The

ABC's

of

Penn Hills Elementary School

Family Handbook
2026-2027

The 2026-2027 Penn Hills Elementary Family Handbook is to serve as a quick reference to our building routines, procedures, and practices. Please note that the policies of the Penn Hills School District Board of Directors guide our practices. The Penn Hills School District reserves the right to amend policies or procedures in this handbook when necessary or appropriate. Proper notification will be disseminated accordingly.

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Penn Hills Elementary School

PENN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2026-2027 TITLE I HOME-SCHOOL COMPACT

At Penn Hills Elementary School, our goal is for families, students, teachers, administrators and support staff to work together to form a united partnership to help each child achieve success and to "BEE" their BEST!

As FAMILY members, we agree to actively participate in our child(ren)'s education by:

- Promoting a positive attitude about school.
- Maintaining regular communication with the teacher and school.
- Ensuring our child(ren) attend school each day and on time.
- Encouraging RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, SAFE and KIND behaviors while at school and on the school bus.
- Encouraging the use of the U.W.A.I.T. strategies to resolve conflicts.
- Providing a quiet learning space at home to complete daily work.
- Encouraging our child(ren) to read each day.

As STUDENTS, we agree to work to the best of our ability by:

- Attending school (virtually or onsite) on time every day.
- Participating in class or virtual meetings each day.
- Being RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, SAFE and KIND in all school environments, including the bus.
- Using the U.W.A.I.T. strategies to resolve conflicts safely and appropriately.
- Asking for help when needed.
- Completing required work at home each day.
- Finding time to read each day.

As SCHOOL STAFF, we agree to provide equitable educational services to all students by:

- Serving as role models for RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, SAFE and KIND behaviors.
- Believing in the potential of all students.
- Planning and delivering engaging, culturally-diverse instruction.
- Treating students with courtesy and respect.
- Providing a safe, welcoming learning environment.
- Encouraging the use of the U.W.A.I.T. strategies to resolve conflicts.
- Fostering regular communication with families/guardians.
- Identifying additional academic and behavioral supports for students in need.

Penn Hills School District
Elementary Division

Student Handbook and Code of Conduct Acknowledgment
2026-2027

Dear Families/Guardians and Students:

This handbook has been prepared as an informational reference for Penn Hills Elementary students and their parents/guardians and family members. While it is impossible to cover all situations that may occur, this document provides you with guidelines and expectations that will lead to student success. It is the responsibility of the families/guardians to review this handbook and the included PHSD Code of Conduct with their students so that everyone is familiar with the expectations and procedures of the school. If you have any questions or need clarification, please reach out.

Sincerely,
PHES Administration

**Please note by updating the Qmlative (formerly Skyward) contact information, parents/families acknowledge receipt and review of this handbook provided in digital form on the Penn Hills Elementary School home page.*

STUDENT INFORMATION:

Student's Name: _____

Grade: _____ **Room Number:** _____ **Bus Number:** _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Teacher Email Address: _____

BUILDING INFORMATION:

Penn Hills Elementary School
1079 Jefferson Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
(412) 793-7000 x7100

Office Staff

Main Office Secretary.....Barbara Donnelly (x7102)
Main Office Secretary.....Tasheanna Ager (x7103)
Attendance/Student Registration Secretary.....Susan Conte (x7113)

Building Administration

Building Principal……..…… Christopher Cence (x7101)
Associate Principal (Kindergarten and Grade 1) ….....Cyrene Bey (x7115)
Associate Principal (Grades 2 and 3) .....Daniel Denlinger (x7135)
Associate Principal (Grades 4 and 5)…….……Patrick Gavin (x7200)

Building Resources

School Counselor (Kindergarten and Grade 1) ….....Lisa Butler (x7132)
School Counselor (Grades 2 and 3) .....Loyal Jasper (x7129)
School Counselor (Grades 4 and 5) ….....Ann Dugan (x7201)
School Social Worker.....Ronay Austin (x7133)
Behavior Management Specialist.....Ruston Brown (x7131)
Pressley Ridge.....(x4142)
Nurse…….....John Cooper (x7122)
Food Services.....Deborah Crosmun (x7110)

DISTRICT INFORMATION:

Penn Hills School District
Administration
260 Aster Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15235
(412) 793-7000

Our Mission - The mission of the Penn Hills School District is to foster an equitable learning environment where all students have access to opportunities and resources that construct a pathway for every student to achieve their full potential.

Our Vision - At the heart of the Penn Hills School District lies a vision that inspires the creation of a vibrant educational space fueled by diversity and inclusion, where each student is acknowledged and celebrated for their distinctive contributions. Through collaborative efforts, we aspire to build a community steeped in mutual respect and understanding, crafting an environment that nurtures learning and social/emotional development. Our dedication to student success and pursuing lifelong learning knows no bounds. We are steadfast in our commitment to equipping individuals with the essential skills, knowledge, and global perspectives to triumph in a constantly evolving world. Together, we illuminate the path to a future where every student can thrive and make a meaningful impact.

Superintendent's Office

Superintendent of Schools.....Dr. John Mozzocio (x1282)
Superintendent's Secretary.....Colleen Szymansky (x1244)

District Offices

Assistant to the Superintendent for Teaching, Learning and Assessment…….. Renel Williams (x1251)

Assistant to the Superintendent for Technology and Innovation.....Dr. Matthew Dado (x1245)

Director of Athletics.....James Eckels (x5206)

Human Resources Manager.....Dominique Ansani (x1228)

Director of Pupil Services.....Kristin Brown (x1223)

Director of Special Education……..……..Stephanie Biancaniello (x1284)

Chief Financial Officer.....Rachel McCarthy (x1231)

Plant Manager…….....Michael Reposky (x1277)

Food Services (The Nutrition Group) .....Robert Sturm (x6182)

Transportation Coordinator.....Rob Van Ryn (x1244)

Bus Garage (Krise Transportation)….....Dispatch Office (412-573-1224)

Qmlative (Skyward) Support.....(x1450)

The Penn Hills School District does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national or ethnic origin, sex, or handicap in employment practices or in administration of any of its educational programs and activities in accordance with applicable federal statutes and regulations. Dominique Ansani has been identified as the Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/AMD Coordinator, Penn Hills School District, 260 Aster Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15235, (412) 793-7000 ext. 1228, email: dansan@phsd.org.

ARRIVAL

School officially starts at 9:10 AM. Students are permitted to arrive between 8:45 and 9:05 AM**. Students may not arrive prior to 8:45 AM because the district does not provide supervision for children until this time.**

If your child will be transported to school via car, please note that the car rider drop-off area is located in the front of the building. Follow the signs and arrows, as this is a one-way traffic flow area. Cars will be directed to pull alongside the curb in the front of the building to allow the children to exit on the passenger side of the car. Please follow the directions of the adults at morning drop-off, respecting their request to use the entire front curb (down to the flagpole) as a drop-off area.

No students should exit a car from the left lane of traffic at any time. In addition, adults dropping off students along the curb are NOT permitted to exit cars to walk the students to the door. Cars along the curb can NOT be left unattended. During the allotted drop-off times from 8:45-9:05 AM, please drive slowly and cautiously through this area, as there will be many parents/guardians and students moving about. Students and parents should remain in vehicles until the doors open at 8:45 AM. The students enter the building through the front doors of the main entrance.

Visitor parking is also available in the lower front parking lot. Parents/guardians and other visitors arriving at this time, and throughout the day, will be stopped by security. **All visitors wanting to gain entrance into Penn Hills Elementary must show valid photo identification and will be subject to a search of their person and/or belongings, including the use of a metal detector.**

Students arriving to Penn Hills Elementary School by bus will be dropped off in the rear of the building. Only authorized vehicles and buses are permitted in this area.

The late bell rings at 9:05 AM. Students *arriving after that time are considered to be tardy, and parents/guardians must accompany the students into school and report to the Attendance Office for a late slip.* Morning procedures are important to every child's educational success; therefore, it is imperative that students arrive before the official start of school in order to get organized and prepared for the day.

Our school campus will be closed to unauthorized visitors from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. Anyone arriving within those hours will be stopped at the entrance gate and greeted by Security to confirm their purpose on campus. Meetings with staff must be scheduled in advance. Parents/families should also provide written notification of student early dismissals to the student's teacher and/or school office prior to arriving onsite. The security staff monitoring the driveway booth will have a record of daily meetings, early dismissals, and other scheduled activities to properly confirm visitor arrival.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school on time each day. All students under the age of seventeen are required to be in school except for illness or serious family emergencies. School is considered a full-time commitment on the part of all students. Chronic absences and truancy will be treated in a serious way and may result in court action. Our school team, led by our Social Worker, will work with families to improve the attendance of students identified with chronic absenteeism. These efforts will include the coordination of a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) which helps to identify causes of truancy and eliminate barriers that impact student attendance.

School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) – District staff shall notify the person in parental relation in writing and by telephone of the date and time of the SAIC. The purpose of the SAIC is to examine the student's absences and reasons for the absences in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services.

The following individuals shall be invited to the SAIC:

- The student.
- The student's person in parental relation.
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource.
- Appropriate school personnel.
- Recommended service providers.

Neither the student nor the person in parental relation shall be required to participate, and the SAIC shall occur even if the person in parental relation declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.

The outcome of the SAIC shall be documented in a written School Attendance Improvement Plan. The Plan shall be retained in the student's file. A copy of the Plan shall be provided to the person in parental relation, the student and appropriate district staff.

When a student under fifteen (15) years of age is habitually truant, district staff shall refer the student to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program, or the local children and youth agency. Also, they may file a citation in the office of the appropriate magisterial district judge against the person in parental relation who resides in the same household as the student.

At Penn Hills Elementary School, students attending onsite are expected to arrive each day no later than 9:05 AM. Students arriving past this time are considered tardy. These students will be admitted to the building, but a parent or guardian must accompany the student into the building upon arrival. Students will obtain a late slip to be admitted to class. After 120 minutes past the start time, students will be admitted to the building. However, they will be considered technically absent and will result in an unexcused absence for the day. Repeated or chronic late arrivals will be noted as an attendance violation.

Families are notified each morning via text message when a student is not in attendance for the day.

Students who attend school remotely via our Synchronous Virtual Learning model are expected to participate in all TEAMS meetings as scheduled by their classroom teacher throughout the school day to receive attendance credit for the day.

A written or electronic excuse must be turned into the student's homeroom teacher within 3 days of his/her return to school; otherwise, the absence will be deemed unexcused. If a student is absent more than 5 days in a row, he/she must submit a doctor's or other professional excuse, or the absence will be deemed unexcused.

A maximum of ten (10) days of cumulative lawful absences verified by Parent/Guardian notification may be permitted during a school year. All absences, including excused/approved absences, beyond ten (10) cumulative days require an official excuse from a physician, court, religious institution, or other approved institution. Otherwise, the absence will be marked unexcused. Please note that the compulsory school attendance law defines "truant" as having 3 or more school days of unexcused absences during the school year, and "habitually truant" refers to 6 or more school days missed due to unexcused absences. Attending school every day, on time is important to a student's success in school.

The Penn Hills School Board considers the following conditions to constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness
2. Quarantine
3. Recovery from accident.
4. Required court attendance.
5. Death in family.
6. Family educational travel, with prior approval.
7. Religious holidays.
8. Educational tours and trips, with prior approval.

Family educational trips must be pre-approved by the principal using the School District of Penn Hills Vacation Request Form. This completed form must be submitted to the building principal at least two weeks in advance of the requested beginning leave date. The approval or non-approval for this requested absence will be determined based on the child's attendance record, academic standing, and discipline record, in addition to the educational merit of the trip.

Teachers will ensure that students legally absent have an opportunity to make up work.

The district will issue written notice to any parent/guardian who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance requirements related to daily attendance. Our school Social Worker will also provide supports to the students and families to help eliminate barriers to attending school

and to develop positive attendance routines. However, our school Social Worker will also inform the parent/guardian of his/her liability under law for the absence of the student and that further violation during the school term will be processed without notice. The district shall not expel or impose out-of-school suspension, disciplinary reassignment or transfer for truant behavior.

Policy #204 outlines the Attendance of students within the Penn Hills School District. A link to the policy can be found here or on the PHSD website at www.phsd.org.

Special Needs and Accommodations (related in Attendance)

If a truant or habitually truant student may qualify as a student with a disability, and require special education services or accommodations, the Director of Special Education shall be notified and shall take action to address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations, and Board policy.

For students with disabilities who are truant or habitually truant, the appropriate team shall be notified and shall address the student's needs in accordance with applicable law, regulations and Board policy.

Definitions of Attendance Terminology

Compulsory school age shall mean the period of a student's life from the time the student's person in parental relation elects to have the student enter school, which shall be no later than **six (6)** years of age, until the student reaches **eighteen (18)** years of age. The term does not include a student who holds a certificate of graduation from a regularly accredited, licensed, registered or approved high school.

Habitually truant shall mean six (6) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.

Truant shall mean having incurred three (3) or more school days of unexcused absences during the current school year by a student subject to compulsory school attendance.

Person in parental relation shall mean a:

- Custodial biological or adoptive parent.
- Noncustodial biological or adoptive parent.
- Guardian of the person of a student.
- Person with whom a student lives and who is acting in a parental role of a student.

This term shall not include any county agency or person acting as an agent of the county agency in the jurisdiction of a dependent child as defined by law.

School-based or **community-based attendance improvement program** shall mean a program designed to improve school attendance by seeking to identify and address the underlying reasons for a student's absences. The term may include an educational assignment in an alternative education program, provided the program does not include a program for disruptive youth established pursuant to Article XIX-C of the Pennsylvania Public School Code.

