Penn Pals

Child Care Center

Parent Handbook

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Dear Parents,

 Thank you for choosing Penn Pals as your child care provider. We appreciate your trust in us. This Parent Manual will give you information on our general policies, enrollment, vacation and credit days, what you will need to provide, snacks, lunches, discipline policies and what to do if your child becomes ill. Please keep this manual so that you can refer to it in the future.

 We understand that placing your child in daycare can be a difficult decision. We want to do everything we can to make it a positive experience for you, as well as your child. Feel free to call us at anytime, whether it is to ask a question, or just stop in for a visit. We believe that communication between parents and our staff is essential, and we ask that you please keep us up-to-date on anything new with your child so that we can adapt to meet your child’s needs.

 The Director is available at any time to answer questions or address concerns. We also send out annual parent surveys for you to complete.

 Thanks you again for choosing Penn Pals. Please do not hesitate to call if you have ANY questions or concerns.

Penn Pals Philosophy

 We know (like you do) that children are this world’s greatest resource. We know that there are many ways to nurture, care for and love our children.

 Our goals are to provide your children with love and warmth, a safe environment, a high-quality and age-appropriate curriculum with a variety of stimulating experiences. Penn Pals is a place where they feel secure and happy.

 We can do this most successfully by fostering a close relationship with the family that has the healthy development of the child as the focal point. We always welcome and strongly encourage parents to drop in or call at any time during the day-just to say “hi” or to discuss their child’s progress.

 The staff at Penn Pals all meet state regulations and are well trained in the most effective curriculum designed for your young children. We are here to serve your child and you. We will do all that we can to make you feel comfortable with your decision to choose Penn Pals Child Care Center.

# General Policies

* Penn Pals hours are 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday – Friday
* We are closed on the 6 major holidays: New Year’s Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.
* There will be posted amended hours during the Thanksgiving and Winter Holidays.
* Parents must sign the in/out sheet daily, upon arriving at the center, and at the end of the day when picking up children.
* **Please call and let us know if your child will be absent.**
* If you have made arrangements with the staff for your child to be released to someone other than those indicated or if a staff person does not know the person picking up your child, be aware that this person will need to show photo ID. Please let us know when someone different will be picking up your child.
* Parents are responsible for their child until placed in their group and after dismissal from a group. Parents must notify a teacher when their child arrives or departs.
* All of your child’s personal items must be labeled and places in the child’s cubby upon arrival at the center.
* Children must have a change of seasonally appropriate clothing labeled and in their cubby.
* All cot linens will be sent home to be washed on a regular basis. Linens must be in good repair, labeled and returned the next time the child attends.
* Daily written reports will be done for children 3 years and under.
* Guns, war toys and other toys of destruction are taboo at the center.
* Health appraisals are required by DPW. They are to be done at: 6, 12, 18 and 24 months and then every year thereafter until Kindergarten.
* All staff is required by law to report any suspicion of neglect or child abuse.
* The center will be closed for extreme weather. Notification will be made on the Penn Pals Facebook page and KDKA, WPXI and WTAE.

**Payment Information**

 Rates are determined according to the age of the children in your child’s group. When your child moves to the next room, you will be asked to sign a new agreement, with the new amount. **All holidays and other occasional days off must be paid for, as our rates are established with these days in mind. The only exception to this rule is if you choose to use a credit day.** For families that have more than one child enrolled, the following discount applies:

* If your children are enrolled 3 or more days per week, you will receive a 10% discount for the oldest child(ren).
* This discount will only apply to School-Age children during the summer program.

**Payment Policy**

* Payments are due no later than 6:00pm, the Friday prior to the upcoming week of service. There is a grace period that extends to the Friday of the current week.
* Make checks payable to: **Penn Pals**
* **Always write the week that you are paying for on the check.**
* If you require monthly statements, please complete and return the request form that is available from the office.
* Please do not post-date any checks

**Late Payment**

* Any payments received after the center closes on Friday of the current week, the payment will be considered late and are subject to a $2 late fee
* A late payment fee of $1.00 per day will be assessed to your account starting the following week.
* If payments are late more than 3 times in 3 months, you may be asked to withdraw your child from the center.

**Insufficient Funds Check (NSF)**

 Checks returned from the bank marked “insufficient funds” will be assessed

 an additional $15.00 fee.

## Late Pick-Up Fee

 Penn Pals closes at 6:00 pm. **A fee of $10.00 will be assessed per 15 minutes (or part there-of) for late pick-up after 6:00 pm.** If pick-up is consistently late you may be asked to withdraw your child from the center.

### Enrollment Policy

 You must complete an enrollment agreement and an emergency contact form prior to your child starting at Penn Pals. A health assessment form must be completed by a doctor within 30 days of your child’s start date. Agreement and health assessments will be updated periodically. If you need to make changes in your child care situation, let us know as soon as possible so that we can determine the availability of space for the requested changes. **If you need to withdraw your child from the center, or reduce your days per week, you must give a two week notice.**

**Schedule Changes**

* Schedule changes will be honored only if space is available. Please do not assume that you may add or switch days from those chosen at the time of registration. SPACE IS LIMITED.
* Parents MUST call the site if/when their child will not attend Penn Pals.

