

Penn Elementary School

2023-2024

Parent/Student Handbook



Believe • Achieve • Succeed

12980 Queen Chapel Road
Woodbridge, VA 15192
703-590-0344

<https://pennes.pwcs.edu>

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Introduction

Penn Elementary School

12980 Queen Chapel Road • Woodbridge, VA 22193
703-590-0344 • FAX 703-590-528 • pennes.pwcs.edu

Dr. Elliot F. Bolles, Principal
Margaret Simpson, Assistant Principal
Christy Parthenakis, Assistant Principal

Dear Penn Families,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year. We are eagerly waiting the arrival of our students and families as we embark on a brand-new year full of amazing learning and awesome opportunities. If you are new to Penn, WELCOME! You will soon find out what makes Penn Elementary a special community of staff, students, and families where diversity is honored and celebrated.

As a staff, we have developed a Vision and Mission built on embracing all students and striving for academic success for each student. The individual classrooms develop and set goals and expectations for academic performance and behavior throughout the year

One PWCS's goals for the year is to decrease **chronic absences**.

“Children who do not show up for school regularly miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build good attendance habits that will carry them through college and careers. Studies have shown that chronic absenteeism beginning in kindergarten and as early as prekindergarten were far less likely to read proficiently by the end of third grade. When the problem persists for over a year, it can increase the prediction of lower test scores, poor attendance, and retention in later grades. [AttendanceWorks®](#)”

On behalf of the faculty, PTO, custodians, cafeteria personnel, and bus drivers at Penn Elementary School, I would like to welcome you to a new school year. I look forward to seeing you throughout the year. Please stay in close contact with your child's teacher and refer to the division and school web sites for the latest information. If you have any questions or concerns, please call 703-590-0344 or email me at bollesef@pwcs.edu.

Sincerely,
Dr. Elliot F. Bolles
Principal

Believe Achieve Succeed



School Overview

Brief History of Penn



Penn Elementary opened its doors in September 1998. The school was named after Sonnie P. Penn (1946-1996). He was a tremendous role model and known for inspiring large numbers of students to achieve greatness. Mr. Penn was an educator for 20 years, the assistant principal at Enterprise Elementary, and an active leader in the community.

Penn prides itself with having strong family and community connections and is known for its diversity. According to Niche, it is the 5th most diverse elementary school in the state of Virginia and the 2nd most diverse school in all of Prince William County. We have families from over 90 different countries and more than 35 languages are spoken! In our main hallway, there are flags hung to represent the students, families, and staff.

Penn's colors are navy blue and teal and its mascot is the Panther.



Mission and Vision

Vision

Penn embraces every student and believes that each will achieve academic success.

Believe Achieve Succeed

Mission

- Penn Elementary teachers and staff will encourage students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers by providing a challenging curriculum through hands-on and technology-enhanced learning.
- Penn Elementary's community of parents, students, and staff will collaborate to celebrate diversity, promote inclusivity, and provide equity to develop responsible world citizens with a growth mindset.
- Penn Elementary will use data-driven instruction to set high expectations and positive reinforcement to instill confidence, responsibility, and ownership in their learning.
- Penn Elementary will be a school that nurtures integrity, honesty, compassion, kindness, and a safe environment to create a school where all students feel safe to contribute.

Staff

Administration

Dr. Elliot Bolles-Principal
Margo Simpson-Assistant Principal
Christy Parthenakis-Assistant Principal

Front Office

Angela Ramirez – Office Assistant
Diane Liming - Registrar
Kathy Dove – Finance Specialist
Joanne Morgan – Administrative Assistant
Itzi Berraondo – Parent Liaison
Catherine Lucas – Nurse
TBD-Security Assistant

Counselors

Sylvia Chmelko
Erin Schneider
Rachel Abraham – Part Time

VPI

Amanda Blair

Kindergarten

Janae Fisher
Elizabeth Halleib
Abril Roa
Stacy Seigfried

First Grade

Nahid Aemal
Elizabeth Bebee
Lee Brosius
Sabrina Sanchez
Sara Switzer

Second Grade

Keisha Johnson
Tammy Scott
Christina Silver
Rukhshinda Tabassum
Kayleigh D'Abadie

Third Grade

Jane Broome
Erica Fitzgerald
Yeheda Hemnarain
Calayna Lane

Fourth Grade

Deena Lee
Quincey Matthew
Rania Sheats
Kenly Thompson

Fifth Grade

Jason Hemnarain
Deborah Henry
Erin Karicher
Paromita Saha
Christina Visagie

Encore

Jessica Aivars – Music
Catherine Harrison - ITC
Kristyn Piazza - PE
Lily Pipher – Art
Judy Swank – Library
Jill Van Hook - PE