BEFORE and AFTER-SCHOOL CHILDCARE PROGRAM – YMCA

The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh provides before and after school care at Penn Hills Elementary School during the school year at a reasonable cost for families.

The Before School Care Program provides care for Penn Hills Elementary students beginning at 7 AM through 9 AM, at which time students are released to their classrooms to start their school day. YMCA staff provide a nurturing atmosphere where children can engage in stimulating activities and get ready for the school day ahead. Their dedicated staff ensures a smooth transition to school, setting the tone for a positive and productive day.

The After School Care Program provides supervised care at the end of the school day from 3:30 PM through 6 PM. Students are dismissed from their classrooms to the cafeteria/gym. YMCA staff supervise students and provide homework help and exciting recreational activities, offering a variety of opportunities for your child to explore their interests and develop new skills. A hot dinner is also provided every day for your child. The YMCA's caring staff fosters a sense of belonging and encourages teamwork, all within a safe and supportive environment.

If you have any questions, please contact the YMCA Youth Development Business Office Monday through Friday from 7AM-4:30PM at 412-573-4166 or visit www.pittsburghymca.org/base.

NOTE: This information is provided as a courtesy and for reference purposes related to the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh. Inclusion in our handbook does not constitute an endorsement from the Penn Hills School District.

CELL PHONES and OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Student use of cell phones and other electronic devices during regular school hours is strictly prohibited. Cell phones should not be carried with a student or within their belongings throughout the school day, unless medically necessary.

Each day, cell phones will be collected in grades 2, 3, 4, and 5 and secured in safe lockboxes by the classroom teacher. At this point, cell phones are less present within the primary grades; thus, students in grades K-1 who bring cell phones to school will be expected to store them safely in their bookbags/cubbies. Cell phones must be turned off when stored. PHE building administration will continue to monitor the use of cell phones in grades K-1 and reserve the right to modify the cell phone collection procedures as needed throughout the year.

As a safeguard to ensure student privacy and confidentiality, the use of communication and/or picture/video features on cellular devices is prohibited at all times. Penn Hills School District realizes that cellular/mobile phone technology is ever changing, and current phone applications could be used as educational tools and potentially integrated into the classroom.
Violation of the Electronic Devices Policy shall result in CONFISCATION OF THE CELL PHONE OR ELECTRONIC DEVICE and PARENT/GUARDIAN PICK UP and/or disciplinary action. This includes display, use or misuse of any electronic device.

The District will not be responsible for the loss, damage, stolen or misuse of any personal electronic device brought to school by a student.

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have a change of contact information, such as address and/or phone number within the Penn Hills School District, you should report it immediately to our Student Registration Office at 412.793.7000 x7113 so that it may be changed within our records. Changes to phone numbers only can be done by the parent/guardian via the family's Qmlative (Skyward) account. Families are required to report changes to address and will be asked to provide proof of residency within the district.

Families living outside the district borders who attempt to fraudulently maintain enrollment within the District will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law and charged a per diem rate of tuition for all days children are/were illegally enrolled.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

The Penn Hills School District is committed to its advocacy role in the physical, emotional, and social well-being of each child. Each professional staff member and caretaker has the responsibility to work in a cooperative effort to achieve this goal.

In accordance with District Policy #806, the Penn Hills School Board requires district employees, independent contractors, and volunteers to comply with identification and reporting requirements for suspected child abuse, as well as the training requirement for recognition and reporting of child abuse to comply with the Child Protective Services Law and the School Code.

The Child Abuse Program is specifically designed to enable the mandated reporter to:

1. Know how to define child abuse.
2. Know the responsibilities once child abuse is suspected.
3. Know the steps in the child abuse reporting flow chart.
4. Know the indicators of child abuse.

If abuse or neglect is suspected, it is the professional employee's responsibility to notify the proper authorities as part of his/her "duty to report" as a Mandated Reporter.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal is from 3:30-4:00 PM.

For students riding buses…

At 3:40 PM, dismissal begins for those students riding District buses home. No student is permitted back to his/her classroom once dismissal procedures begin. Please remind your child(ren) to be responsible by having all necessary items ready when bus dismissal begins. The students are directed by staff to their assigned buses as bus numbers are announced over our school intercom system. It is important that your child be familiar with his/her bus number and bus stop. Each student riding a bus receives a bag tag with bussing information recorded on it. Please make sure the tag remains on the students' bags throughout the year and notify the school office if changes need to be made to the tags.

Students must ride the bus to which they have been assigned by the Penn Hills School District. They must also get on and off at their assigned bus stop. Permanent changes to bussing or bus stops must be made through the Penn Hills School District Transportation Office.

For temporary changes to bus transportation, Parent/Guardians must submit a written request to the school office at the start of the school day that the change needs to occur. Students will then be issued a Temporary Bus Pass for the day.

For students who are car riders…

If your child will be a regular car rider, (picked up every day or on a regular schedule), please complete a Car Rider Registration Form and return it to the school office. You will be issued a numbered car tag and included on our permanent car rider list. If your child occasionally rides home by car, please be sure that a note is sent to the teacher each day this is to occur indicating the day of the pick-up and the name of the person responsible for picking up the child. Your note will be relayed to the dismissal staff.

Student pick-up occurs in the front of the building. Please note that student pick-up is from 3:30 PM to 4:00 PM. The security gate will open to allow cars onto campus at 3:00 pm each day. It is not necessary to arrive at our school earlier than that time, as it will cause an unnecessary backup of car traffic. We encourage you to utilize the entire window of time until 4:00 PM for pick-up, as we believe this strategy will help to reduce your wait time in line. With approximately 200 cars arriving for students, safety is our top priority at dismissal time. Please have your numbered car tags visible. **Persons without valid Car Rider tags will be directed into the security office to confirm authorization for pick-up.** It is also important that cars remain in the pick-up line, until directed otherwise by our security staff. Please do not try to bypass traffic by traveling in the opposite lane to get up the hill to our school.

For the 25-26 school year. **We will again be using the Pikmykid App for our car riders. Please download the PikmyKid App on your iPhone or Android device.** We will also be available to help throughout the first week of school. Parents and families can register with

PikmyKid after downloading the app from their Appstore or please visit the PHES website (Click on the Parent and Family tab, then click the Dismissal tab).

Car rider drop-off and pick-up will occur at the front entrance of Penn Hills Elementary School. Please follow the posted signage and remember to drive with caution throughout this area to protect the safety of our students. Please **ONLY** allow your child to exit/enter on the passenger side of the car along the sidewalk near the front entrance.

Please pay attention and follow the directions of the staff members directing traffic during dismissal time. Traffic patterns are shifted during car rider dismissal to accommodate the increased number of cars onsite at PHE. While waiting in the car rider line, please keep a close distance between cars. Also, adults should remain in or near their cars. A staff member will escort your child to you/your car. Adults should NOT walk up to the main entrance of the building to wait for students to exit.

Please note that all dismissal changes need to be made in writing. Dismissal changes by phone are reserved for emergencies only, and a callback may be made to verify the change. Changes to student dismissal procedures, including temporary bus changes, MUST be requested by a parent/guardian. NO changes will be honored at a student's request.

Students cannot be released to persons not listed in our school records associated with each family. Please make the office aware if a friend and/or relative is picking up your child, and that person is not listed in our student information system. Everyone picking up students will be asked to show proper State-issued photo identification as verification prior to the student being released. Students will NOT be released to any person without this valid identification. The photo identification will be scanned through the Raptor Visitor Management System for clearance. We ask for your cooperation and understanding with this procedure, as it helps to ensure the safety and well-being of our students.

Early Dismissals

Early dismissals should only occur in emergency situations. If it is necessary for the student to be excused from school, a written parent/guardian request MUST be submitted to the ATTENDANCE OFFICE on the day of the early dismissal. This written notification should state the time of the early dismissal and identify who will be picking up the child, especially if it will be an adult other than the parent/guardian as listed in Qmlative (Skyward). Adults listed as Emergency Contacts do not have the right to pick up a child unless approval has been received from the parent/guardian. Adults arriving onsite from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm will be stopped at our security gate and asked to present their purpose for being on campus during school hours. Our security

personnel will be alerted to scheduled early dismissals. Once approved, the adult will receive a pass to proceed through the gate to the main entrance.

Due to the high volume of car traffic at dismissal time, early dismissals will only be honored until 3:00 PM each day. After 3:00 PM, parents/guardians must wait until our regular dismissal time (3:30-4:00 PM).

When picking up a child for an early dismissal, parent/guardian designee must report to the Security Office/Attendance Office after being cleared through Security at the entrance gate. Adults picking up students for early dismissals will be asked to present proper State-issued photo identification. Students will NOT be released to any person without valid identification. The photo identification will be scanned through the Raptor Visitor Management System for clearance. The child will meet the parent/guardian or designee in the Security Office unless otherwise directed.

Only emergency early dismissal requests can be relayed to the school via a phone call on the day of the early dismissal request. Parents/guardians who telephone an emergency early dismissal request will be called back to confirm the request.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education does not approve of any early dismissal unless emergency conditions exist.

Early dismissals will be permitted only if one of these conditions is met:

1. The student presents a doctor or dentist's appointment on official medical stationery.
2. The parent/guardian appears in person at the appropriate school attendance office to accompany the student.
3. The student has submitted a written request from the parent/guardian upon arrival to school, and a member of the office staff has validated the request.
4. If you become ill during the day, you must be properly excused by the Health Office, or the Main office.

Like chronic tardiness, repeated early dismissals can be deemed an attendance violation and result in an intervention through our school Social Worker/Home School Visitor's office.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency contact information should be accurately recorded within our Qmlative (Skyward) Student Management System. We ask that families update this information as necessary to keep it current and accurate. Emergency contacts are persons to be called if parents/guardians cannot be contacted in an emergency or if your child is ill. Each family should designate at least one reliable emergency contact. Parents/guardians are REQUIRED to arrange necessary transportation when a student needs to go home due to an illness. Please be sure that your designated emergency contacts can also assist with transportation as necessary. In case of a serious emergency, the school will call an ambulance and notify the parents/guardians so that they can meet the child at the hospital.

As emergency contact information changes, it is in the best interest of the child that the school be notified immediately.

Please note that adults identified as emergency contacts are not permitted to pick up for scheduled early dismissals unless written confirmation is provided by the parent/guardian.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Mandatory emergency practice drills, including fire drills, severe weather drills, lockdown drills, and building evacuation drills, will occur multiple times throughout the school year. School code requires that one practice drill occurs each month during the school year. These drills are routine and are designed to maximize the safety of our students and staff in the event of an actual emergency situation. Students are expected to adhere to the safety procedures and act in a responsible manner during drills. Local law enforcement and EMS units may be invited to participate in such drills. During drills, visitors to the school and late-arriving students will be detained at a designated location until the drill has been completed.

FIRE DRILLS: State building regulations require that a fire drill be held routinely in public schools. Classroom teachers will provide instruction to the students regarding safe and appropriate behavior that is expected during a fire drill. Please reinforce the importance of following adult instructions during these drills.

SEVERE WEATHER DRILLS: Severe weather drills will also be held periodically throughout the school year to prepare students for weather-related emergencies, such as tornadoes. Students and staff will practice the "Drop and Tuck" safety stance against an interior wall of the hallway, away from the windows/showcases starting at the ***ORANGE SEVERE WEATHER START Sign***. "Drop and Tuck" means to be in a kneeling position, facing the wall, with the head down, and hands shielding the head.

CANINE DRILLS: The Penn Hills Police Department canine officer will visit our school to conduct searches for unauthorized substances/items. During canine drills, students will be asked to remain within classrooms. Hallway movement will be limited while the canines are onsite.

LOCKDOWN DRILLS: Critical incidents in the community may arise when it is advisable to prohibit entrance into our building and necessitate that our students and staff exercise sheltering in place, or what is commonly referred to as a LOCKDOWN. At least twice per year, we will practice this lockdown drill with the guidance of the Penn Hills Police Department. Parents/guardians will be notified via a letter from building administration if/when this drill occurs within PHES.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION DRILLS: In the event of an actual EMERGENCY EVACUATION from Penn Hills Elementary, the following procedure will be implemented…

1. The Building Principal and the Superintendent/designee, in collaboration with the Penn Hills Police Department, will make the decision whether or not to evacuate the building.

2. The building will be evacuated using the practiced emergency drill procedure.
3. Students and staff will be secured in an offsite location.
4. Penn Hills Police will be responsible for inspecting the building and denoting when it is safe to return to the building.
5. Parent/guardian notification via our district's automated messaging system will be made to relay information regarding the event, including alternate dismissal arrangements if necessary.

Penn Hills School District has a comprehensive crisis response plan in place in all school buildings. Staff and students are regularly trained in these security/evacuation procedures.

FIELD TRIPS

Students at each grade level may be taken on field trips to sites in Pittsburgh and surrounding areas. While on these trips in the community, the students are representatives of Penn Hills Elementary School. When a field trip is to occur, information will be sent home, and a signed permission slip will need to be returned prior to the date of the trip in order for the student to participate. Students are reminded that the same behavior that is expected of them within our school building is expected of them when they are on field trips. In accordance with the PHSD Volunteer Policy #916, parents/guardians participating on field trips must obtain required clearances. Non school-aged children are not permitted on the district school buses.



FOOD SERVICES

Food services are provided through a contract with The Nutrition Group. The first requirement for good health is a well-balanced diet that contains the vital nutrients from 5 meal components - meat

or meat alternatives, grains, fruit, vegetables, and dairy. It is important to remember that eating a well-balanced diet will contribute greatly to a healthy mind and body and will therefore enhance a student's academic performance. The Penn Hills School District serves nutritious meals each school day that follow in accordance with the USDA regulations.

