



**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: 8:50 - 11:20

PM Session: 12:00 - 2:30



# PENNOYER DISTRICT 79 PRESCHOOL MISSION

Pennoyer Preschool is dedicated to fostering the social, emotional, and intellectual development of all children. Together, the Preschool team strives to partner alongside families and the larger community to support the varying needs of all students, ensuring that the unique needs of each child are met through a thoughtful and developmental approach. We are committed to celebrating the diversity of our students as we prepare them for their journey as lifelong learners!



## 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 an 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**

Pennoyer School Main Line (708) 456-9094

Nicole Gray	Preschool Teacher	<a href="mailto:ngray@pennoyerschool.org">ngray@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Maria Torres	Preschool Teaching Assistant	<a href="mailto:mtorres@pennoyerschool.org">mtorres@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Alana Cardenas	School Nurse	<a href="mailto:acardenas@pennoyerschool.org">acardenas@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Rachel Slawson	Social Worker	<a href="mailto:rslawson@pennoyerschool.org">rslawson@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Annie Saperstein	Speech Pathologist	<a href="mailto:asaperstein@pennoyerschool.org">asaperstein@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Damien Antwine	School Psychologist	<a href="mailto:dantwine@jelanieducationalservices.org">dantwine@jelanieducationalservices.org</a>
Monica Kula	English Language Support Specialist	<a href="mailto:mkula@pennoyerschool.org">mkula@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Marcus Goodwin	Technical Assistant Supervisor for Pennoyer	<a href="mailto:mgoodwin@lasecfp.org">mgoodwin@lasecfp.org</a>
Alicia Norgard	Director of Student Services	<a href="mailto:anorgard@pennoyerschool.org">anorgard@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Adam Greenberg	Principal	<a href="mailto:agreenberg@pennoyerschool.org">agreenberg@pennoyerschool.org</a>
Kristin Kopta	Superintendent	<a href="mailto:kkopta@pennoyerschool.org">kkopta@pennoyerschool.org</a>

## **PROGRAMS & SCREENING PROCESS**

All children 3-5 (but not eligible for kindergarten) are possible candidates for the Pennoyer Preschool Program. Eligibility for Pennoyer's Preschool For All program is determined based on a developmental screening process and an examination of at-risk factors. Students may also qualify for the program if they are found to be eligible for special education services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students supported through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) prior to age 3 will also work with the preschool team to schedule a preschool screening, prior to a child's 3rd birthday and partner with the special education team to examine eligibility.

The screening process, which can be scheduled to take place 3 months prior to a child's 3rd birthday, families can expect students to participate in the following:

- Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning (Dial-4)
- Home Language Survey
- Weighted Risk Factor Survey
- Ages and Stages: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE)
- Hearing and Vision Screening

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

### *PM Wednesday Parking Passes*

Upon completion of the preschool registration packet, PM families will receive a parking pass to use for Wednesday afternoons when preschool dismissal is the same as Pennoyer K-8 dismissal. 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 pick up their preschool students. **Vehicles entering the circle drive must pull all the way forward in order to accommodate all families and prevent traffic congestion.**

### *Arrival and Dismissal*

Vehicles may temporarily park in the circle drive to facilitate arrival. Arrival procedures require families to walk their child to the East School Doors. The preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant will greet families and welcome students. Dismissal procedures require families to pull all the way through the circle drive, and temporarily park. Using the East School building doors, the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant will dismiss students directly to families. **Vehicles entering the circle drive must pull all the way forward in order to accommodate all families and prevent traffic congestion.**

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.

### 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

#### *Preschool Screening Process*

Pennoyer Preschool utilizes the DIAL-4 for the preschool screening process. The DIAL-4 screener examines a child's motor skills (such as skipping, jumping, cutting, and writing), conceptual skills (such as knowledge of colors and counting), and language skills (such as knowledge of letters and words, and ability to solve problems). Additionally during the preschool screening process, families work with the social worker to complete a questionnaire to help determine the level of need or risk factors in which a family is experiencing as well as the Ages and Stages: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE). Pennoyer's English Language Specialist will also support the completion of the home language survey, which is offered in the preferred language of the family. Finally, a hearing and vision screening is conducted.

### *Preschool Assessment | Measures and tools*

If students or the families speak a language other than English at home, students enrolled in the PFA program will complete a language screener with an EL specialist.

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.
- Arriving at school in weather-appropriate attire.
- Eating a healthy and balanced breakfast or lunch.
- Following a structured home routine that supports students arriving on time.

### **CONFERENCES**

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

### **HOME VISITS**

Home visits provide the preschool team an opportunity to meet with you and your child in their home environment. New students to the program are prioritized for scheduling home visits, but returning students may also participate. The preschool teacher will call to schedule a time that works for you and your schedule on the designated days for home visits in the preschool calendar. Any member of the preschool team (teacher, paraprofessional, related service providers, preschool administrator) may participate in the visit to your home. The duration of the visit will be approximately 20 minutes as the team engages with you and your child. The purpose of the visits is to build our home/school connection and support you with any concerns you may have. Since preschool is a child's first experience with school, we aim to provide a positive transition into the school environment.



### **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. The preschool team is dedicated to supporting students wherever they may be in the process and are a resource for teaching independence.

### **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.

### **SUSPENSION & EXPULSION**

In compliance with HB2663/SB1557, Pennoyer's PFA Program prohibits the practice of suspension and expulsion due to student behavior. The Preschool team approaches behavior with a prevention and promotion philosophy for all children. The Pyramid Model, the framework of the preschool team, promotes social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes for young children. The Preschool team believes that the basis of student success begins with the utilization of effective teaching and engagement practices and the development of positive relationships. Additionally, the team believes in using data to guide interventions and family involvement.

### **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.pennyoyerschool.org/>

### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

All school supplies are provided through the Preschool for All Grant. Families may ask if their child can bring a backpack, which we allow, but do not require. Pennoyer Preschool will provide all preschool students with all materials needed.

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**

Snacks are provided to all students through the Preschool for All Grant. However, if you would like to send in a specific snack for their child during preschool, families are welcome to do so. Please note that students will be instructed not to share snacks with peers. Additionally, please do not send snacks with peanuts or peanut butter.

## COMMUNICATION

We know that communication is key to promoting a strong partnership between school and families. 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 and be provided appropriate services and supports (ex. Special Education, Title I programs, EL services, etc) if eligible. Immediate participation in our meal program will be provided to all homeless students as well as provisions regarding transportation. 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 welcome to visit a kindergarten classroom, attend the Kindergarten Registration Event to meet the kindergarten team, review necessary paperwork and school logistics, tour the school building, and

### **TRANSITION PLANNING**

Students transitioning from preschool to kindergarten have the opportunity to visit Pennoyer's kindergarten classrooms, practice the kindergarten routines of lunch, recess, and read alouds, and take home materials over the summer preparing them for kindergarten. Additionally, Pennoyer's kindergarten teachers are given time to observe our preschool classes. Finally, Pennoyer's preschool teacher and the preschool team participate in an articulation meeting with Pennoyer's kindergarten team. Together, the teams discuss each student and their unique and individual needs. The preschool and kindergarten teams collaborate to set the stage for success so that each student moving into kindergarten can positively transition.