Special Education

Tammy Delene - PreK
Christy Clayborne – PreK
Karima Chalouati-PreK
Cat Amin
Melissa Gogel
Kelly Johnson
Candace Hopkins
Christine McCafferty
Atal Naim
Katie Sihrer
Kelly Tully
Laura Bartenstein – Speech
Christina Pisa-Relli – Psychologist
Rachel Wright-Social Worker
Amanda Davis - Diagnostician

ESOL

Hui Laspee
Rachel Latham
Lydia Mockabee
Brooke Wallace

Reading Specialist

Casie Gast

Reading

Renee Lombardo
Noelia Sandoval
Syed

Gifted

Mary Beth McHugh

Teacher Assistants

Sandra Alvarez - VPI
Nadine Blot - Library
Ana Daniel – Special Education
Nancy Gaytan – PreSchool
Kenya Harris-Roa – Special Education
Sherry Hedding – Special Education
Kamilla Heywood – Special Education
Nathaniel Hicks – Special Education
Rashida Hicks – Special Education
Chloe Huber – Kindergarten
Portia Johnson – Special Education
Ciera Maxwell - Kindergarten
Amy Northrop – Kindergarten
Neetha Panduranga-PreSchool
Velky Reyes – Kindergarten
Lindsey Rogers – Special Education

Other Staff

Todd Gholar – TSPEC
Jessica Poblete – Cafeteria Hostess
Patricia Varela – Cafeteria Hostess
Ana Martinez – Custodial Manager
Ana Alvarez – Custodian
Jessica Canales Velasquez- Custodian



Procedural Information

Attendance

Absences ([PWCS Attendance Information](#))

It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to see that their child attends school on time, every single day. Children who often are absent from school miss fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build good attendance habits that will carry them through high school. Studies have shown that students who are chronically absent beginning in kindergarten were far less likely to be reading on grade level by the end of third grade.

In Section 22.1-258 of the Code of Virginia states, "Whenever any student fails to report to school on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the student's parent/guardian is aware of the student's absence, the parent/guardian will be notified by the school." Penn's office staff will attempt to reach the phone numbers on the emergency list to verify the absence.

If your child is going to be absent, we ask that you call the school at 703-590-0344 before school starts. Please send a note with your child when they come back explaining why they were absent. All absences/ tardies will be entered as unexcused unless a written note and/or phone call is received to verify the absence/tardy.

Regarding extended absences, in accordance with PWCS Regulation 724-1, "In order for any prearranged absences to be classified as excused, principals shall be notified in writing within a reasonable amount of time prior to the absence." Parents will be strongly encouraged to schedule family trips during school holidays. Prearranged absences that extend beyond 15 school days will result in the withdrawal of the student from school. In this situation, parents would be required to re-enroll their child. Excessive prearranged absences may result in absences being unexcused.

Classwork for excused absences may be made up according to Regulation 724-1. The student or parent is responsible for obtaining assignments. The best way for your child to succeed at our school is to have them here every day, learning. By working together, we can ensure the success of your child at Penn.

Attendance letters will be sent for excessive/chronic absences. In addition, parents may be asked to attend an attendance meeting. Both excused and unexcused absences count toward absence totals.

Late Arrival

Front doors will be closed and locked promptly at 9:20 AM. If your child is late, you will need to walk them into the building and sign them in at the office. Excessive tardies will be addressed through letters and conferences with the attendance committee. Tardies impact not only the child who is late, but also the entire class. Students who are late disrupt the learning environment.

Early Release

As a reminder, early dismissal is disruptive to teachers, other students, and the staff who are preparing for a quick and safe dismissal. If you need to pick your child up early because of an appointment, please send a note with the student to the teacher and plan on arriving 15 minutes earlier than you need to leave. Please park and report to the office and do not leave your car unattended in the pickup line. Make sure you bring your ID!

Dismissal is a very busy time of day, especially in the front of the building and office. We greatly encourage parents to NOT pick up students between 3:30 and 4:00 PM. Teachers are busy with important end-of-the-day wrap-up activities and working to ensure that students have everything they need to go home safely. We would prefer not to dismiss students after 3:30 PM from their classes until dismissal time due to the safety of all students.

Cafeteria

Cafeteria Manager Malia Littlejohn

Menus, how to make payments, and other information can be found at <https://pwcsnutrition.com/>.