The Penn Hills School Board's Student Wellness Policy is in place to ensure the health and well-being of all students. This policy also provides guidelines relating to the school lunch menu and other related school activities/procedures. For the complete Student Wellness Policy, visit the Penn Hills School District website at www.phsd.org.

Through the **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program**, ALL students attending Penn Hills Elementary will be afforded FREE breakfast and lunch each day.

Breakfast

A grab-n-go style breakfast is served from 8:45-9:05 AM at Penn Hills Elementary. Students may pick up their grab-n-go breakfast choices in the cafeteria or from breakfast kiosk stations in the lobby and hallways. Students who plan to eat breakfast should report to one of these areas upon entering the building. After obtaining their breakfast bags, students should go immediately to their classrooms to eat. If there is a school delay, no breakfast will be served at school.

Lunch

All students are eligible for a free lunch meal each day. This meal includes:

1. Milk
2. A choice between two prepared hot lunches.
3. An alternative sandwich selection for lunch.

The school lunch menu is available on the Penn Hills School District website at www.phsd.org.

Healthy a la carte items are also available at lunch, at an extra charge. We support a two-item limit per child. This is to encourage a healthy mealtime.

Students are also welcome to bring their lunch to school each day. Milk and other snacks are available for purchase to complement the packed lunches. Packed lunches cannot be refrigerated, so parents/guardians are asked to pack non-perishable items. Parents/guardians are also asked to avoid packing items that must be heated, as that service is not available to students. Glass containers are also prohibited for obvious safety reasons. We also ask to refrain from sending soda pop as a drink option. Healthy meal and drink choices are encouraged. Parents/guardians are encouraged to serve as positive role models for students by promoting a healthy diet. Foods from outside fast-food restaurants are discouraged. Furthermore, the Penn Hills Elementary School will not accept food deliveries for students from the following, but not limited to: Uber Eats, DoorDash, Grubhub, etc.

Due to food allergies and restricted diets, we discourage students from sharing food at lunch. We ask students to eat only their own food received from our cafeteria lines or brought from home.

Food Service Account Information

With our technology, all students have an account that tracks all purchase activity, thus increasing the speed of our food service so that students have more time to eat. Parents/guardians can enjoy the convenience of prepaying for their child's a la carte items and milk through the school cafeteria at no charge or prepay online at https://www.schoolcafe.com. Students will still have the option to pay with cash on a daily basis as well. Please note that our food service cashiers are not able to provide change to students. The entire cash amount received will be applied to the student's food service account.

NOTE: Students should not bring large sums of money to school because sometimes the money gets misplaced or lost. Students are not permitted to sell items in school in exchange for money.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

Penn Hills Elementary School participates in the Fresh Fruit and Veggie Program (FFVP). This federally assisted program provides free fresh fruits and vegetables to students in participating elementary schools during the school day. Its goal is to improve children's overall diet and create healthier eating habits to impact their present and future health. The FFVP will help schools create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices, expanding the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience, and increasing children's fruit and vegetable consumption.

Snacks from Home

Each classroom allots time throughout the day for students to enjoy a snack. Three days of the week, fresh fruits and vegetable snacks are provided to us via the FFVP grant. If your child wishes to bring his/her own snacks, healthy snack choices are encouraged. Please avoid high-sugar snacks such as soda pop and candy bars. We discourage students from sharing daily snacks due to potential food allergies and dietary restrictions.

When selecting snack options to be shared with your child's class, please be cognizant that many of our students have food allergies, especially related to peanut and milk products. Seek advice from your child's teacher when selecting classroom snacks. **Classroom snacks must also comply with our District Student Wellness Policy #246 and USDA Smart Snack guidelines.** Such snacks must be under 200 calories, have minimal/zero trans-fat, identify the first ingredient as a whole grain, fruit or vegetable and be under 200 mg of sodium per serving. Snacks that do not follow the policy regulations will NOT be permitted to be distributed.

USDA Smart Snack guidelines should also be followed regarding birthday treats. Birthday treats that are shared with the whole class must meet the nutritional requirements listed above OR be a

non-food item. Cupcakes, cookies, and other sugary treats are NOT permitted to be distributed as classroom treats and WILL be returned home with the student or available in the school office for pick-up.

HOMEWORK PROCEDURES

Homework assignments vary per grade level. Typically, assignments are made minimally four days a week and posted to your child's Canvas account for your convenience. Your child's teacher will send home information about homework requirements at the beginning of the school year. The extent to which the homework assignments should be considered in relation to the report grade will vary from subject to subject. It is important to establish at the outset that homework assignments will be monitored, and the summary of the assignments is an extension of the classroom work and a meaningful part of the learning process. Homework assignments should be completed during a predetermined time and in a quiet, well-lit place. It is suggested that families identify a consistent homework spot in their home, equipped with necessary learning tools including a location for charging electronic devices each night. Please reach out to your child's classroom teacher if you need school supplies/resources for your home study area. Parents/guardians should assume the responsibility to monitor the child's working time and check the work. Homework assignments should reflect the student's understanding of the concepts and reflect the student's own work.

Homework assignments need not always require written work. Extended reading of the text or supplementary material will often offer experiences that will enrich the classroom work. Variety in the assignments will enable the student to have an opportunity to acquire different skills and further develop good work habits. In general, the time that a student should devote to homework each night should follow these guidelines:

Grade K/1—10 minutes
Grade 2—20 minutes
Grade 3—30 minutes
Grade 4—40 minutes
Grade5—50 minutes

If your child consistently works past these general homework guidelines, please contact your child's teacher.

Submitting homework assignments late are often the source of much confusion. It is more difficult to assure mastery of skills and issue appropriate evaluations when homework assignments are not submitted on time. Since the purpose of the homework is to ensure understanding of the content of a particular lesson, it is necessary to demand that assignments are submitted when due. There is little to be gained by excusing students from meeting the due date or permitting students to submit many back assignments at a later date.

Questions regarding homework assignments should be directed toward your child's teacher.

Parents/guardians requesting make-up work/homework for extended absences and/or approved vacations should allow for 24-hour advanced notice in order for the teacher to prepare assignments for pick-up.

Homework Tips for Parents/Guardians

Homework is important, but helping children with homework isn't always easy. Here are some ways you can make homework easier for everyone:

1. STUDY THE SAME THINGS IN DIFFERENT WAYS AND PLACES
   Help your child learn about new words or content in a variety of ways. Talk about new vocabulary words several times during the week, in different settings. This will help enrich your child's understanding of the word.
2. MIX UP THE STUDY TIME
   If your child prefers to do a little math, a little reading, a little word study and then back to math…that's okay!
3. SPACE OUT THE LEARNING
   If your child has a big test coming up next week, help him or her study a little bit each day rather than cramming it in the night before. An hour or so every other day, spacing out the learning, is a better way to really learn the material.
4. HELP YOUR CHILD GET ORGANIZED
   Help your child pick out a special homework notebook or folder and make sure your child has homework supplies available to him or her.
5. SHOW YOUR CHILD THAT YOU THINK HOMEWORK IS IMPORTANT
   Ask your child about his or her homework each day and check to see that it is completed. Tell your child that you are proud of the work he or she is doing.
6. HELP YOUR CHILD WITHOUT DOING THE HOMEWORK
   It's important to answer questions if you can, but remember that homework is supposed to be completed by your child to help him/her learn. By doing your child's homework, you are not helping your child in the long run.
7. TALK WITH YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER
   Find out what the teacher's homework expectations are. If your child has a problem completing or understanding homework, call or email the teacher to talk about the issue.

District-Issued Electronic Device INSURANCE

All students will have a district-issued electronic device given to them that the students use; in the classroom and/or at home for learning.
Parents/guardians are responsible for damages that occur during the duration of assignment. Fees for damages for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd time will be determined by the Technology Department per PHSD policy # 256.

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found items are collected throughout the school year in the main lobby and/or office. Every effort is made to return lost items to its owners. Parents/guardians are encouraged to label students' belongings with the child's name. Please contact your child's teacher as soon as possible if you notice an item is missing. At the end of the school year, unclaimed items are donated to a local charity.

Valuables should not be brought to school, as the Penn Hills School District is not responsible for lost personal items.

NURSE'S OFFICE SERVICES

There is a certified nurse available each day in the Penn Hills Elementary Health Office. Our nurses are onsite to take care of minor health care needs of the students. All injuries/accidents should be reported to the nurse by the observing staff member immediately regardless of how severe it may seem. If a student is seen by one of our nurses, every effort will be made to contact the parent or guardian. Please make sure that parent/guardian and emergency contact information is up-to-date and accurate in our Qmlative (Skyward) Student Management System.

The school nurse does not diagnose conditions. He/she also cannot issue medication or treat a condition unless there is a written order from a physician PHSD Medication Policy. The school health office will not treat injuries that occur in the home and/or during non-school hours. All students must have a properly signed pass to enter the Health Office unless it is an emergency.

Allergies

Many students and staff suffer from allergies. If your child has an allergy, please be sure to indicate that on his/her Emergency Care Card that is on file within the nurse's office. In order to maintain a safe and comfortable learning environment for all, it is also advised that parents/guardians notify the classroom teachers of any allergies, especially those related to food. A peanut-free zone is provided within the cafeteria for students that suffer from peanut or nut-related allergies.

Items containing fragrances (sprays, lotions, mists, hand sanitizer, etc.) should not be brought into school because allergies and/or respiratory conditions can be exacerbated by these products. In addition, students are asked not to wear cologne or perfume to school.

First Aid

The school attempts to create an environment where the child will be safe. If a minor accident occurs, the school nurse will be summoned and the nurse will administer first aid. The parents/guardians will be notified immediately and urged to come for the child. **The nurse will give**

no care beyond first aid, defined as the immediate, temporary care given in case of accident or illness. Injuries should be reported immediately to the proper school personnel. This is necessary, especially where the parents/guardians have school insurance. Any further necessary treatment is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to transport a sick or injured child.

Examinations

Physical examinations are required by law upon original entry into school, and in the **sixth** and **eleventh** grades. Dental examinations are required upon original entry into school and in the **third** and **seventh** grades.

Parents/guardians are urged to have these examinations completed by the family physician and dentist. These examinations may be completed one year prior to the start of the school year. Any child not having an examination by the family doctor or dentist will be examined at school. School officials may request a special examination at any time.

All deviations from normal health found in school will be reported to the Parent/Guardians in writing or by telephone or through a home visit. Parents/guardians are requested to report promptly to the school after the advice of the family physician and dentist has been obtained.

Each child of school age will be given:

1. A vision test annually by a school nurse.
2. A hearing test employing an audiometer in kindergarten, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades, and as deemed necessary.
3. A measurement of height and weight annually by a school nurse.
4. A Scoliosis screening (curvature of the spine) in sixth and seventh grades.

Immunization Requirements

Pennsylvania State law requires children entering school to be immunized against *Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Mumps, Measles, Hepatitis B, Rubella* (German measles) and *Chicken Pox*. Names and dates of immunization must be recorded in the school records.

The law also indicates that pupils may be excluded from school when the required immunization regulations are not met, unless the student is excluded or excused for medical or religious reasons. Documentation of all immunizations must come from the physician's office.

SCHOOL IMMUNIZATION REGULATIONS:

All Grades K-12

4 doses of Tetanus (1 dose after the 4th birthday); 3 doses if series started after 7 years of age.
4 doses of Diphtheria (1 dose after the 4th birthday); 3 doses if series started after 7 years of age.

4 doses of Polio (1 dose after the 4th birthday)
2 doses of Measles
2 doses of Mumps
2 doses of Rubella
3 doses of Hepatitis B
2 doses of Varicella or written statement from physician indicating month and year of disease or serologic proof of immunity.

Grades 7-12 (in addition to other listed vaccines)
1 dose of Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Tdap)
1 dose of Meningitis vaccine (MCV4)—2 doses in Grade 12

If a child is exempt from immunizations, he/she may be removed from school during an outbreak. The law also indicates that pupils may be excluded from school when the required immunization regulations are not met, unless the student is excluded or excused for medical or religious reasons.

Medication

Only essential **prescribed** oral medicines will be given at school. The parent/guardian will assume full responsibility for any medications sent into the school. It is advised that parents/guardians should deliver medications to school. **Students should not transport medications.** The following regulations have been adopted by the Penn Hills School Board concerning medication:

All medicine must be accompanied by a physician's or nurse practitioner's prescription. Only medications prescribed by a physician or nurse practitioner accompanied by written instructions signed by the physician or nurse practitioner will be given in the schools. In addition, a parent/guardian must complete a permission form issued by the school. The medicine containers must be properly labeled by the parent/guardian with the student's name, room number, the name of the medicine and the time and dosage to be given. No over-the-counter medicine will be kept in the health office unless they comply with above regulations. All medicines must be kept in the health office unless alternative arrangements are made. Students are not permitted to carry medications. Medications that do not comply with the above regulations will not be given by school personnel and will be returned to the parent/guardian. Please note that cough drops and medicated lip balms are not permitted for use in school. Any questions pertaining to medications should be directed to the school nurse.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pick up any leftover medication by the last day of school. Medication orders must be renewed at the beginning of each school year.

Medical Restrictions

To restrict students from school activities, including physical education and recess, the parent/guardian must obtain a note from the family physician describing the condition and advising the kind of restriction. Permanent excuses must be renewed at the start of school each year.

A doctor's excuse is necessary to be excused from gym class. The doctor's excuse should also state the restrictions, if any, for recess. A doctor's excuse is also required for any special accommodations to be made in school. A child will also need a doctor's excuse to be reinstated to class.

