



Pennoyer
School District 79

Pennoyer Preschool

Parent & Student Handbook

5200 N. Cumberland Avenue
Norridge, IL 60706
MAIN OFFICE: (708) 456-9094
FAX: (708) 456-9098

Pennoyer Main Office Hours:

7:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Preschool Hours:

AM Session: 8:30 - 11:00

PM Session: 11:45 - 2:15

Our Mission

The pathway to our vision includes

- Acknowledging all exceptionalities and expanding opportunities for students.
- Maintaining existing and emerging practices.
- Encouraging students to take an active role in their academic lives.
- Engaging parents and the community for the success of the school.

Our Vision

Pennoyer School District 79 staff, parents, and community members will empower students and foster their development in their present and future academic and life experiences.

- Continue to foster empathetic, inclusive, and nurturing learning environment.
- Expand opportunities for collaboration and creative thinking.
- Redefine the use of technology.
- Create a platform for expression of student voice and choice.

PHILOSOPHY

The Pennoyer Preschool philosophy is to support child development in four areas: social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive. It is important that these objects for your child's development and learning are interrelated and will be addressed in the classroom in a variety of settings.

Social-Emotional Development: Pennoyer Preschool believes that social-emotional development is essential to a child's well-being and success throughout life. Preschool will support students in regulation of emotions, the development of social skills, and an understanding of social expectations.

Physical Development: Students at Pennoyer Preschool will be developing both fine and gross motor skills, working on balance, coordination, strength, and motor planning.

Language Development: Pennoyer Preschool understands the complexities of language acquisition. Children will be supported in their journey of listening, understanding, and using words to communicate, to build effective communication skills. Pennoyer Preschool exposes students to the structure and sequence of speech sounds, vocabulary, and grammar to help students succeed throughout their academic careers.

Cognitive Development: At Pennoyer Preschool, we believe in helping children approach learning in a positive manner, connect and recall experiences, classify, and use symbols. Our approach to supporting the cognitive development of children is through providing them opportunities to observe, explore, problem-solve, communicate, and make connections and organize information.

The Pennoyer Preschool team works collectively to understand the individual strengths, needs, and interests of each child, while also celebrating the culture of each child and family. We believe in a teacher-family partnership to support the development and learning of each child, and we value the role of constructive and purposeful play.

Staff Names & Contact Info

Therese Gaffney	Preschool Teacher	tgaffney@pennoyerschool.org Ext. 2014
Lisa Himargios	Preschool Teaching Assistant	
Alana Cardenas	School Nurse	alanac@pennoyerschool.org
Rachel Slawson	Social Worker	rslawson@pennoyerschool.org
Annalisa Nardulli	Speech Pathologist	anardulli@pennoyerschool.org
Lauren Saetr	School Psychologist	lisaetre@lasecfp.org
Toni Binz	Technical Assistant Supervisor for Pennoyer	tbinz@lasecfp.org
Alicia Schmeisser	Director of Student Services	alicias@pennoyerschool.org
Gina Sierra	Principal	gsierra@pennoyerschool.org
Kristin Kopta	Superintendent	kkopta@pennoyerschool.org

PROGRAMS & SCREENING PROCESS

All children 3-5 (but not eligible for kindergarten) are possible candidates for the Pennoyer Preschool Program. Students enter the program through a developmental screening process and are determined to be at-risk, or may enter the program with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

To help determine candidacy for Pennoyer's Preschool Program, parents and teachers work together to complete our screening tool: the Dial-4. Data is gathered to determine if there are specific areas of need. If the child needs further screening, parents will be contacted. Screening data helps create the child's initial instructional goals including social-emotional and executive functioning.

Please call the Pennoyer District Office 708-456-9094 to schedule a preschool screening.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance is important for all children to succeed in school. However, if your child is ill or there is an emergency situation, the attendance line can be reached 24 hours a day.

- Pennoyer Main Number: (708) 456-9094. Press 2 to be connected with the school nurse.
- Call each day your child is out of school.
- Please state your child's first and last name, AM or PM session, and reason for absence.
- If your child is absent for five or more days, a note from the doctor is required before your child may return to school.
- Please plan family vacations/trips to coincide with scheduled school holidays, winter break or spring break.
- If your child is absent for 10 consecutive days your child may be dropped from the preschool program.
- If your child has excessive absences or late arrivals you will be contacted by the principal or school social worker. You may be asked to withdraw your child so other children can enter the program.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

- Illinois state law requires a current physical and record of immunizations on file **BEFORE** a child begins school. Please turn in the physical forms early to ensure that your child will be able to start school on time. Any questions, please call the school nurse. (708) 456-9094. Press 2 to be connected.
- Dental examinations are recommended, but not required.
- If your student has a fever, your child must be fever free for 24 hours *without medication* in order to return to school.
- Any kind of rash may require a doctor's note to return to school.
- Please let the office know of any allergies or any medical changes throughout the year.