Breakfast

- Breakfast is served every morning from 9:00 a.m. until 9:20 a.m. All children are welcome to eat breakfast as they arrive each day.
- Upon arrival, students go directly to the cafeteria to eat breakfast then proceed to their homerooms.
- Cost=\$1.60



Lunch

- Lunch is served daily
- Cost=\$2.60

Ala Carte Milk - \$1.00

Payments

All checks should be made to Prince William County School Food Services. There is a link to the online system for lunch accounts on our website: [Penn Elementary Website](#)

Free and Reduced

Applications for free or reduced-price breakfasts/lunches are available through the office at any time throughout the school year.

Early Release

On half-days lunch is provided for all students, even if their normal lunchtime falls after dismissal time.

Additional Information ([PWCS Nutrition Information](#))

Parents who come to school to eat lunch with their students are asked to sit at a table on the stage we have reserved for parents and students. Please do not sit at the table with the other students. In addition, we ask that only your child eats with you on stage unless we have written permission for an additional student to join you.

Communication

Penn is dedicated to keeping an open line of communication with our families. Staff may reach out in a variety of ways. With School Status, we can email and text you in your preferred language. If you need to reach a staff member during the day, the most efficient way is through email. If you call to speak with your child's teacher, you will be asked to leave a message. Our teachers are very busy with their students and cannot accept phone calls while they are teaching. They will return your call or email within 24 hours.



School Status-You may receive calls from staff through School Status. It will not show up as Penn but from a location in VA. These calls are recorded.



During the year, parents may have questions or concerns about things happening in the classroom. We ask that parents contact the teacher first as they are the most knowledgeable of what is happening in their classroom.

[Penn Twitter Page](#)

Penn has a Twitter page! Please check it out for the latest news or to get a glimpse of the exciting things happening at our school.

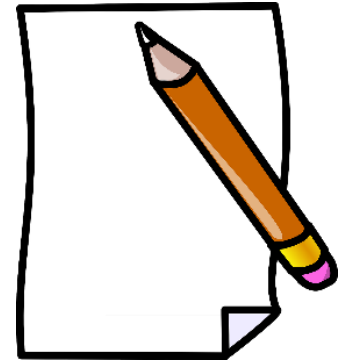
[Penn Elementary](#)

Our website is updated often. Check it often for newsletters, updates, and links to important information.

Homework

Our teachers follow PWCS Regulation 663-1 regarding all assigned homework, which states that the purpose of homework is to provide:

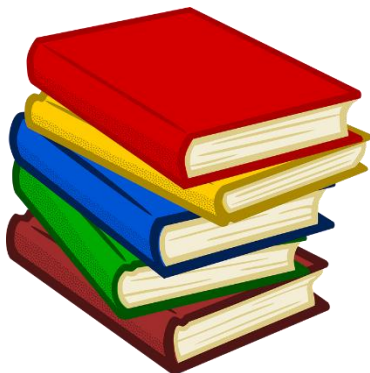
- Pre-learning opportunity to organize new information or build interest in an upcoming topic, or unit of study
- Practice for applying new knowledge and skills
- Revisit knowledge and concept for review
- Prepare for an upcoming assessment



Students work very hard throughout the school day, and it is equally important that they enjoy recreational activities and family time after school. Therefore, there are guidelines, stated in Regulation 663-1, that limit the amount of nightly homework for students. The following times are the maximum recommended time for nightly homework (Monday-Thursday), which also includes reading: Kindergarten (10- 20 minutes), 1st & 2nd Grades (10-20 minutes), and 3rd – 5th Grades (30-50 minutes).

Reading for 10-30 minutes a night with a family member is very important. 20 minutes of reading every day, exposes a child to 1.8 million words yearly leading to increased general knowledge, vocabulary, communication, and analytical skills.

According to Carrey Crenshaw, a literary expert, reading daily can have long-term effects on the brain. Students who read daily:



- Get better at reading
- Exercise the brain
- Improve concentration
- Learn about the world
- Enrich our vocabulary
- Develop your imagination
- Understand empathy.
- Perform better academically
- Relax the body and mind

Releasing of Students

Anytime a student is being released, **we require photo ID** to be shown prior to entering the building. This will be cross-checked with the emergency information in our system. If you would like to add anyone to your emergency authorization list, contact Diane Liming or Joanne Morgan at 703-590-0344. Please let the office know if someone different will be picking up your child.

Safety

We take the safety of our students and staff very seriously and have several policies in place to protect our school.