Regulations for Control of Communicable Diseases

The daily inspection of students is vitally important in preventing the spread of communicable diseases. Parents/guardians are advised that teachers will cooperate in identifying the health status of individual pupils. Colds are contagious and may develop into serious illness. Students who have profuse nasal discharges or persistent coughs should be excluded until these symptoms disappear.

When a child has the symptoms of an illness such as, running nose, sneezing, coughing, mild or no fever, headache, pains in muscles and joints, or a possible stomach and intestinal upset, he may be developing any one of the communicable diseases. The parent/guardian may think the child is not sick enough to remain home from school; however, he can expose many other children to the disease. It is during this period of three or four days (prodromal period) that the diseases are most infectious. Please contact the school nurse if your child shows evidence of a communicable disease or if you have any questions related to communicable diseases.

COVID-19

Families are expected to monitor their child's temperature daily. They are advised NOT to send a child to school if he/she has a fever of 100.4 or higher OR exhibits any of the known COVID-19 symptoms, including but not limited to cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, chills, lack of taste or smell, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or headache. We ask that families contact homeroom teachers when a student is feeling ill.

Please contact our school nurse if your child tests positive for COVID-19. Our nurse and your child's pediatrician will provide guidance for when your child can safely return to school for onsite learning. If your child experiences an extended absence due to COVID-19, the teacher can accommodate your child through our Synchronous Virtual Learning option.

Chicken Pox

The child must remain home from school **six days** from the last crop of vesicles (blisters). After this period, the child may return if the scabs have formed and are beginning to fall off.

German Measles (Rubella or 3 day)

The child must remain home from school **four days** from the appearance of the rash.

Impetigo
The child must remain home until judged non-infectious by the school nurse or the child's physician.

Mumps
The child must remain home from school **nine days** from the onset or until the swelling has subsided.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)
The child must remain home until judged non-infectious by the school nurse. No child will be readmitted to school until all nits have been removed.

Pink Eye
The child must remain home **twenty-four hours** from the institution of appropriate therapy. He may return when judged non-infectious by the school nurse or the child's physician.

Respiratory Streptococcal Infections
Because of the seriousness of this disease, a physician must make the diagnosis. The child must **remain home not less than seven days from the onset if no physician is in attendance, or 24 hours from the institution of appropriate antimicrobial therapy.**

Ringworm
The child must be excluded until judged non-infectious by the school nurse or the child's physician.

Scabies
The child must remain home from school until judged non-infectious by the school nurse or the child's physician.

Scarlet Fever
The child must remain home **not less than seven days** if no physician is in attendance, **or 24 hours from the institution of appropriate antimicrobial therapy.** Readmission to school may be delayed until complete recovery is evident.

Whooping Cough
The period of communicability varies. If untreated, whooping cough can be contagious for 21 days from start of inflammation of the nose and air passages or 2 weeks from the start of cough. If treated, whooping cough can be contagious until 5 days after start of appropriate antimicrobial therapy. Students diagnosed with whooping cough should be excluded from school until 5 days from start of appropriate antimicrobial therapy or for 3 weeks from onset of symptoms.

Other Disease Information

Reye's Syndrome

Since flu occurs more frequently during the winter months, and since Reye's syndrome can follow the flu (and also other viruses), it is suggested that you keep this awareness bulletin in a handy place for easy reference.

Reye's syndrome affects children from infancy through age nineteen. When a child is recovering from a viral infection, especially the flu, chicken pox, or an upper respiratory infection, and the following symptoms are observed, they should be treated as serious and as possibly the first indication of Reye's syndrome:

- Persistent or continuous vomiting
- Listlessness and loss of pep and energy (drowsiness)
- Personality change (such as irritability and combativeness)
- Disorientation (unable to identify whereabouts or family members)
- Delirium, convulsions

Reye's syndrome affects the liver and the brain. It is not contagious and it is often misdiagnosed as encephalitis, meningitis, diabetes, poisoning, mental illness or even drug abuse. A child's life can depend on **early** diagnosis. Phone your physician immediately if any of the symptoms develop and tell him that you suspect Reye's syndrome. Anti-nausea or fever reducing medication may mask the symptoms of Reye's syndrome and are still under suspension, therefore, your physician may wish to avoid them.

Two liver function tests can be done to indicate the possibility of Reye's syndrome. There is a 90% chance of recovery when physicians and nurses treat it in its earliest stages.

*No one under the age of 21 should take aspirin or aspirin products because of the danger of contracting Reye's syndrome.

Wildlife Rabies

Wildlife rabies has become an increasing problem in Pennsylvania. Pets should be immunized against rabies to protect the human population. However, there is no rabies vaccine manufactured for wildlife.

Children under eighteen years of age account for 70% of the total recorded animal bites. The rabies virus is transmitted through the saliva of infected animals by a bite or a scratch. During the summer months, children are usually exposed to raccoons, skunks and foxes who are highly susceptible to rabies and account for 85% of rabid animals in Pennsylvania.

The following precautions are recommended:

1. Stay away from all wild and stray animals. Do not pet, feed or act friendly with them.
2. Make sure your pet is vaccinated for rabies.
3. Keep your pet on a leash and in your yard away from wild animals.

4. If an animal bites you, wash the wound with soap and water and go to your doctor.
5. Report the bite to the Allegheny County Health Department.

OPEN HOUSE

In the fall of each school year, the Elementary Open House evenings provide a nice opportunity to get familiar with the classroom's daily routines and procedures, as well as the curriculum and activities implemented throughout the year. Support personnel and resource teachers will also be available each of these nights. Open House is designed to provide general information to the parents/guardians and families. If you should have specific concerns about your child(ren), please contact the teacher to arrange for an individual conference at another time.

Specific information about Open House will be sent home within the first few weeks of school. The specific dates can also be found on the PHSD calendar posted to the PHSD website.

PARENT/GUARDIAN-TEACHER CONFERENCES

A parent/guardian-teacher conference day is scheduled at the elementary level in November of each year. In addition, parents/guardians are welcome to schedule conferences with teachers at any time throughout the year. At Penn Hills Elementary, we strongly believe in the importance of home/school communication and collaboration. If questions or concerns arise at any time throughout the year, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or principal. You are reminded to please call-in advance to arrange a conference time. Without a scheduled appointment, visitors will not be permitted to enter the school compass.

SEVEN WAYS TO ASSURE SUCCESS AT PARENT/GUARDIAN-TEACHER CONFERENCES

The National Education Association suggest these tips for better Parent/Guardian-Teacher conferences:

- Write yourself notes, before the conference, about important topics to cover. You might want the teacher to know about your child's home life, personality, problems, habits or hobbies.
- Ask your children what they would like you to talk about with their teachers. Also, ask your children what they think are their best and worst subjects, and have them explain why.
- Stay calm during the conference.
- Ask for an explanation if the teacher uses an unfamiliar term or talks about something that you don't understand.
- Ask important questions first in case you run out of time.
- Try to ask such questions as; is my child in different groups for different subjects? Why? What are his/her best and worst subjects? Is my child working up to his/her ability? Does my child participate in class discussions and activities? Has my child missed any classes other than the ones I contacted the school about? What kinds of tests are being

done? What do they say about my child's progress? How well does my child handle taking tests?

- Find out specific ways that you can help your child perform better in school. At home, discuss these strategies with your child and let him/her know that you and the teacher care about what happens. Then, start working on your plan immediately. Finally, remember to follow up with the teacher to discuss your child's progress.

PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

Penn Hills Elementary PTO is a dedicated and hard-working group of volunteer parents who support the school in a variety of ways. Fundraising throughout the year allows us to sponsor programs during the school day and in the evenings that enhance the education and community within our school. The PTO meets regularly and encourages all parents and guardians to attend, as the meetings are a great way to know more about what's happening at the school and to support the programs that benefit the students. Meetings are on the school calendar and can also be found on our **website: https://pennhillselementary.ptboard.com**. The PTO can also be reached via email at **phelempto@gmail.com** or in the private Facebook group called Penn Hills Elementary PTO.

PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS

Classroom parties/celebrations occur at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Parents and/or family members may be invited to help with these celebrations at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Volunteer policy guidelines apply for these events. Non-school-aged siblings are not allowed to participate in school functions during the school day. Invitations to parties held outside of school hours should not be distributed at school.

When selecting snack options to be shared with your child's class, please be cognizant that many of our students have food allergies, especially related to peanut and milk products. *Seek advice from your child's teacher when selecting classroom snacks and the delivery date and time of classroom snacks must be scheduled with the teacher. Parents are not permitted to bring classroom snacks to the PHES without the consent of the homeroom teacher, and these items may be sent home with your child.* **Classroom snacks must also comply with our District Student Wellness Policy #246 and USDA Smart Snack guidelines.** Such snacks must be under 200 calories, have minimal/zero trans-fat, identify the first ingredient as a whole grain, fruit or vegetable and be under 200 mg of sodium per serving. Snacks that do not follow the policy regulations will NOT be permitted to be distributed.

USDA Smart Snack guidelines should also be followed in regard to birthday treats. Birthday treats should be simple. ***Birthday treats that are shared with the whole class must meet the nutritional requirements listed above OR be a non-food item. Cupcakes, cookies, and other sugary treats are NOT permitted to be distributed as classroom treats and WILL be returned home with the student or available in the school office for pick-up.*** We also ask that you refrain from sending

balloons into school for or with your child. Balloons cannot be transported home on school buses.

Smart Snack Classroom Celebration Items Available for Purchase

The following items are available for purchase for parties from our Food Service Department, The Nutrition Group. Please contact Nutrition Group at to coordinate purchases.

Fresh Baked Cookie **$0.75 each**
Individually wrapped soft & chewy wholegrain cookies.

Festive Rice Krispies Pop **$1.25 each**
Individually wrapped sweet and delicious wholegrain treat on a stick dipped or drizzled in either vanilla or chocolate icing and topped with festive sprinkles.

Hershey's Ice Cream Cup **$1.00 each**
Individual Cups

Individual Fruit or Veggie Snack **$0.75-$0.85 each**
Bagged apple slices -or- baby carrots with ranch dip

Assorted Individual Snack Bar **$0.75–$1.00 each**
Individual bags of Baked Chips, Cheddar Goldfish, SmartPop!® Popcorn, Kids Munchie Mix, Watermelon or Strawberry Craisins, or Fruit Snacks

8oz Bottled Water, Milk or 4oz Juice **$0.50- $0.75 each**
All choices are wholegrain or low fat and napkins are provided.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Publishing Photographs of Student in Local Media

During the school year, photographers for the school district or for the media may be taking pictures of students engaged in various activities or for honors and awards. If you do not want your child's picture to appear in any publicity, please electronically complete a Publicity Release Form via the Student Information Update Process on Qmlative (Skyward's) Family Access Center. Skyward can be accessed via the PHSD website at www.phsd.org.

Publishing Student Work and Photographs on District Website

Throughout the school year, student work and photographs will appear on the Penn Hills School District website. Student names will not appear with their work or with their photographs on the website. If you do not want your child's work or photograph to appear on the district website, please electronically complete a Publicity Release Form via the Student Information Update Process on Qmlative (Skyward's) Family Access Center. Qmlative (Skyward) can be accessed via the PHSD website at www.phsd.org.

REPORT CARDS

All grading information, including reports cards and progress notices, will be electronically distributed to students and families throughout the school year. Paper copies of report cards are no longer distributed to families.

Report cards will be available via the Qmlative (Skyward) Parent/Guardian Portal each nine weeks for all grades, kindergarten through fifth. If a student is having difficulty, the parents/guardians will be notified via the *Penn Hills School District Elementary Progress Report* prior to the end of the grading period. (Kindergarten students do not receive progress reports.) At any time, Parent/Guardians are welcome to contact their children's teachers if they have concerns or questions about their children's progress. The Qmlative (Skyward) Parent/Guardian Portal is also a resource for accessing student grade information. The link to this portal can be found on the District website.

The **Penn Hills School District Grading Scale** for Grades 1-12 is as follows…

100 – 90% = A
89 – 80% = B
79 – 70% = C
69 – 60% = D
59% and below = E

An explanation of **Kindergarten** marks is as follows:

	Explanation of Marks
P	The student shows PROFICIENT progress by mastering all targeted skills/behaviors consistently.
S	The student shows SATISFACTORY progress by exhibiting targeted skills/behaviors some of the time. Continued Practice is needed.
N	The student NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN targeted skills/behaviors. Additional time and support is needed.
X	Not yet taught.

SCHEDULES AND ACADEMIC CLASSES

Daily Schedule

Penn Hills Elementary School operates on a 5-day cycle, not a weekly Monday through Friday schedule. These numbered days are important to your child because they indicate when certain resource classes and activities will be held. For example, your child may have Physical Education

classes on day 2 and will need to be prepared on those days by wearing the proper shoes and clothing. Your child's teacher will distribute a class schedule of resource activities.

Your child's teacher will also distribute a classroom schedule that specifically outlines your child's other academic courses, as well as lunch and recess times and resource classes.

Reading/Language Arts

Multiple curricular resources are utilized to create a well-rounded Reading/Language Arts program aligned to the Science of Reading. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness (K-2) and Reading Horizons (K-3), compliment the Great Minds Wit & Wisdom Reading series used in first through fifth grade. Language Arts is taught in a block of time during the school day. The comprehensive Language Arts curriculum emphasizes reading, grammar, writing, spelling, phonics, speaking, and listening skills. Students read high-interest stories on a routine basis. Teachers differentiate instruction so that all students' academic needs are met. Enrichment, as well as remediation activities, are ALSO provided. The goal of the Language Arts curriculum is for students to meet the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. The standards can be assessed online at https://www.pdesas.org/standard/.