MEDICINE

- If your child needs to take medication during school time, a School Medication Authorization form must be completed by a doctor and kept in the Pennoyer health file.
- Medication cannot be administered to a child without this form and approval from a doctor.
- Do not send medication with your child or on the bus. Parents must bring medication directly to the nurse in the pharmacy labeled container or in original packaging for non-prescription medication.
- Parents must assume responsibility for informing the school nurse of any change in your child's health or medication.

TRANSPORTATION

Upon completion of the preschool registration packet, families will receive a parking pass. Families must display the parking pass in order to enter the circle drive in front of the school building off of Foster Avenue. The parking pass allows one car per family to drop off/pick up their preschool student. Vehicles entering the circle drive must pull all the way forward in order to accommodate all families and prevent traffic congestion. Arrival procedures require families to walk their child to the District Office Doors. The preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant will greet families and welcome students with the cars temporarily parked on the circle drive. Dismissal procedures require families to pull all the way through the circle drive, and temporarily park to meet their student at the East School building doors.

The Preschool Parking Passes must be displayed in order to enter the circle drive, which helps our school ensure the safety of students, and families. If a parent would like to enter the building, they must enter through Pennoyer's Main Entrance. As soon as students have been dropped off or picked up from preschool, parents must immediately exit to secure the school campus. Please remember, cell phone use is prohibited in school zones by law. Any adults picking up your child with an ID must be on file as an emergency contact. Please be respectful of all preschool staff and pick-up students on-time. Morning Preschool dismissal is at 11:00 and Afternoon Preschool dismissal is at 2:15.

CLOTHES/SHOES/BACKPACKS

Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for school activities.

- Students should wear comfortable play clothes for indoors and outdoors.
- Students will be going outside to play in weather between 25-90 degrees including heat and wind chill.
- Please send your child in velcro gym shoes, to allow for running, jumping, and climbing. If your child is not independent in tying shoes, please provide velcro shoes.
- You may have your child keep a jacket or sweatshirt in his/her backpack.
- Students should have a **regular sized backpack** without wheels. Backpacks need to fit a full sized folder. Be sure to check the backpack daily to read school information and notes from the teacher.
- In cold weather all children need:
 - Coat with easy working zipper or buttons
 - Gloves or mittens
 - Hats or hoods

- Snow boots (Please have your child's gym shoes in his/her backpack or leave an extra pair at school during the winter months.)

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are enrichment opportunities provided to supplement the classroom learning experience for your child. These field trips are extensions of classroom activities and may be planned several times during the school year. Parents/guardians are encouraged to attend field trips with their children. Siblings or children who are not enrolled at the Pennoyer Preschool Program may not attend field trips. All children are supervised at all times by qualified persons and school staff members who oversee the entire field trip.

CURRICULUM

Pennoyer Preschool follows the Creative Curriculum, which is aligned to the Illinois Early Learning Standards for students ages 3-5. Developmentally appropriate instruction will promote cognitive, emotional, social and motor skills growth. The Preschool room is set up in interest areas such as dramatic play, art, discovery, blocks, and library. Throughout the year, students will be learning through units of study.

ASSESSMENT

Pennoyer Preschool uses DIAL-4 for the screening process. This screening covers language, concepts, motor skills, vision, hearing, social work, and medical/social history. Throughout the year, the preschool team will collect work samples from each child and assess their work using Teaching Strategies Gold. Our portfolio system highlights your child's accomplishments and growth based on the Illinois Early Standards and IEP goals.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parental participation is important to the success of the Pennoyer's Preschool for All program. Partnering with our Preschool team and engaging in ongoing two-way communication supports the success of all students. Pennoyer Preschool will be offering parents opportunities to volunteer in the classroom, accompany students on field trips, and participate in parenting workshops. Pennoyer values the opportunity to partner with each family and utilize their expertise in making important decisions related to their child's success in school.

Pennoyer's Preschool team will help provide ideas regarding activities to continue engaging your child at home, building on the learning experiences at school. Parents are highly encouraged to attend the various workshops, programs, family activities, and community field trips provided throughout the school year. To help your child be successful at school please ensure your child is ready to learn. The following works to set each child up for success.

- Sleeping between 9 - 12 hours each night.
- Coming to school in weather-appropriate attire.
- Eating a healthy breakfast or lunch.
- Following a structured home routine that supports students arriving on time.

CONFERENCES

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for November, February, and throughout the year as needed. Your teacher will contact you about scheduling a conference.

HOME VISITS

Home visits are like parent/teacher conferences at your house. Returning students will not need to participate in a home visit unless requested. The office or preschool teacher will call to schedule a time. Teacher, para-educators, and possibly therapists will come visit you at home for about 20 minutes to meet you and your child. The purpose of the visits is to help build the home/school connection and help with any concerns about separation as your child is coming to school for the first time.