- All outside doors are locked. All classroom doors are locked.
- All visitors are required to show ID and wear a visible visitor's badge.
- The school has multiple emergency/crisis plans to deal with specific safety and emergency issues. For more information see [Safety and Security](#) on the PWCS website.
- Students must be signed out in the office and will not be released to anyone other than those listed on the emergency cards.
- All staff carry walkie-talkies and are instructed to report any suspicious activity inside or outside of the building. In addition, all staff wear safety vests when outside of the building.
- The school should be notified immediately of any potentially serious or unusual situations involving friends or relatives who may try to contact children at school. The school's only interest in knowing this type of information is for the protection of our students and staff.

Transportation



Bus Procedures

All students riding the bus are expected to understand and adhere to the code of conduct for bus behavior, which is available on the Prince William County Public Schools web page.

"Riding the School Bus is a Privilege. Should a student be reported to the principal, the principal will be responsible for disciplinary action, which may include the loss of the privilege of bus transportation, until the parent, the bus driver, the principal, and in some instances, a Transportation Department representative can arrive at an understanding that will correct the problem. The parent

will be responsible for the transportation of students who have lost school bus transportation privileges. If you have questions, please refer to Regulation 431-4."

Please speak with your child about appropriate bus behavior. For the safety of all students and the driver, it is essential that students stay seated and keep volume at an appropriate level. There are safety patrols assigned to each bus to help monitor student behavior.

Kindergarten students must be greeted of the bus by a designated person listed on the Kindergarten Authorization Form which can be found on our website. An adult or high school student will need to show ID to the driver.

Walkers

Penn is a school with many walkers. Please stay on the sidewalks and use the crosswalks when going to and from school. Walkers are dismissed at the end of the day from the main door. Parents will be assigned a number at the beginning of the year and students will have a tag with the matching number on their backpacks. Parents should wait outside the front door with their numbers. At dismissal, a staff member will check numbers and send your child out when you have arrived. If you do not have your number, staff will ask for ID to verify that you are authorized to pick up the student. Students in first grade or above, **with prior written parent permission**, are allowed to walk home without an adult.



Bike Riders

For students who ride their bike to school, we have a bike rack out front. Consider using a lock as an extra precaution. For the safety of parents, students and staff, please **DO NOT** ride on the sidewalks.

Car Riders

SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY!

The procedures for car riders are very important. Please read carefully.

We have many students who are dropped off/picked up each day. Regular car riders are assigned a car rider number with a car tag for the parent and a backpack tag for the student. We ask all drivers to stay alert, be off cell phones, and to follow the direction of the staff.

AM

- When you arrive, you will turn in to the first entrance which goes along the front of the school and stay in the far right-hand lane.
- Students should be seated on the passenger side of the car and ready to exit the vehicle.
- You will see bright cones on the sidewalk. This is the drop-off area. Only in this “zone” should students be exiting vehicles.
- **Students should not begin to exit vehicles until 9:00** when the staff comes out to greet students!
- **Always pull as far forward as possible.** If the cars have started moving, **do not stop** and let your child out. Keep pulling forward.

PM

- Numbers must be displayed in the window so our staff can radio them to the gym to get your student prepared.
- If you forget your number, please park and come into the office. You will need to verify your identity with ID.
- Students will come out from the gym door and walk to your car. They will need to enter the car on the passenger side.
- If your child needs extra time to get buckled, please pull into a parking space or pull over once you have exited to ensure that the line keeps moving.



Additional Notes

- ❖ **You are not permitted to drop your child off in the morning and leave.** Supervision begins when the doors open at 9:00. While there are many adults who walk with their children to school and may be standing outside the front doors, they are not responsible for your child(ren). **The ONLY students who should be standing at the door in the morning are walkers or parents who park and are walking their children to the door/office.**
- ❖ **Do not drop your child off in the top parking lot for them to walk across the crosswalk** to avoid waiting in line. This is a significant safety concern. If you wish to park and walk your child to the door, please use the left-hand lane to access the front visitor parking spaces.
- ❖ **DO NOT** get out of your car while in the car line. If your child needs extra assistance, please park.
- ❖ Staff will not be able nor are required to open car doors. We will try to get to as many cars as we can, but that is not always possible. Your child should be able to exit the car independently.



Behavior

Conduct and School Rules

Please carefully read the PWCS Code of Behavior available online from our school web page. This is reviewed with all students during the first quarter. It is the family's responsibility to follow all county policies that are outlined in these documents. Please remind your child that any look-alike weapons (as described in the Code of Behavior) brought to school will result in disciplinary action. Please also speak with your child about making verbal or physical threats to other students or staff. Such actions create serious situations and consequences.