Mathematics

In Grades K - 5, Penn Hills will be using the Illustrative mathematics curriculum. This core program will develop conceptual understanding through daily Problem-Based Interactive Learning and step-by-step Visual Learning. Abundant digital resources are available for use in the classroom as well as at home. In addition, elementary students will also experience mathematics through the **XtraMath** program that helps students master addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts. Through this dedicated time each day, students work with a variety of mathematics concepts such as time, money, patterns, counting, etc. Penn Hills Elementary places a strong emphasis on math, and it is taught daily. Technology is integrated into the math curriculum, and children learn the math concepts by working with manipulatives, so they understand the concepts presented. There is an expectation that students practice and master the grade-appropriate mathematics facts.

Science

The **OpenSciEd** science program is used in elementary school and is designed for building inquiry and STEM skills and optimized for learning for all. This program emphasizes the hands-on inquiry-based approach where the children learn by doing. The Science Curriculum correlates to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards.

Social Studies

The elementary social studies program teaches a wide variety of content skills at the various grade levels. Children learn about geography, history, economics, government, citizenship, sociology, anthropology and humanities through a wide variety of activities. TCI provides the curricular resources for our social studies program K-5.

Resource Classes

Once each day, students in all grades participate in one of the following RESOURCE CLASSES:

- Health and Physical Education
- Art
- Music
- Library (K-2)
- Library/STEM (Grades 3-5)

Resources classes are 45-minutes in length.

Intervention Period

A daily Intervention Period (IP) is provided in each student's general education schedule in order to allow for additional targeted supports and interventions from our support professionals such as Reading Specialists and Special Education case managers. IP is "in addition to" core instruction, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction to target specific student strengths and needs.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS, DELAYS, AND FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS (FID)

At times, serious weather conditions or other unplanned occurrences may necessitate an adjustment to regular school operations.
An automated robocall will be sent to all families at the phone number and email identified within our Qmlative (Skyward) Student Management System. This automated notification will provide information regarding the adjustments necessary to school operations, including delays, school closing, or District-wide virtual learning days. This information will also be shared with local news agencies.

- (AM Radio) KDKA-1020, WTAE-1250, WJAS-1320
- (FM Radio) WHTX, 3WS, WHYW, WDSY and WAMO
- (TV) WTAE, KDKA and WPXI

The District may enact a Flexible Instructional Day (FID) in the event of a short-term school closure when a circumstance arises that prevents instruction in the traditional manner. The District is granted up to five FID days each year by the State of Pennsylvania Department of Education to use in the event of a weather-related school closure or due to an inoperable school building. Instruction on FID days continue via planned lessons through our online learning platforms for grades K-12. Flexible Instructional Days count as student instructional days. Students will be required to log on via Microsoft TEAMS to follow their class schedule virtually for that day in order to receive attendance credit.

IN THE EVENT OF A DELAY, STUDENTS ARE NOT TO BE DROPPED OFF AT THE REGULAR TIME. Add two hours to your child's regular morning bus schedule, as that is the time the bus should arrive when there is a two-hour delay. On a two-hour delay schedule, the school building opens

to students at 10:45 AM, and the late bell will ring at 11:05 AM. Please note that breakfast is NOT served on delay days.

IN THE EVENT OF A DISTRICT-ANNOUNCED SCHOOL CLOSING, the days missed as a result of such a closing WILL NOT BE COUNTED as student absences and subsequently not recorded on the attendance register. These days will be made up at some point in time throughout the remainder of the school year.

Closing the schools in an emergency will be for a one-day period. IF SCHOOL IS TO REMAIN CLOSED THE FOLLOWING DAY, ANNOUNCEMENTS WILL BE MADE TO THAT EFFECT EACH DAY. IF THERE IS NO ANNOUNCEMENT, PARENT/GUARDIANS SHOULD ASSUME THAT SCHOOL IS OPEN AND OPERATING.

You can also retrieve recorded messages regarding school delays and cancellations by dialing (412) 793-7000 or visit the Penn Hills School District website at www.phsd.org.

SECURITY

School safety is important. Penn Hills Elementary is a secure campus. Onsite security guards and our closed-circuit camera system support our efforts to keep students and staff safe each day. We also work cooperatively with the Penn Hills Police Department.

Our driveway booth will be manned daily by a security guard. The entrance gate will be secured from 9:30 am to 3 pm, limiting unauthorized access to our school.

Visitors who wish to gain access to our school building will be asked to comply with our security guidelines and directives. Only authorized personnel and visitors are permitted on campus during school hours. Visitors wishing to enter the school building will be subject to a search of their person and belongings through a metal detector.

Additionally, students entering the school building during morning arrival may be subject to a search of their belongings via the use of metal detectors. Students from five buses, along with random car riders, will be selected each morning to enter the building through metal detectors. The District reserves the right to expand the use of metal detectors throughout the year as District security protocols are reviewed and revised.

Desk/Cubbies/Bookbag Searches

The Board acknowledges the need for safe in-school storage of books, clothing, school materials, and other personal property and will provide student cubbies and desks for such storage.

All student bookbags/belongings will also be subject to a daily inspection by classroom teachers as part of their morning arrival routine. This procedure ensures that only necessary instructional materials are brought to school. Toys and other non-instructional devices are prohibited.

Desks and other storage areas are and shall remain the property of the school district. No student may store a substance or object which is prohibited by law or district regulations, or which constitutes a threat to health, safety, or welfare of the occupants of the school building or the building itself. Student cubbies and desks can be searched at the administrative discretion.

Qmlative (SKYWARD) PARENT/GUARDIAN WEB PORTAL

The Qmlative (Skyward) Parent/Guardian Portal gives Parent/Guardians the ability to set shortcuts to the information they care about. They can also sign up to receive timely notifications via email or family access center – all linked from our website under Parent/Guardian access. Parents/Guardians can quickly see a consolidated and personalized view of each child's grades and attendance record – even if multiple children attend different schools in the district.

Parent/Guardian access to student accounts is available for students enrolled in grades K to 12.
FERPA NOTICE

To request an activation code for **Qmlative** (**Skyward) Parent/Guardian Web Portal** or **School Messenger's Contact Manager**, please contact us using one the following methods:

1) Call 412-793-7000 – select option 8, and extension 1450. Leave your student(s) name and ID number(s), your phone number and the program(s) you need the activation code(s) for or that you have questions about.
2) Send an email to skyHelp@phsd.org. Include the following information, your student(s) name and ID number, your phone number and the program you need the activation code for or that you have questions about.
3) Mail a note to the following address, include your student(s) name and ID number, your phone number and the program you need the activation code for or that you have questions about:

   Attention: Technology Department/Student Information Help
   Penn Hills School District
   260 Aster Street
   Pittsburgh, PA 15235

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Penn Hills School District Special Education Department offers a continuum of services for students with intellectual, behavioral and emotional disabilities. Our PHSD Special Education Department also oversees Gifted Support, as well as Medical Service Plans (504 Plans).

Child Find Notice

Procedural Safeguards Notice

Programs for Eligible or Protected Handicapped Students:

Individualized services and programs are available for children who are determined to need specially designed instruction due to the following conditions:
• Autism/pervasive development disorder
• Blindness or visual impairment
• Deafness or hearing impairment
• Developmental delay
• Intellectual Disability
• Multi-handicapped
• Neurological impairment
• Other health impairments
• Physical disability
• Emotional disturbance
• Specific learning disability
• Speech or language impairment

If you believe that your school-aged child may need special education services and related programs, or young child (age 3 to school-age) may need early intervention, screening and evaluation processes designed to assess the needs of the child and his/her eligibility are available to you at no cost. You may request screening and evaluation at any time, whether or not your child is enrolled in the District's public-school program. Requests for evaluation and screening are made in writing to the building principal, guidance counselor or teacher. Verbal requests will be followed with appropriate evaluation forms. In compliance with state and federal law, the Penn Hills School District will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services, or accommodations, which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability, which limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program. These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" are distinct from those applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs. For further information on the rights of parents and children, provision of services, evaluation, and screening (including purpose, time, and location), and rights to due process procedures, contact any building principal in writing.

Speech/Language Development

The Penn Hills School District speech and language therapy program is designed to help students with speech and language disorders. The speech therapist provides diagnosis and treatment for all speech and language disorders within the school district, referring special cases to appropriate outside resources, and informing both parents and professional personnel of the nature of speech therapy and speech problems.

Occupational Therapy

Students experiencing delays with fine motor development can be referred for an Occupational Therapy evaluation through our Special Education Department.

Gifted Support

A multi-step, standardized Child Find screening and evaluation procedure is utilized in the Penn Hills School District to identify students eligible for academic enrichment and enhancement through our Penn Hills School District Gifted Education Program. The Gifted Child Find process begins in the fall and is coordinated by our school counselors. Students in each grade K through 5 who pass the initial screening criteria through this process are then referred to a district school psychologist for further evaluation to determine eligibility for entry into the program.

STUDENT SERVICES

At Penn Hills Elementary School, we monitor academic and behavioral interventions in all grade levels through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program. This program provides interventions and supports to struggling students throughout the educational process. MTSS begins at Tier I with standard-aligned instruction and supportive interventions for all students. A universal screening of all students wherein classroom teachers and support personnel review data indicators, including academic assessments, discipline referrals, and attendance data allows our educational team to identify students in need of additional support and monitoring. Students' progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or both. Students may receive support with class work, organization, homework, test taking and/or behavior at Tier II via our many support personnel, including our Reading Specialist, Behavior Management Specialist, and/or School Counselors. The MTSS process strives to help students and their families learn strategies to overcome learning and behavioral difficulties. Students in need of the most intensive interventions at Tier III may be referred to a multi-disciplinary evaluation and/or ESAP (Elementary Student Assistance Program) services. Through the ESAP process, students and families can be connected to services within our community.

Elementary School Counseling Services

Elementary Guidance and Counseling services are defined through the Penn Hills School District Comprehensive Guidance Plan. The early identification of children in need of special attention is the main purpose of the elementary guidance program so that educational planning can be facilitated in the best interest of the child's school adjustment. Guidance and Counseling services at the elementary level include classroom lessons, as well as individual and small group sessions related to social and emotional development.

Behavior Support

Our Elementary Behavior Management Specialist (BMS) offers strategies and tips to teachers and Parent/Guardians for managing student behavioral concerns that impede the student's overall school success through Tier I and II of our Multi-Tiered System of Supports process. At Tier I, our BMS provides coaching support to teachers to help them identify and implement appropriate classroom and individual behavior interventions. At a Tier II level, our Behavior Management Specialist also works with individual students to help them build strong decision-making skills, as well as to learn to solve conflicts appropriately and to manage their feelings in safe ways.

Students requiring behavioral assistance at a Tier III, intensive level of supports, may be referred to our Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP) team for additional support.

Y.E.T. (Youth Engagement Team)

Youth Engagement Team work to support the social/emotional needs of our students. They work collaboratively with our building support services to help students regulate emotions, solve peer conflicts, and follow school expectations.

Elementary Student Assistance Program (ESAP)

Students struggling to achieve academic, behavioral and/or social success despite supports offered within the classroom or school setting may be referred through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports process to Tier III supports via our Elementary Student Assistance Program. Through this program, students and families are connected to support via Allegheny Children's Initiative, who contracts with the Penn Hills School District to provide ESAP services. Allegheny Children's Initiative can provide support to the student by assisting the student and his/her family by identifying risk factors, sharing positive school-based strategies, and providing referrals to additional outside agency resources.

Elementary Social Worker

Our elementary Social Worker provides support to students and families experiencing difficulties both within school and within the community. This support may include school attendance, residency concerns, foster care, homelessness, and other life-assistance programs.

If you are experiencing housing issues, including displacement from your current residence, please contact the Penn Hills School District Homeless Liaison for further consideration and support for your family. Our District Homeless Liaison is Ronay Austin. She can be reached at 412.793.7000 x7133. More information about the MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENTS ACT (2001) can be found at the end of this manual.

Reading Support

Through our School-Wide Title I Program, Reading Specialists provide support to students in Kindergarten through fifth grade who are identified in need of strategic (Tier II) or intensive (Tier III) reading support. Parents/guardians will be notified of their child's participation in intervention services involving our Reading Specialists. Our Reading Specialists also provide Tier I supports via weekly classroom lessons and collaboration with grade-level teachers.

ELL (English Language Learners)

Penn Hills School District offers a K-12 English as a Second Language (ELL) Program. The ELL program is designed to provide non-native, English-speaking students with the language skills they need to participate successfully in content area classes. To meet this goal, ELL instruction addresses the ELL and Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening to enable full participation. The emphasis placed on achieving benchmarks is adjusted to the needs of the individual student. An underlying objective is to provide a source of support as the student seeks to understand and adapt to his or her new cultural and academic setting. The ELL teacher works to develop an appreciation of the students' strengths within the school setting and to ensure full access to the range of educational opportunities available at the Penn Hills School District.

STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

Notify the Penn Hills Elementary School Office (x7102 or x7103) as soon as you know your child is leaving Penn Hills School District. There is a Withdrawal Form that needs to be completed and signed by the parent/guardian in order to process the withdrawal. This signed form allows the Penn Hills School District to release the student's educational documents to another school or district.

SUPPLIES

A limited amount of school supplies are provided by the school at no cost to the children. However, teachers may request donations of supplies and/or other needed items throughout the year. Commonly needed items include boxes of tissues, hand sanitizer, glue sticks, pencils, crayons, etc. Your willingness to donate to your child's classroom is greatly appreciated.

Student Agendas/Take-Home Folders

In second through fifth grade, student agendas are an important home-to-school connection. Students are expected to use their agendas to record assignments, tests and projects on a daily basis. In addition, teachers may utilize the agenda to communicate with parents/guardians. Please review and sign your child(ren)'s agenda nightly.