POTTY TRAINING

Students do not need to be potty trained to come to school. Please send your child with extra diapers, pull ups, and clothes. Please communicate with your teacher about where you are in the process and we are happy to assist you and help with routines.

TOYS & GAMES

We ask that students refrain from bringing toys or electronic games to school. The preschool classroom is equipped with engaging learning materials for our students, and our goal is to expose students to new experiences at school. Pennoyer Preschool is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Pennoyer Preschool follows the calendar of Pennoyer School District 79. Please reference the calendar attached to your Preschool registration packet from the District Office. If a school closure is deemed necessary, an announcement will be made as early as possible. Please check Pennoyer's School website for emergency closings and alerts sent to families through School Messenger.

<https://www.pennoyerschool.org/>

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

All school supplies are provided through the Preschool for All Grant. Pennoyer Preschool asks that families send your child with their backpack and their one-pocket folder. Please, no backpacks with wheels.

An **extra set of clothing** should also be sent to school and kept in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name. Please include a shirt, pants, underwear and socks in the bag so your child can wear his/her own clothes if an accident occurs. The soiled clothes will be sent home that day. Please remember to send another clean set of clothes back to school with your child the following day.

FOOD

The children will have a provided snack and drink daily. Families may also provide students with their own snacks and drinks. Students will not be able to share snacks with peers. **Please do not send snacks with peanuts or peanut butter.**

COMMUNICATION

We know that communication is key to promoting a strong partnership with our parents. Please check your child's backpack daily for important information.

- The district handbook will be sent home with students during the first week of school for you to review.
- Teachers are unavailable to answer phone calls during class time. Please feel free to leave a message at their extension, or contact them by email. The Pennoyer main office will connect you with teacher voicemail when you call the main office at (708)456-9094.
- If you would like to meet with your child's teacher please request to set up an appointment.
- Please keep the office informed of any changes to your child's health or emergency contacts.
- Throughout the year, the Pennoyer Preschool Team will communicate with you through home visits, folders, conferences, phone calls, email, and school events. We believe that communication is essential in providing the best education for each child and strive to foster a culture of family/school partnership.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In order to contact parents quickly in the event of an emergency, Pennoyer School must have complete and accurate information on the following items:

- Home address and telephone number
- Work addresses and phone numbers
- Name, numbers, and address of those authorized to attend to your child in the case of an emergency.

Parents are responsible for letting the Pennoyer School office know of any changes. Pennoyer School will not release your child to anyone who is not listed as an emergency contact.

VISITATION/VOLUNTEERING

All visitors, please enter through Pennoyer School's main office, which is located in the middle of the circle drive on Foster Avenue. Upon entering the building, **all visitors must check in with Pennoyer's main office staff and present a photo ID**. The ID will be scanned into the system and print a visitor's badge. The printed badges help students and staff recognize visitors. Thank you in advance for your cooperation of wearing the badge throughout the entirety of your visit. Please check out in the main office before exiting the building.

PARENT COORDINATOR/EDUCATOR

Pennoyer Preschool partners with a Parent Coordinator/Educator. The role of the Parent Coordinator/Educator is to work alongside teachers, administrators, and parents in order to coordinate and advocate for family involvement to facilitate children's learning. Throughout the school year, the Parent Coordinator/Educator will facilitate parent education opportunities, opportunities and experiences for our preschool students, and family development programs.

HOMELESSNESS

Any homeless child shall be immediately admitted in the school of residence, even if the child's parent or guardian is unable to produce records normally required to establish residency. Immediate participation in our meal program will be provided to all homeless students and for the remainder of the year. Board policy, *Education of Homeless Children 6:140*, and its implementing administrative procedure, govern the enrollment of homeless children. If a child is denied enrollment under this policy, the Liaison shall immediately refer the child to the ombudsperson appointed by the Regional Superintendent and provide the child and his/her parent a written explanation for the denial.

TRANSITION TO PRESCHOOL/TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

In order to best meet the needs of students and ensure a smooth transition into preschool, opportunities for both students and families will be provided. Families are invited to observe the classroom in order to reduce anxiety and assist with an understanding of the program. New preschool students and families are able to observe the preschool program and speak with the preschool team and the Parent Coordinator/Educator prior to the start of school. A member of the preschool team may complete a home visit before school begins to meet the child and family at their home. The home visit provides an opportunity to build a relationship between the school and family in the home setting. In August, families are encouraged to attend the Back to School/Meet the Teacher Picnic. All families are welcome to tour the school, meet the staff, and ask any questions.

In the spring of each year, transition activities occur for students going to kindergarten. Students and families are able to visit a kindergarten classroom.

TRANSITION PLANNING

Students transitioning from preschool to kindergarten have the opportunity to visit Pennoyer's kindergarten classrooms, practice some of the routines of kindergarten, and take home materials over the summer preparing them for kindergarten. Pennoyer's preschool teacher has the opportunity to articulate with the kindergarten team about each individual student, and teachers are able to observe and plan together to ensure the success of each child.