For more information, see the online [Code of Behavior](#).

PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support)

Classroom, individual, and mini-PAWS are given out to students who are showing PAWS Behavior:

P – 'Paws'itive Attitude

A - Act Respectful

W - Work Together

S – Self-Control.

A mini-PAWS drawing is held each Friday for a prize.

Students who receive Individual PAWS stickers are recognized by staff.

Classroom PAWS are collected by the teachers for class rewards.

Dress Code ([Regulation 734-1](#) & Code of Behavior)

Please be aware that the Prince William County Schools Code of Behavior defines the dress code for all schools in Prince William County and the code will be enforced at Penn Elementary. The PWCS student dress and grooming guidelines follow the State guidance and are created to ensure equity in student expression and staff enforcement and are not intended to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by law.

Students are permitted to wear any religiously and ethnically specific or significant head covering or hairstyle. Permitted head coverings and hairstyles include but are not limited to:

- Hijabs
- Yarmulkes
- Headwraps
- Braids
- Locs
- Cornrows

Also consistent with Virginia Code §§ 22.1-276.01 and 22.1-279.6, these dress and grooming guidelines were created to maintain gender neutrality by creating equitable standards regardless of gender and to not have a disparate impact on students of a particular gender. Prohibited items of clothing include clothing items which:

- Reveal bare skin to the extent that they distract or may foreseeably distract other students or staff
- Reveal or expose undergarments
- Fit in a manner as to reveal or expose undergarments

- Contain vulgar, discriminatory, lewd patently offensive or obscene language or images
- Contain threats or gang symbols
- Promotes the use of weapons and violence, or the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs, and/or associated paraphernalia
- Cause or may foreseeably cause a disruption to the learning environment
- Accessories which could be regarded as or used as a weapon.

Headwear which covers one's entire head or face with the following exceptions:

- Worn as part of one's religion
- Worn for medical reasons
- Worn for personal prevention practices as in the case of the spread of infectious diseases
- Worn for an approved school event
- Worn as an expression of one's cultural or ethnical background
- Jewelry or other items which could be regarded as or used as a weapon. Rubber-sole sports shoes are recommended due to the daily recess period and increased PE classes. Loose fitting sandals and flip-flops are not safe for school wear.

Electronic Devices/Cellphones

Penn understands that many students have their own devices-cell phones, tablets, smart watches, etc. Ideally, these should be left at home, but we know that with the diverse needs of our families that students may need to have these for before and after school. We ask that all technology from home is silenced and left in a backpack. These devices can create many problems and disruptions in an elementary school environment. If a student is using their cell phone, it may be confiscated and sent to the office for the student to pick up at the end of the day. Repeated offenses will result in a conference with parents and administration.

Penn follows the Code of Behavior regarding cell phone use.

Possession of communication devices by students or staff on PWCS grounds is a privilege, not a right, and any staff member or student who brings a communication device on PWCS property consents to these rules and to the School Division's right to confiscate and/or search such devices as provided in these rules.

- All devices must be set to silent or vibrate mode, with audible signals disabled during all in-school use. Speaker settings must be turned off.
- Searches of communication devices may be conducted if the administrator has a reasonable suspicion that it is being used for conduct that is criminal or a violation of the "Code of Behavior" and/or Regulation 503-1.
- PWCS does not assume responsibility for the security of communication and/or electronic devices that are brought onto PWCS property.
- The School Division cannot monitor nor be held liable for communications or actions originated on personally-owned devices used on PWCS property.



General Information

Celebrations

We discourage sending in treats or snacks for the class. Please consider non-food options such as stickers, pencils, etc. If you send in treats or snacks for the class for special occasions, please be aware that many children have food allergies/intolerances.

Field Trips

Field trips provide enrichment that aligns with the grade level standards. All students will travel to and from the location with the group and teachers. Most field trips require additional adult chaperones. Teachers will ask for volunteers to act as chaperones. All parent chaperones will be assigned students to monitor throughout the field trip. Parents should not just show up at the field trip location.

Contact your child's teacher if you need assistance with the cost of a field trip. No child will be denied due to inability to pay.

Hours

- Student Hours ~ 9:20-4:00
- Office Hours ~ 8:00-4:30

The front doors open at 9:00. Students are considered late after 9:20. Supervision does not begin until the doors open at 9:00.

For before school clubs, please do not drop off your child more than 5 minutes early. The club sponsors will be available to welcome your child 5 minutes before the session begins.