Students in all grades have been issued RED take-home folders to help them organize homework and important papers, including school flyers and PTO information, for transport to and from school. Please check your child(ren)'s take-home folder nightly.

TECHNOLOGY

The Penn Hills School District recognizes the importance of technology in the education of our students and provides computers, software and related resources such as the Internet to support comprehensive educational programs. All students in grades K-5 will be issued an electronic device from the Penn Hills School District. Students in grades K-5 will use iPads. Along with the device, students will also receive charging cords and protective cases. Students are responsible for the transportation of their device to/from school each day. Devices should be charged nightly at home.

All users of technology given access to District technological resources are required to exercise ethical, appropriate and responsible behavior as outlined in this Technology Code of Conduct. The ethical, appropriate, and responsible behaviors described will hence be referred to as acceptable use. Penn Hills School District holds the right to monitor student devices.

The Penn Hills School District reserves the right to limit, restrict, or extend technology use privileges and access to its resources. The use of technologies is a privilege that may be revoked for abusive conduct. Tampering with, vandalism of, unauthorized use of or inappropriate use of Penn Hills School District technologies is prohibited. Prohibited actions may occur on or off school property due to technological configurations. Violators, including those who assist another in the violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, restitution and/or prosecution (18 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 3953).

Responsible and Acceptable Use Guidelines

Users are responsible for acceptable use of all technology, computers, software, and passwords assigned to them along with any software files residing in their personal directories.
The following are considered to be examples, but not an all-inclusive list of **violations of acceptable use**. Each user will treat District technology, equipment, hardware and software in a responsible manner and **will not**:

1. Mistreat District technology, equipment, computers or software.
2. Alter, delete, damage, or copy any District computer file, database, or modify District computer configurations.
3. Attempt to illegally enter Penn Hills School District computer networks, circumvent data protection schemes, uncover/discover security loopholes, reveal their passwords to others or attempt to gain access to other users' accounts or passwords.
4. Copy personal software or unauthorized public domain software onto District stand-alone or network computers.
5. Create or introduce, run or install, or give to another, a program that invades, disrupts, absorbs, destroys or could result in eventual damage to a file, computer system, and

information network or in the reproduction of itself. This is directed toward, but not limited to, the classes of programs known as computer viruses, Trojan horses, and worms.

6. Originate, send or receive using District technologies profanity or vulgarities; derogatory and otherwise inappropriate messages or information such as: libelous statements; pornographic materials; cyber-bullying; pirated software; and destructive software.
7. Perform acts which are wasteful of technological resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others; or for any purpose not directly related to school activities.
8. Violate copyright and/or licensing agreements or violations of other federal, state and local statutes, ordinances and regulations relative to computer usage.
9. Perform acts of theft of equipment, time, services, software or supplies.
10. Use personal electronic communication devices for non-instructional purposes or to circumvent any school policy.

TITLE I SCHOOL-WIDE PROGRAM

Title I is a federally funded educational program. Penn Hills Elementary School is considered a school-wide Title I school. Academic supports are allotted for ALL students within our school.

TRANSPORTATION

Students in the Penn Hills School District are offered transportation services; however, parents/guardians may also opt to transport their children to and from school. Please refer to the Arrival and Dismissal sections of this handbook for further information regarding car rider procedures.

If students are transported via PHSD bussing services, students are expected to adhere to expected bus behavior. Parents/Guardians should reinforce bus safety rules and expectations as well. Bus riding is a privilege. It is recommended that an adult be present at the bus stop during morning and afternoon times.

Kindergarten students will NOT be dropped off at their bus stop without a parent/guardian/responsible adult present. According to the policy of the transportation department, if a bus driver finds a Kindergarten parent/guardian/responsible adult is not present, the driver will complete the route, then return to the bus stop one final time. If the parent/guardian/responsible adult is still not waiting, student will be brought back to Penn Hills Elementary School and a parent/guardian will be contacted. PARENT/GUARDIAN IS THEN RESPONSIBLE FOR PICKING UP STUDENT AT THE BUS GARAGE OR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

If the bus stop is inaccessible due to a community incident, then parents/guardians will be contacted to arrange a meeting location for pick up. Should parent/guardian be unable to contact, students will be brought back to Penn Hills Elementary School.

For further information or concerns regarding bus transportation, please contact the Bus Garage for Krise Transportation at 412-573-1224.

Pennsylvania School Bus Stopping Law

•When you meet or overtake a stopped school bus with red signal lights flashing and stop arm extended, you MUST STOP.
•When you approach an intersection where a stopped school bus with red signal lights flashing and stop arm extended, you MUST STOP.
•You MUST STOP at least ten (10) feet away from the school bus.
•You MUST WAIT until the red lights have stopped flashing and the stop arm has been withdrawn before moving.
•DO NOT MOVE until all the children have reached a place of safety.
•Family members and guardians ARE PROHIBITED from boarding the bus/van.

VIRTUAL LEARNING OPTIONS

The Penn Hills School District offers a Synchronous Virtual Learning (SVL) option for students in grades K-5. This instructional model allows students to work remotely from home following the same learning schedule as their grade-level peers. SVL students are assigned a grade-level homeroom and a Penn Hills Elementary teacher. Using our advanced classroom technology resources, the classroom teacher can connect the remote students to real-time instruction via Microsoft TEAMS videoconferencing platform.

Virtual learners are expected to follow the daily schedule of their onsite peers, as provided by the SVL classroom teacher. For attendance purposes, virtual students are required to attend the virtual meetings as outlined in the classroom schedule. Grades will be comprised of completed assignments in the online learning platforms, along with participation in daily meetings. Virtual learners are expected to attend meetings with cameras on; thusly we recommend that families identify a home learning area that is free from distraction and other household activity.

Families choosing this option will be provided with additional information regarding successful management and support of virtual learners. It is expected that an adult at home will be deemed the student's "Learning Coach" and be readily available throughout the school day to assist the child as needed.

Parents/guardians have the option to enroll their children in the SVL option each school year. If choosing this option, we ask that parents/guardian to commit to the SVL mode of instruction for at least one nine weeks. Student enrollment in/out of SVL can only occur at the end of a nine-week period.

The Penn Hills School District also offers an asynchronous virtual learning option through our Penn Hills Cyber Academy. This learning option allows students to navigate assigned academic

content following a flexible schedule. Students working in our PH Cyber Academy will still have contact with certified instructors as needed.

VISITORS and VOLUNTEERS

We invite our families and community members to participate in scheduled school activities; however, we ask that visitors and volunteers follow our school procedures as outlined below.

Our school campus will be closed to unauthorized visitors from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. Anyone arriving within those hours will be stopped at the entrance gate and greeted by Security to confirm their purpose on campus. Meetings with staff must be scheduled in advance; otherwise, the visitor will be denied access to the school. The security staff monitoring the driveway booth will have a record of daily meetings and other scheduled activities in order to properly confirm visitor arrival. Once a visitor's purpose has been confirmed, he/she will be issued a pass and permitted on our school's campus.

Anyone visiting Penn Hills Elementary MUST find a parking space in the visitor's lot located in the front of the school. Please do not park along the curb in front of the building. This area is clearly marked as a no parking zone and fire lane.

To maintain building security, all approved visitors must enter the building through the main entrance of Penn Hills Elementary. Upon entrance, visitors will be greeted by a member of our security staff. Visitors will be asked to present proper State-issued photo identification at this time as well. This identification will be run electronically through the Raptor Visitor Management System. All visitors will also be subject to a search of their persons and/or belongings, including the use of a metal detector. Once cleared by our security staff, visitors will be directed to the main office. Security will provide each visitor with a visitor's badge that must be worn/displayed on the visitor's clothing during his/her visit to our school. No visitor will be permitted access to the building, staff or students without presenting valid photo identification and obtaining security clearance. No visitor will be permitted to confer with a student without approval of a building principal.

Classroom visitations must be arranged in advance through the teacher and principal. A minimum of 24-hour notice is required. Visitors are only permitted to visit within the classroom in which their children are assigned. Visitors are to stay for a designated amount of time that does not exceed 30 minutes, unless otherwise determined by the principal. A staff member will accompany the visitor to the room and remain with him/her throughout the visit to answer any questions. To eliminate instructional disruptions, visitors are not permitted to interact with the students or teacher during the visit. NO audio or video recording is permitted.

Family members who are interested in volunteering for school activities must follow the guidelines of PHSD Policy #916. This policy defines the role of volunteers in our schools and outlines the necessary procedures that volunteers must follow. All volunteers are encouraged to obtain the following clearances: the Pennsylvania State Police (Act 34), the Child Abuse Clearance

from the Pennsylvania Department of Child Welfare (Act 151), the Federal Criminal History from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Act 114), the Mandated Reporter Training Part 1 (Act 126), and the Arrest/Conviction Report and Certification Form (Act 24). However, the policy also allows for a "guest" status of volunteers. A guest is a person who has been invited into the school for a single event and works directly under the supervision and direction of a teacher or administrator employed by PHSD. Guests do not provide direct services to students or have unsupervised contact with students. Guest volunteers cannot exceed 10 hours in a single school year and do not need to obtain clearances. Volunteers who work more than 10 hours in a school year, along with volunteers who participate in off-site field trips, are required to obtain the above-mentioned clearances. All volunteers shall be approved by the appropriate building administrator.

PENN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Our school-wide **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports Program (PBIS),** the Penn Hills Elementary Way to "BEE YOUR BEST," outlines the expectations for student behavior in all school environments. This program emphasizes four main expectations:

BEE Responsible
BEE Respectful
BEE Safe
BEE Kind

These expectations are reviewed daily by staff and discussed during weekly classroom community circles on **Way to BEE Wednesdays**. The expectations are reinforced by all staff with positive behavior recognition tickets, called **BEE YOUR BEST slips**. At the end of each month, the slips are tallied, and the student(s) in each classroom with the most slips become the classroom **MVBee's!** MVBee's attend a monthly celebration with the building principal. Bee Your Best slips are also used to randomly select students for monthly prizes. Our school-wide program also recognizes positive and appropriate behavior of classroom teams as well. Classrooms are awarded **HIVE pieces** by adults throughout the school when they exhibit our school-wide expectations as a classroom community. The classroom(s) in each grade level with the most HIVE pieces win celebrations every nine weeks.

Our school-wide expectations for the various school environments are shared throughout this manual via **behavioral matrices**. The matrices provide a visual reminder of the ways students can demonstrate respectful, responsible, safe, and kind behavior everywhere they go at Penn Hills Elementary.

It is the right of every student to participate in all teaching and learning activities in a safe school climate that is conducive to learning. In this environment, every student has the right to achieve

his/her maximum potential. Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work and adherence to school expectations and regulations. Students share, with the administration and faculty, a responsibility to develop this positive school climate so that everyone can experience success.

Restorative Practices

In conjunction with our school-wide PBIS program, we also practice Restorative Practices throughout our building.

Evidence has shown that exclusionary discipline practices in schools like suspensions have negative effects on students and schools alike. Restorative Practices is designed to advance achievement for all students by implementing and evaluating school-based relational climate and restorative practice programs at Penn Hills Elementary in our response to student behavior.

Restorative Practices supports teachers, students, and staff in efforts to enhance relational approaches through scripted daily morning and class circles that ultimately reduce the need for exclusionary discipline in schools. It integrates these approaches into existing school climate priorities and provides specialized personnel and school climate support (Restorative Practice Coordinator). We expect that decreases in school suspensions and increases in strong relationships will yield safer schools, improved academic outcomes, and reduced contact with criminal justice systems for youth.

Restorative Practices is constituted by a set of questions, which are always more transformative than definitive answers:

a. Who has been hurt and what are their needs?

b. Whose obligation is it to meet those needs (and what are their needs?)

c. Who else has been affected by this event?

d. What is a participatory process that engages all those impacted to decide what needs to be done?

Consequences and supports include but are not limited to: forms of mediation called Healing Circles (if agreed upon by all parties), teacher-student-parent meetings, interactions with a school counselor/social worker, communication with teachers as needed, referrals to the SAP teams and restorative practices (reflection/improvement statements, courses on topics related to the offense(s) or other restorative practices).

Restorative practices follow seven principles:

1. Meeting student needs

2. Providing accountability and support.

3. Making things right

4. Viewing conflict as a learning opportunity

5. Building healthy learning communities

6. Restoring relationships

7. Addressing power imbalances.

*It should be noted that punitive and restorative discipline can, and will be, used in tandem. However, each discipline infraction will involve a Restorative Practice, but not necessarily a punitive discipline practice. For example, when a student is returning from suspension they will, at a minimum, engage in a restorative reinstatement conversation.

Dress Expectations

Discretion and good judgment should be exercised in all phases of planning your school wardrobe. While the vast majority of our students consistently reflect good taste in the selection of apparel, extremes in dress by any individual will not be accepted.

The faculty and administration, acknowledging the rapidly changing mode of dress styles, will not attempt to pass judgement on each and every new style produced by the fashion world in an upcoming year. The following regulations provide an ongoing guide for the school year.

1. Neat, clean clothes are expected.
2. Hair must be kept clean as a matter of personal and public hygiene.
3. Tank type jerseys, mesh shirts, halter tops, muscle shirts and other types of see-through garments, as well as short shorts are not acceptable school attire.

4. Provocative or obscene printing and/or pictures on clothing and or any attire that displays tobacco/vapes/alcohol/drugs will not be permitted.
5. For health reasons, footwear must be worn at all times. Flip-flops create a breach of good safety practices and are strongly discouraged.
6. Headgear, such as hats, ski masks, facial coverings, caps and/or hoods, is to be removed upon entering the building and remain off throughout the school day.
7. Parents/guardians are expected to demonstrate good taste in their selection of appropriate attire for their child/children.
8. Students are not to wear outside coats and jackets to class.
9. Sunglasses are for outside use and will only be permitted inside with a medical excuse.
10. Appropriate athletic shoes are to be worn to participate in physical education class.

