder every day. *This folder will go home and must come back to school EVERY DAY!* Please send any notes or papers to the school in the communication folder as well.

Your child will also need a backpack labeled with their name to carry items to and from school. This needs to be a regular-sized backpack so folders, books, and projects can easily be transported home. Please encourage your child to take responsibility for bringing their backpack to school each day. Many projects and handouts will come home on a regular basis, and some may be rather large, so please make sure your child's backpack is big enough to carry these items.

Behavior Management

Students will be encouraged to consciously make good choices and will be reminded that they are in control of their behavior. This gives us great opportunities to talk about using words to problem solve with their peers.

The Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation maintains a safe and orderly environment. Students are expected to follow the Positive School-Wide Behavior Plan. The expectations and skills embedded in these plans are based upon the Life-Long Guidelines and Life Skills. These expectations and skills are taught and reviewed at various times throughout the school experience. Expectations, guidelines, and skills are posted in every building and teachers expect students to follow them on a daily basis. The Life-Long Guidelines are Truth, Trust, Active Listening, No put-downs, and Personal best. The Life Skills are Integrity, Initiative, Flexibility, Perseverance, Organization, Sense of Humor, Effort, Common Sense, Problem-solving, Responsibility, Patience, Friendship, Curiosity, Cooperation, and Caring.

Non-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment

It is the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation's policy to provide an equal educational opportunity for children regardless of race, color, creed, age, disability, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, place of residence within P-H-M's boundaries, or social or economic background. In addition, it is our

policy to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning and free from all forms of unlawful harassment.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding P-H-M's equal educational opportunity and anti-harassment policies: Dr. Heather Short, Assistant Superintendent, 574-259-7941.

Additional information regarding P-H-M's Equal Educational Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policies may be found in Board Policies 2260, 2260.01, and 5517.

Parent Volunteers/Visitors

All volunteers will need to complete a required background check BEFORE volunteering. This required background check can be done in the school office. If you wish to visit our classroom, we ask that you contact your child's teacher to schedule a visit. Please call to schedule any visits at least 24 hours in advance. This will help us with planning. Visitors may not enter the classroom until they have signed in at the front office and have received a visitor's badge. You will need to bring a valid driver's license to get a visitor's badge through our RAPTOR visitor monitoring system. This is a required component of our school safety plan. We also ask that all visitors wait at least one month (until October) before visiting our classroom so the children can adjust and become more comfortable in their new learning environment. Volunteers/Visitors may not photograph or record students or staff while on school property during the instructional day without permission from school administration. When permission is granted, visitors may only photograph or record their own child.

Child Custody

At the time of enrollment, parents are expected to provide the school with court papers, including custody orders, pertaining to the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities. The school will honor all current court orders pertaining to the allocation of these rights. To the extent that these rights are modified by the court at any point during the time a child is enrolled as a student with Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, it is the responsibility of the parents to submit to the school a copy of the most recent court order.

In general, parents who share joint legal custody are to share the responsibility for the major decisions concerning the child's upbringing, including the child's education.

Unless restricted by court order, a non-custodial parent will be given access to all student records, progress reports, and disciplinary actions. The non-custodial parent is responsible for informing the principal or the school office in writing of their wish to receive copies of records related to the student's school activities or academic progress. Should a custodial parent wish to prohibit the distribution of information and records to the non-custodial parent, they must provide a certified copy of the court order restricting the non-custodial parent's access.

Absent a court order to the contrary, the non-custodial parent may attend any school activities that are open to the public, such as concerts, fairs, and athletic events. In addition, the non-custodial parent may participate in parent-teacher conferences, classroom visitations, and all other school activities, unless the custodial parent has communicated in writing their desire that the non-custodial parent not participate in these activities and has provided the school a copy of the current custody order.

P-H-M will observe all Court Orders in releasing children to the parent who has parenting time on the day in question, absent written notification from the primary physical custodial parent.

P-H-M Staff will follow Court Orders related to child custody matters. P-H-M Staff does not seek to become involved in litigation related to child custody matters.

Emergency Cards

Each child in our school is required to have a completed, up-to-date emergency contact card on file in the office. It is essential that we are able to contact you (or a designated adult) if necessary during the school day. If there are any changes in your housing, employment, emergency phone number, email address, etc., please contact the office ASAP so we can update the information on your child's emergency card. THANK YOU!

Outdoor/Gross Motor

If the temperature is over 20 degrees, our preschoolers will go outside to play. Please make sure your child comes dressed to go outside each day. During the winter months, this would include the BIG 5: snow pants, winter coat, mittens/gloves, boots, and a hat. Please send these in a reusable bag. We will go outside for recess unless the wind-chill is below zero. Please label ALL belongings with your child's name.

Supplies

Please purchase a backpack large enough to hold a 1.5-inch binder, for bringing home completed work and parent information.

Please send an extra set of clothes in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name, in case of wet or soiled clothing, or toileting accident. Please include a shirt, pants, socks, and underwear.

If your child is not yet toilet trained, please keep a supply of diapers or pull-ups in the backpack.

Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, cell phones, gaming devices, etc., to school. They could possibly be lost, stolen, or broken, which causes an unhappy experience at school. In addition, these items are distracting to students, and we'd like to avoid distractions whenever possible.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT PENN PALS COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL, PLEASE CONTACT US! YOUR PARTNERSHIP IS IMPORTANT AND VALUED!

Acknowledgment of Receipt of Handbook

This is to certify that I have received and read the Penn-Harris-Madison Penn PALS Community Preschool Parent Handbook and agreed to abide by it while my child is enrolled in Penn PALS Community Preschool.

Parent Signature

Parent Name Printed

Date

(Please complete the Consent to Publish Form found on the next page)

Consent to Publish Student Work and Photographs

At Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, we value the strong communications we have with our families and community partners. Our students, teachers, and staff are actively involved in many activities often winning school, local, state, national, or international recognition. We are proud of the amazing work accomplished by all our students. As part of our ongoing communication efforts, the District and/or Schools would like to spread the good news about these accomplishments. But in order to publicize the name, photo, or works of your student(s), we need consent from the parent and/or guardian. This is the purpose of this form.

Photographs, video, and/or audio may be taken of students and/or Student Work (as hereinafter defined) as a part of a curricular project, to promote a school event, or to highlight student achievement. The Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation (the "School Corporation") may use images and names of students and/or Student Work on any form of printed or digital communication, including P-H-M district or school websites, social media, and newsletters. As part of P-H-M's public relations efforts, your student's achievement and/or involvement can also be shared with third-party news media outlets. "Student Work" includes, but is not limited to: drawings; materials; writings; photographs; and images.

I understand that by signing this form I hereby give permission to post and/or publish photographs, the name, and/or Student Work of _____ (student's name) on the aforementioned websites, social media and any form of digital or written publication. I understand and agree that my child is not entitled to any compensation for Student Work or images appearing in said printed and/or digital communications.

Please note that this consent form cannot apply to public events. If your child attends or participates in an event that is open to the general public, such as a P-H-M athletic, theater, band, orchestra, choir, academic competition, or another type of school or district-sponsored activity, pictures might be taken and used in the before names district communications.

____ **YES**, I give my consent. I recognize I may withdraw this consent by notifying, in writing, the principal at my child's school.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

____ **NO**, I do not grant consent

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____