Intervention

At Penn, we provide differentiation, support, and extensions to help children be successful. Our intervention team is led by Mrs. Simpson, who meets regularly with teachers to review student progress and academic and/or behavioral data. If additional concerns arise, an intervention meeting may be scheduled. At an intervention meeting, we discuss assessment data, classroom performance, progress, and create a plan to move forward. Parents are important members of the intervention team and will be invited to all intervention meetings for their child.

Lost and Found

We have a lost and found located outside of the AUX gym. Parents are welcome to come look for lost items. Please check in at the office first.

Photos

According to current PWCS policies and regulations, photographs and video images of any student engaged in school activities may be produced and used in any school division program, publication, or exhibit, if deemed appropriate by school division personnel. Photos and images may also be authorized for use by outside organizations such as the news media and scholarship providers so long as this is in the best interest of the students, the school and the school division and complies with other regulation guidelines. Any parent wishing to avoid use of their children's photos by external organizations may fill out and submit an opt-out form. There is a link to the forms on Penn's website.

Right to Special Programs and Services

Prince William County Public Schools is required to inform the community of a student's right to a free, appropriate public education and the availability of programs and services, including a special education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) are federal laws that give the School Division certain responsibilities with respect to providing such educational programs to students with disabilities.

Under the IDEA and Section 504, the School Division has the responsibility to actively and continuously identify, locate, and evaluate those children, infant to age 21, living in Prince William County who may be in need of special education and/or related services, or adaptations or accommodations to regular education services. These laws also require the School Division to:

- Refer for possible evaluation any student of school age living in the School Division who a school staff member suspects may be disabled.
- Provide appropriate educational and school-related opportunities to students with disabilities in an inclusive setting to the maximum extent appropriate.
- Provide notice of the availability of services and types and location of services to nearby private schools, pediatricians, and the Health Department.
- Provide parents/guardians of students with disabilities with notice of their rights annually, and prior to their student's evaluation and placement, or any significant change in their student's placement.
- Develop and implement procedural safeguards with respect to actions regarding the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities.
- Provide written notice of the School Division's procedural safeguards to parents or guardians.

If you suspect that your student may have a disability affecting your student's development or academic performance or may have a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, please contact the Mrs. Simpson (simpsomf@pwcs.edu) or Mrs. Parthenakis (parthec@pwcs.edu) at 703-590-0344 or the Director of Special Education at 703-791-7287 for further information.

Visitors

For the safety and security of our children, all visitors and volunteers in the building, during school hours must report to the office to sign in with an ID. Visitors will be screened by the "Raptor" system which identifies any sex offenders. Prince William County Schools require that photo identification be left in the office. You will be given a visitor's badge/lanyard that must be visible at all times. Your photo identification will be returned to you when you sign out and return your visitor's badge (Regulation 926-1).



Health

Clinic

School Nurse Catherine Lucas

Illness

When to Stay Home

Students with symptoms of illness, such as rashes, fever, sore throat, vomiting, coughing, runny nose, pink eye, or diarrhea, should stay home until a doctor evaluates their symptoms and determines whether they are contagious or not. The Prince William County Department of Health recommends that students remain home fever-free, vomit-free, and diarrhea-free for 24 hours after an illness.