The school authorities have no intentions of dictating the quality of specific types of clothing to be worn but will reserve the right to govern the mode of dress and grooming. Students dressing in a manner not recommended will be sent to an administrator's office for appropriate intervention. There will be exceptions made for students who wear headgear or coverings for religious reasons.

It is also highly recommended that all outerwear clothing SHOULD BE CLEARLY LABELED WITH THE CHILD'S FIRST AND LAST NAME AND GRADE.

Kindergarten students should bring/keep an extra set of clothing in their book bags or room cubbies in case of spills or accidents.

Lunch/Cafeteria Expectations

Every student has the right to a safe, clean and enjoyable lunch environment. During lunch, students are also responsible to help maintain an enjoyable eating environment by utilizing good manners and cleaning up after themselves. Opened containers of food need to be discarded at the end of the lunch period, as no open food items can be taken from the cafeteria. Please review The Penn Hills Elementary Way to BEE expectations in the cafeteria for lunch behavior with your child(ren).

Students who do not act in ways that are expected of them will lose privileges. For example, in the cafeteria it is the right of every student to enjoy lunch in a clean, safe environment. It is a privilege to be able to sit with friends.



Recess Expectations

Students at each grade level are afforded the opportunity to enjoy both indoor and outdoor recess activities at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Multiple outdoor play areas are available for use by students, including the playground apparatus and multiple game zones. On inclement weather days, indoor recess activities are provided within the classrooms.

Recess is a privilege for students. At recess, students are expected to act in safe ways by using the playground equipment properly, maintaining self-control and following the directions of the adults in charge. Please see "The Penn Hills Elementary Way to BEE" student expectations matrix below to review the behavioral expectations at recess and on the playground. Choosing to act in irresponsible, inappropriate ways will result in the loss of playground and recess privileges.

Toys from home are not permitted in the school building because of the disruption they cause. Toys brought to school will be removed from the student(s) and held by the teacher for Parent/Guardian pick-up. It is understood that students may bring in toy-like items for class presentations/projects. These items should be accompanied by a note from the teacher and/or Parent/Guardian. Please remember that under no circumstances should toy guns or other toy weapons be brought into school, as disciplinary action will automatically occur as per the Penn Hills School District weapons policy.

The Penn Hills Elementary Way to "Bee Your Best"

my goal • my best
your goal • your best
our goal • our best

The Expectations for the Playground	
Responsible	Follow directions of adults Solve problems the Penn Hills Elementary Way Be a good role model Stay with assigned adult Stop play when whistle blows
Respectful	Take turns Share Be a good sport
Safe	Use equipment properly/follow safety rules Be AWARE of others Be IN CONTROL of your body Stay in your "BUBBLE" SAFE HANDS & FEET Line up the Penn Hills Elementary Way VOICES OFF
Kind	Use FRIENDLY WORDS & VOICES Include everyone

The Penn Hills Elementary Way to "Bee Your Best"

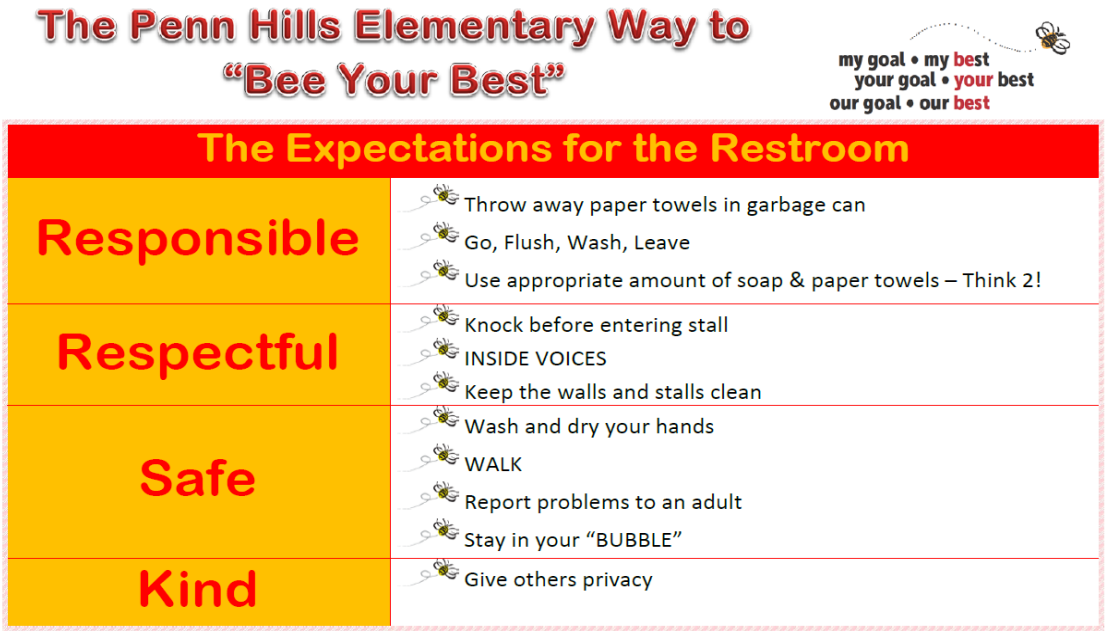
my goal • my best
your goal • your best
our goal • our best

The Expectations for Indoor Recess	
Responsible	FOLLOW DIRECTIONS of ALL adults Use U.W.A.I.T. strategies to solve problems Be a good ROLE MODEL CLEAN UP immediately when signaled
Respectful	TAKE TURNS SHARE Be a GOOD SPORT INSIDE VOICES
Safe	Be AWARE of others Be IN CONTROL of your body Stay in your "BUBBLE" Choose APPROPRIATE and CALM indoor activities to play
Kind	Use FRIENDLY WORDS & VOICES INCLUDE everyone

Restroom Expectations

School restrooms are a reflection of student respect for the school environment. Students are expected to act in responsible and respectful ways within the school's restrooms and to use proper hygiene and maintenance practices when using the restrooms. These behaviors include flushing the toilets, discarding used towels in the garbage can, and acting with care when washing hands so that water does not splash to the floor creating a safety hazard. Teachers

provide group restroom breaks for their classes throughout the day, but students may use the restroom for emergencies at other times.



Bus Expectations

It is the right of every student to have a safe and enjoyable ride to and from school. However, it is not the student's right to be transported to and from school. **It is a privilege to be transported to and from school.**

While waiting at the bus stop, students are expected to behave in a responsible and safe manner.

Waiting for the Bus:

1. Be at the proper bus stop on time, 5 to 10 minutes before the expected arrival of the bus, but no more than 10 minutes.
2. Refrain from defacing or destroying property at the stop and in the neighborhood on the way to the stop.
3. Stand and wait for the bus in the designated area, not on private property.
4. Wait for your bus for no more than thirty (30) minutes beyond the expected arrival time.

Boarding the Bus:

1. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the red flashing lights come on and board the bus in an orderly manner.

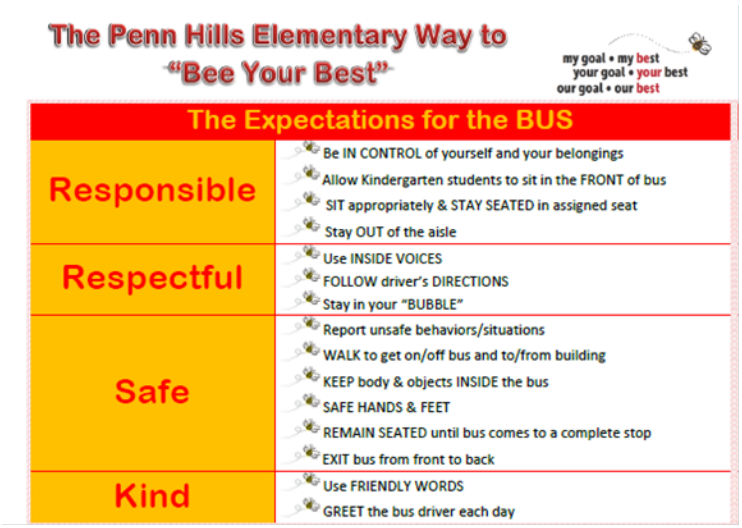
2. If you must cross the roadway to board the bus, wait for the signal from the bus driver to cross safely.
3. Be seated promptly to the satisfaction of your bus driver.

On the Bus:

1. Stay in your seat.
2. For your personal safety, hands, arms, head and personal belonging are not to be extended beyond the bus window.
3. You will use an “inside voice" (only to be heard within 12 inches).
4. Fighting is prohibited.
5. Eating, drinking, and gum chewing are prohibited on the bus.
6. Use acceptable language at all times.
7. Refrain from throwing objects around the bus or out of the bus window.
8. Refrain from defacing or destroying bus equipment.
9. Live animals cannot be transported to and from school on the bus.
10. Items including hockey sticks, ball bats, soccer balls, football, etc. are not to be transported on the bus unless permission is granted in writing by your teacher and principal. You will have to show the permission slip to the bus driver.

Departure from the Bus:

1. Remain seated until the bus comes to a complete stop, INCLUDING UPON ARRIVAL TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING EACH MORNING.
2. Exit the bus from front to back.
3. If you must cross the roadway after exiting the bus, wait for a signal from the driver to do so.
4. Walk directly from the bus to your classroom or directly to your home.



Bus Misconduct Consequences

Failure to follow school rules and regulations while on a school bus is reported to the administration through **Bus Conduct Reports** provided by the bus driver and/or bus monitor. The building principal/administrative staff will review and investigate each reported incident. Consequences for bus misbehavior will be based on the severity of each incident. Consequences may include verbal warning, assigned seating, Parent/Guardian conference, bus behavior contract, detention, "Bus School" lessons coordinated by our School Counselors, and/or suspension of bus riding privileges. Frequent recurrences of misbehavior will result in more restrictive consequences.

Student bus conduct will be reviewed each grading period. Continued misconduct may result in the permanent loss of bus riding privileges for the remainder of the school year. For any misconduct that results in damage to property, the parent/guardian may also be responsible for monetary restitution as billed by the bus company.

When students are issued bus suspensions, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to transport or make transportation arrangements for his/her child to and from school on the dates of the suspension. STUDENTS MUST BE PICKED UP FROM PENN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BY 4:00 PM.

PENN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT
CODE OF DISCIPLINE and RESPONSIBILITIES

It is our intention that the issuance of any type of disciplinary action assigned to a student is based on factual evidence after a complete and thorough investigation of the situation at hand by the administrative team/individual. The administrative team believes that by using Restorative Practices aligned to our school-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program, students will have ample opportunities to learn from their mistakes and refrain from behaviors that can be unsafe and/or disruptive to the learning environment. However, we do recognize that some student behaviors may escalate in severity, frequency, and duration. At that point, more formal disciplinary measures may be assigned as a consequence.

Philosophy of the Disciplinary Code

The philosophy of the Penn Hills School District is based upon the fundamental belief that as educators we are responsible for providing each individual with opportunities to mature intellectually, creatively, emotionally, socially, ethically, and physically. Individuals can grow within this spectrum only if they are encouraged to identify and develop their unique abilities and interests.

Significant progress toward educational goals can only occur in a positive learning environment wherein mutual respect, self-discipline and restraint, security, equality and faith are active ingredients in the dynamics of human relationships. Individual rights and freedoms are inherent in a democratic society, but individuals can be free only to the extent that they accept responsibility

for their actions and recognize that their actions must not violate the freedoms and opportunities of others.

Purpose of Disciplinary Code

Teachers, administrators, and school officials are charged by the Penn Hills Board of School Directors to maintain good order and discipline in the schools. Students who choose to evade their responsibility for good school citizenship and behavior will be disciplined consistent with the policies in place. Discipline in a school means that teaching-learning activities are conducted in an orderly manner so that the goals of education can be realized with maximum efficiency. Proper conduct makes it possible for interaction with people, particularly as it relates to the best use of educational processes. Behavior that disrupts teaching and learning is harmful not only to the persons involved in disturbance, but also to others, and ultimately to society in general.

Goals of the Disciplinary Code

1. Guarantee the rights of each individual through fair and reasonable treatment.
2. Teach self-discipline by clearly communicating to students their rights and responsibilities.
3. Respect the rights and personal dignity of all students and staff by providing a safe and desirable school environment.
4. Comply with federal, state and local laws.
5. Protect and maintain school property.
6. Ensure all students the "right to learn".
7. Reduce the occurrence of discipline problems.
8. Consistently apply the disciplinary options that are identified equally to all students.

A task force of School Board Directors, School Administrators, Teachers, Parent/Guardians and Students compiled the following code to ensure a reasonable and consistent administration of discipline procedures.

Authority According to the Code

Section 1317 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code states:

"Every teacher, vice-principal and principal in the public schools shall have the right to exercise the same authority over the pupils attending this school, during the time they are in attendance, including the time required in going to and from their homes, as the parents, guardians or persons in parental relation to such pupils may exercise over them." (In loco parentis)

Student Misconduct

In accordance with our PBIS system, student behavior is categorized as Staff-Managed or Administrator-Managed. Staff-managed student behaviors generally falls under Level I offenses in the PHSD Code of Conduct.