Taking Your Student Home

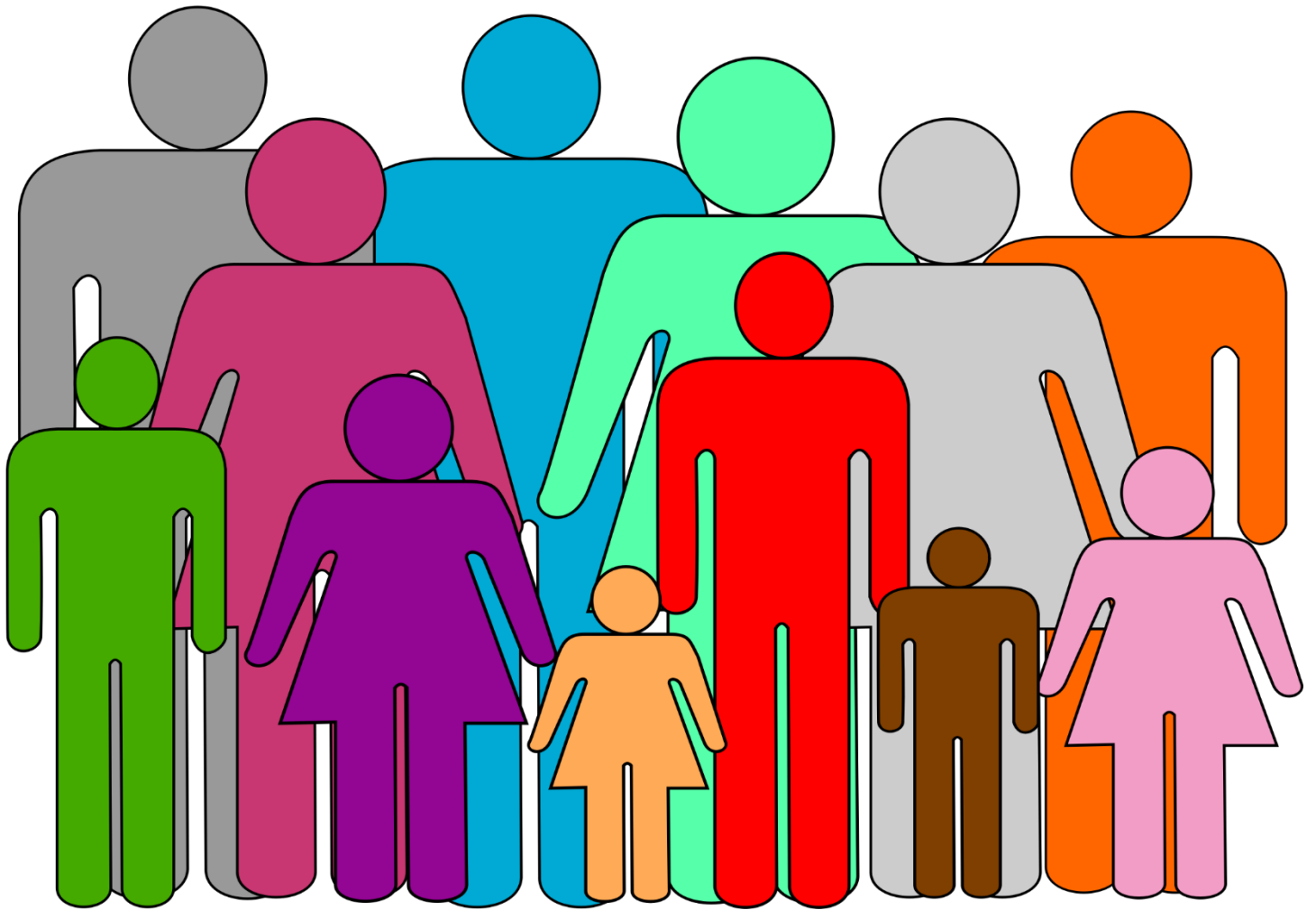
Our clinic works to control and manage student exposure to contagious diseases. We will call you if your student exhibits symptoms of illness, including but not limited to:

- COVID-19 Symptoms
- Fever
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Unexplained rash
- Diarrhea
- Head lice
- Inflamed eyes with discharge
- Persistent cough

When called, we ask that you make arrangements to pick up your student as soon as possible. It is important that the office has current phone numbers on the emergency card. Please make sure that individuals who are authorized to pick up your child from school are listed on the emergency card.

Medication

- All medicine must be in its original container, **absolutely UNOPENED**, with student's name.
- All medicine (over the counter or prescription) administered at school, must have a medication authorization form on file in the clinic.
- Prescription medicine must have a physician's signature on the form before medicine can be administered.
- Absolutely NO medication is to be sent to school with the student. If a student is known to be carrying any type of medication, it will be confiscated by and kept with Nurse Catherine until a parent or guardian retrieves it from the clinic. Therefore, parents please bring to the clinic any and all medication with its corresponding Medication Authorization Form signed by a physician.
- **Cough drops are no longer considered medication and can be carried by students without medication form. Cough drops need to be in their original package.**
- Students with allergies and/or asthma should have an asthma and/or allergy plan on file as well.



Parent Information

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council represents the Penn Elementary School community. It will serve in an advisory capacity to the principal in development of the Operating budget, fiscal support for the school, and the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). This Council will also assist in communicating the vision and mission of Penn Elementary to its school, community and to the community at large.

Meetings are held quarterly from 6:30-7:30 in the school library. Please contact Dr. Bolles if you are interested in participating.

Class Assignments

At Penn, we are thorough, thoughtful, and intentional when forming classes. We consider many different variables, including parent input, when creating each class of students. This means your child may not be placed in a class with the same teacher that his/her older sibling had or with his/her best friend. We believe all our teachers are excellent and that your child will have an outstanding year as they learn to adjust to different teaching styles and classroom environments. We do not move students very often and look at any requests to move a student very carefully. If you feel that a change in teacher is absolutely necessary, you must meet and discuss all of your concerns with the teacher first. We have seen that most concerns are resolved in this manner. If you still feel strongly about a change, a written request to the principal is needed. The principal will make the final decision regarding class assignments.

Grading

Communication about academic progress is an important part of learning. Each quarter, teachers will provide parents a report card summarizing student progress. But students and their families do not have to wait several weeks to know what a student is learning about and how they are performing as student progress can be monitored on ParentVue.

Prior to beginning instruction, teachers and students discuss the learning goals or targets. These learning intentions include a description of how the teacher will know that a student has demonstrated mastery of the standards. This can be described as "standards-based learning."

The tasks students engage in to demonstrate their learning may be done for practice (formative assessment) or to provide more formal evidence of student learning (summative assessment). Students and their families can see this information online (ParentVue).

Regulation 661-1 outlines the elementary grading practices and includes rubrics for grading. Grades K-2 use S+, S, S-, and N to reflect student progress. It is important to note that an S- does not indicate that a student is failing. It indicates a student is making progress, but not yet mastered the standard. Grades 3-5 use letter grades with additional ratings for work habits and conduct.

K-2 Descriptive Grading Scale

Level of Mastery	Letter Grade	Descriptor	Student Statement
Above Standard	S+	Exceeds grade level standards. Consistently meets requirements for exceptional work. Demonstrates high level of knowledge and understanding.	I know (and can do) it well enough to make connections that were not taught.
Proficient	S	Meets grade level requirements. Consistently meets requirements for proficient work. Demonstrates acceptable level of knowledge and understanding.	I know (and can do) everything that was taught making few mistakes.
Approaching	S-	Approaching grade level standards. Meets some requirements for proficient work. Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding.	I know (and can do) all the easy parts, but I do not know (and cannot do) the harder parts.
Beginning	N	Consistently requires teacher direction and assistance to demonstrate partial knowledge or understanding.	With help, I know (and can do) some of what was taught. I do not know (and cannot do) any of it.

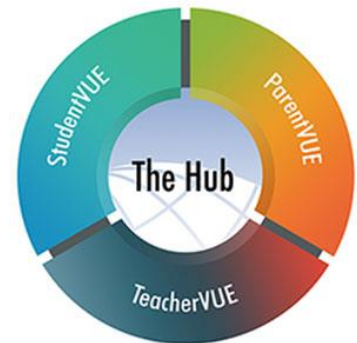
Grades 3-5

Report Grade	Level of Mastery	Simple Descriptor
A	Above Standard	Can make connections beyond what was taught
B+	Above Standard	Can make connections beyond what was taught but not consistently
B	Meets Standard	Can do everything that was taught without mistakes
C+	Meets Standard	Can do all the easy parts and some of the harder parts
C	Approaching Standard	Can do all the easy parts but none of the harder parts
D+	Approaching Standard	Can do some of the easier parts with mistakes
D	Beginning	With help, can do some harder and easier parts
F	Well Below	With help can do easier parts but not harder parts

ParentVue

ParentVUE is a tool that gives parents and guardians access to their child's bus information, class schedules, grades, attendance information, and more.

All families have a ParentVue account for one parent or both. Please call Joanne Morgan at 703-590-0344 if you need assistance with access.



P.A.W.S. (formerly Watch D.O.G.S.)

P.A.W.S. stands for Parents Active With Students. P.A.W.S. is modeled after WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students). While WATCH D.O.G.S. is specifically designed for male/father figures, P.A.W.S. is designed to be more inclusive and equitable to all the important adults in our students' lives.



Who are P.A.W.S? Here at Penn, P.A.W.S. are any male or female parent, guardian or adult family member who volunteers at least one full school day at their child's/student's school during the school year.



What do P.A.W.S. DO? During the day, P.A.W.S. volunteers perform a variety of tasks. This includes monitoring the school entrances and hallways, assisting with unloading and loading of buses and cars, monitoring the lunchroom, helping in the classroom with a teacher's guidance, and any other assigned activities where they actively engage with not only their own student(s), but other students as well. They make security sweeps both inside and outside the building.

An information meeting will be held in early September.

PTO

Meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of most months during the school year at 7:00 pm in the school library. More PTO information is posted on our webpage. Joining the PTO is a great way to support our students and staff throughout the year. Any help is always appreciated!

Military Families-Purple Star

Penn is a Purple Star designated school. Information for this organization can be found on the Penn website.

Information in this parent handbook is subject to change if the policies and regulations of the school division or Penn Elementary change throughout the year.