Level I misbehavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Classroom disruptions
- Disrespectful speech and/or actions
- Unsafe play at recess
- Non-compliance with teacher directions
- Lying
- Inappropriate language

Staff members are responsible for responding to these type of student misbehaviors using classroom-based interventions which may include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal redirection
- Parent/Guardian notification
- Community Circle/Meeting
- Seating change
- Team Time Out
- Loss of recess, supervised by teacher
- Classroom Behavioral Contract/Behavior Chart

Student misbehavior categorized as Level II may include a continuation of Level I behaviors that remains unresponsive to classroom-level interventions and supports. These behaviors may require additional support from our School Counselors, Behavior Management Specialist, and/or YET team personnel. Level II behaviors may also result in the need for an administrator's intervention.

Level III behaviors are more serious, as they may be directed against persons or property and may endanger the health and/or safety of others in the school. Examples of these behaviors may include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting
- Threats to other students or school personnel
- Vandalism
- Theft/possession of stolen property
- Sexual Harassment
- Bullying

Responses to Level III behaviors may include:

- Restorative Circles
- Administrative Lunch/Recess Detentions
- Assigned Time to B.E.E. Intervention
- Out-of-school suspension
- Student and/or Family Mediation
- Removal from class
- Referral to outside agencies
- Restitution of school property and damages resulting from misconduct
- Removal of extra-curricular participation privileges

Level IV behaviors constitute more violent acts against persons or property posing a direct threat to the safety of others. These acts are clearly criminal and are so serious that they always require administrative actions, which result in the immediate removal of the student from school, the intervention of law enforcement authorities, and action by the Board of School Directors.

Examples of Level IV behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Continuation of Level III behavior
- Assault/battery on school personnel and/or other students
- Possession of or attempts to transport tools of the trade (razors, hammers, utility knives, etc.) into or out of the school building and/or school buses
- Vandalism
- Possession/use/transfer of weapons or look-alike weapons
- Arson
- Tampering with fire alarm
- Possession of illegal substances

Disciplinary actions by the principal will include notification to parent/guardians via phone call and in writing.

The administrator initiates disciplinary action by investigating the infraction and conferring with staff. The administrator meets with the student and confers with the Parent/Guardian about the student's misconduct and resulting disciplinary action. Parent/Guardian conference is mandated. A complete and accurate report is submitted to the Superintendent through the division director. Student is given a full due process hearing.

Definitions

- **Administrative Detention**

  Building Administrators assign and supervise for up to 30 minutes during student's designated lunch time.

- **B.E.E. HIVE Time**

  Students are assigned to Behavior Expectation Education (B.E.E) time when repeated patterns of negative behavior are displayed or as a consequence for Administrator-Managed behaviors as an alternate to suspension as determined by Building Administrator. The goal of B.E.E. HIVE is for students to learn/practice appropriate school behaviors.

- **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)**

  A principal may give exclusion from school for a period of 1 to 10 consecutive school days. The student and Parent/Guardian are informed of the reasons for the suspension and given

an opportunity to make up exams and work missed. Students are not eligible to attend school-sponsored activities and may not be on school property when suspended out-of-school. If a student is suspended for multiple days that include both a Friday and Monday, he/she is ineligible to participate in school-sponsored activities hosted that weekend.

- **Expulsion**

Expulsion is removal from school for such a period of time as determined by the Penn Hills Board of School Directors and during which the Parent/Guardian must provide or have the district provide educational services for students under the age of 18 years

- **Bullying/Cyber Bullying**

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in and/or outside a school setting that is severe, persistent or pervasive. Bullying shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following acts:

- Physically harming a student (e.g., hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, and invading one's personal space in an aggressive manner).
- Damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property.
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm.
- Placing a student in emotional unrest by spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships or environment, engaging in social exclusion, extortion, intimidation, and ridicule.
- Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities
- Creating verbal statements or written remarks that are taunting, malicious threatening or sexual.
- Bullying as defined in this policy shall include cyber bullying.

At Penn Hills Elementary, bullying and bully-like behaviors will not be tolerated. All students are expected to treat one another with respect, kindness, and fairness. Whether verbal, physical, emotional, or relational, bullying has a negative effect on the educational environment and is strictly prohibited on school property. Staff and students will be provided with resources to help identify and manage bullying behaviors. Reports of bullying will be investigated and reported using the PHSD Bullying and Harassment Reporting Form. Students who are found bullying will be given consequences as defined by the Code of Student Conduct of the Penn Hills School District.

Our anti-bullying rules are:

1. We will NOT bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will include others who are left out.
4. If we know that someone is being bullied, we will tell an adult at home and at school.

- **Harassment**

Harassment shall consist of verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, national origin/ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Sexual harassment shall consist of unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other inappropriate verbal, written, graphic or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Step 1 – Reporting

A student or third party who believes she/he has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report the incident to the building principal or a district employee.

A school employee who suspects or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the building principal.

If the building principal is the subject of a complaint, the student, third party or employee shall report the incident direct to the Compliance Officer.

The complainant or reporting employee is encouraged to use the report form available from the building principal, but oral complaints shall be acceptable.

Step 2 – Investigation

Upon receiving a complaint of unlawful harassment, the building principal shall immediately notify the Compliance Officer. The Complaint Officer shall authorize the building principal to investigate the complaint, unless the building principal is the subject of the Complaint or is unable to conduct the investigation. The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation. The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

Step 3 – Investigative Report

The building principal shall prepare a written report within fifteen (15) days, unless additional time to complete the investigation is required. The report shall include a summary of the investigation, a determination of whether the complaint

has been substantiated as factual and whether it is a violation of this policy, and a recommended disposition of the complaint.
Findings of the investigation shall be provided to the complainant, the accused, and the Compliance Officer.

Step 4 – District Action

If the investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the district shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur.

Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with the Code of Discipline and Responsibilities, Board policies and district procedures applicable collective bargaining agreements, and state and federal laws.

If it is concluded that a student has knowingly made a false complaint under this policy, such student shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Appeal Procedure

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with a finding of no violation of the policy or with the corrective action recommended in the investigative report, she/he may submit a written appeal to the Compliance Officer within fifteen (15) days.

2. The Compliance Officer shall review the investigation and the investigative report and may also conduct a reasonable investigation.

3. The Compliance Officer shall prepare a written response to the appeal within fifteen (15) days. Copies of the response shall be provided to the complainant, the accused and the building principal who conducted the initial investigation.

- **Weapons**

A weapon is defined but not limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, look-alike gun, and/or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. A student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student; in the student's locker; under the student's control while s/he is on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school; or while the student is on his/her way to or from school. Upon entering school, if students feel that they may have items on their person that are in violation of our weapons policy, they must immediately turn those items into the principal for appropriate action.

*****In accordance with Act 26, the Safe Schools Act, the school district shall expel for a period of not less than one (1) year any student who violates the weapons policy. Such expulsion shall be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law.**

Penn Hills School District

ACT 145 and ACT 26 – STATEMENT OF AWARENESS--2026 – 2027

We are aware of the Penn Hills School District Code of Discipline and Responsibilities and ACT 145 of 1996 that prohibits possession or use of tobacco in schools.

We know that the law defines possession or use of tobacco productors or smokeless tobacco by a student in a school building, a school bus or on school property owned by, leased by or under the control of a school district as a summary offense.

The disciplinary action is a three (3) day out-of-school suspension and a summary offense citation. The student may be sentenced to pay a fine of no more than $50.00 for the benefit of the school district. If a hearing is held before the District Magistrate, court costs may be added.

We are also aware of the Penn Hills School District Code of Discipline and Responsibilities and ACT 26 of 1995 (Safe Schools Act).

We know that possession/use/transfer of weapon(s), or "look alike" weapon(s) on school property or at school functions is prohibited and will result in suspension from school, a hearing, and an expulsion for a period of not less than one year.

Weapon is defined, but not limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tools, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, look-alike gun, and /or any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. A student is in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student, in the student's locker, the school, at any school function or activity, at any school event held away from the school, or while the student is on his/her way to or from school.

Upon entering school, if students feel that they may have items on their person, which are in violation of our weapons policy, they must immediately turn those items into the principal for appropriate action.

**Signatures and acceptance are done electronically each year when updating Skyward as prompted at the beginning of each school year.*

Penn Hills School District
Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia Policy

School Board Policy #227- prohibits students from possessing, using and selling drugs and/or alcohol or look-alike substances on school property. This policy can be located on the district's webpage at **https://www.phsd.org/school-board/policies**

PHSD STUDENT MEDIATION AGREEMENT DISCLOSURE

2026- 2027 SCHOOL YEAR

This mediation agreement disclosure is to advise all parents and / or guardians of Penn Hills School District students that your child may be asked to participate in a mediation to resolve a conflict or problem he/she may be having. All mediations will be done with a certified mediator (guidance counselor, home school visitor, dean of students or principal) during the school day. Parents and / or guardians of both parties will be notified prior to and after the mediation process is completed and will be advised of the terms / conditions of the mediation agreement.

Both parties mutually agree that there is no reason why this agreement should not last and be binding for the foreseeable future based on face-to-face discussions, mutual good faith, and the following specific provisions.

Note: Participation in the mediation process is not in lieu of disciplinary actions that may result from the conflict.

Should your child participate in a mediation program he/she will operate under the PHSD Student Mediation Program guidelines / procedures.

MEDIATION SERVICES

PHSD STUDENT MEDIATION PROGRAM GUIDELINES / PROCEDURES

1. I voluntarily agree to participate in the mediation process and:
    - ***a.*** Make a good faith effort to resolve the conflict.
    - ***b.*** Keep all mediation communications confidential.
    - ***c.*** Listen to the person speaking without interruption.
    - ***d.*** Speak without name calling, using abusive language or making threats of any kind.
    - ***e.*** Conduct myself in a way that does not physically harm or threaten to physically harm anyone present at the mediation or any physical property.
2. I understand that the PHSD Student Mediation Program is not providing me with legal representation or counseling.
3. I understand that mediation communication and documents are confidential and under Pennsylvania law are inadmissible in a court of law. I understand that the PHSD Student Mediation Program keeps strict confidentiality. Any telephone discussions with the staff before the mediation and any discussions during the mediation itself or during the follow-up will not be used during subsequent proceedings or reported to others, EXCEPT IN THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:
    - ***a.*** Threats of bodily harm or property damage or conduct that causes direct bodily injury to a person.
    - ***b.*** Written mediated agreement, when introduced in a proceeding that enforces the agreement, unless the mediated agreement states that it is not intended to be legally binding.
    - ***c.*** To have a mediated agreement reached because of fraudulent communication set aside.
4. I understand that all materials contained in the PHSD Student Mediation Program files are confidential and that only copies of the agreement or correspondence directly addressed to me can be released to me.
5. I release the PHSD Student Mediation Program, its mediators, staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers from any liability concerning this mediation.

I have read or had read to me all the above and I freely and knowingly agree to the terms stated above, to mediate and keep confidential any information disclosed to me during the mediation.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Signed: _____ Date: _____
Signed: _____ Date: _____
Signed: _____ Date: _____

Witnessed by:
Mediator: _____ Date: _____
Mediator: _____ Date: _____

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION ASSISTANCE IMPROVEMENTS ACT (2001)

LAWS COVERING SERVICES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:
In 1887, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act became law. This is the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problems of homelessness in America. In 2001, the act was included in No Child Left Behind and is now titled "The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001."
In 1988, the Pennsylvania Department of Education established the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.
The key mandate of these laws is to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with other children.

WHO QUALIFIES?
"Children and youth experiencing homelessness" means children who have no fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. They may be found in the following situations:

- Public or private shelters.
- Public or private places not designated for/or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations such as vehicles, parks, motels, campgrounds, etc.
- Living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter.
- Individuals and/or families living with relatives or friends due to lack of housing.
- Living in transitional housing programs.
- Children of migrant families who lack adequate housing.
- Children abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care.
- Unaccompanied youth (under age 18) and children who have been abandoned or forced out of the home by parents or other caretakers. They may be in temporary shelters awaiting assistance from social service agencies or may live alone on the street or move from place to place among family members, friends, or acquaintances. This also includes such youth from 18-21 of age who may still be eligible for educational services in regular or special education.

THE RIGHTS OF STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:

- School Choice (If a student becomes homeless during the academic year or between academic years, they may continue in their "school of origin" for the rest of that year if this is in the best interest of the student.)
- Eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunches
- Eligibility for Title I support services
- Transportation services arranged by Penn Hills School District
- Home/School Visitor (School Social Worker) to support and provide resources for the family.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP:
If you feel you and your family are experiencing homelessness, please contact our homeless liaison, school principal or school counselor in order to receive appropriate services.
Ronay Austin, Penn Hills School District Homeless Liaison—412.793.7000 x7133
Nicole Anderson, Allegheny Intermediate Unit—412.394.5700
The PA Dept. of Education Homeless Children and Youth Program—717.783.6466

THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

In June of 2019, legislation was enacted to assist schools in creating safer environments. One of three acts, Article XIII-E, Threat Assessment was added to the Pennsylvania School Code. The law states that each school entity shall establish at least one threat assessment team. In accordance with the legislation, the School Safety and Security Committee (SSSC), Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), and key stakeholders from across Pennsylvania developed model procedures and guidance materials to help local schools establish and operate threat assessment teams.

The Superintendent has appointed members to four threat assessment teams, one for each building in addition to one that encompasses the entire district. All team members have received extensive training provided by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. At Linton Middle School, the team is comprised of the building principal, the associate principals, the school psychologist, the school social worker, school counselors, nurses, counselors and security.

What is a threat? A threat is a communication or behavior that indicates an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others. The threat may be expressed/communicated behaviorally, orally, visually, in writing, electronically, or through any other means. These actions can be considered a threat regardless of whether they are observed by or communicated directly to the target of the threat or observed by a third party, and regardless of whether the target of the threat is aware of the threat.



my goal • my best
your goal • your best
our goal • our best