**Pick-up Policy**

* If any changes occur in the information provided on the Emergency Contact Forms concerning who may pick up your child, you must let the Site Director know. We must have this information in writing to ensure protection of your child. Proper identification (Picture ID) will be required if the person picking up your child is not known to our staff members.
* **If a parent is not permitted to pick-up a child, a court order MUST be on file.**

**Verbal Request for Release of a Child:**

If someone other than the individuals listed on the emergency contact form will

 pick up your child, you must do the following:

* Call the site. A staff member will take the name of the child, date, time called, requesting parent, telephone number parent is calling from, and the name of person that will be picking up your child.
* The pick-up person MUST present photo identification in order for the staff to release the child. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Any parent that appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol when picking up a child, please know that the authorities will be contacted immediately since we cannot legally bar you from taking your child from the center.

Staff members will inform parents if they feel their child would benefit from any outside services such as: speech therapy, occupational therapy, social or mental health agencies or medical services.

 Holding Fee for Temporary Withdrawal

If your child will not be attending Penn Pals at all or is reducing their days of attendance for an extended period of time that is more than 3 weeks but less than 9 weeks. (ex: maternity leave, work absences), there will be a non-refundable return holding fee. This fee will hold the vacated spots for the weeks that your child is off.

This fee is based on a percentage of the total fee that would have been paid during the time off. For a reduction in attendance, the percent is calculated on the amount that the weekly fee has been reduced multiplied by the number of weeks the reduction in attendance will be in effect. The percent is based on age of child. For example, an infant or toddler that is out completely for 5 weeks will pay 20% of the weekly fee multiplied by 5. A preschool age child that drops from 4 days to 2 days for 5 weeks will pay 15% of the difference in the rate multiplied by 5 weeks. For school-age children during the school year, the percent is 10% of the reduction in fee multiplied by the number of weeks (up to 9) that the child is not attending.

This policy applies to reductions during the school year. The summer withdrawal holding fees are structured differently. Please see the Director for additional information.

#### Required Forms For Each Child’s File

**Registration Form:** This form is to accompany your registration fee at the time of registration.

**Agreement**: Parents are required to sign a contractual agreement upon enrollment. You tuition amount can be found on this form. This form is required by the state to be updated every six months, but may also be updated due to a change in your enrollment or your child’s classroom. We will make a copy of this signed form for your child’s file and return the original to you.

**Emergency Contact Form:** This form is extremely important. It lists the people that can pick up your child, emergency contact telephone numbers, insurance information and any allergies or special dietary restrictions your child might have. The people that you list on this form must be available during the hours that your child is in our care. **A current form must be in each child’s file.** This form is required by the state to be updated every six months. If you change employment or residence, you are required to inform the site director as soon as possible.

**Health Assessment:** According to the state regulations, each child enrolled must have a current, age-appropriate health assessment form on file at Penn Pals no later than 30 days after the child’s first day of enrollment. If there are any special considerations, health, behavior or other needs that your child requires, please inform us as early as possible in order to ensure that the proper arrangements are made for your child.

**Discipline Policy:** Upon enrollment, each parent MUST sign and date the discipline policy and return it to the site

**Custody Papers:** If your child(ren) is involved in any legal situation, copies of the legal documents must be presented to the site director. This information will be kept in your child’s file. Legal documentation of custody must be present in your child’s file or we cannot deny a parent from picking up their child.

All of the above forms must be completed and returned prior to your child’s first day of attendance, with the exception of the health assessment.

Families moving from one Penn Pals location to another will have all records transferred automatically.

##### Penn Pals Child Care Discipline Policy

It is the objective at Penn Pals Child Care Centers to provide quality child care. We realize the importance of discipline and its effect on the children in our care. We know that it is necessary to remember that patience, love and understanding are vital in recognizing each child as a unique individual.

There will be no cruel, harsh or physical punishment. No discipline shall be imposed for failure to eat, to sleep or toileting accidents. No physical restraints shall be used, nor will children be placed in a locked room for confinement. No child shall be humiliated, shamed or frightened. Children will not be subjected to profanity, threats or derogatory remarks.

**General Penn Pals Child Care Rules:**

1. Show respect for all staff members and children.
2. Touch only items that belong to you.
3. Say only positive things. Use appropriate language.
4. Follow all instructions from staff members.

**Consequences:**

These are designed to establish a positive environment in which children can interact with each other. If the above rules should be violated by anyone, the following steps will be taken:

1. Redirection with explanation is our first means of discipline,
2. After recurring offences, the child will receive a verbal warning, as well as possible isolation from other children, and/or loss of privileges. Parents will be notified in writing.
3. If the child’s behavior continues, the parent will be contacted by telephone, informed of the problem, and possibly being required to pick them up..
4. If the behavior continues, a conference with parents will be scheduled with the director.
5. If the behavior continues, the child will be suspended. For the child to re-enter the program, a parent/child conference must be scheduled with the director
6. If the behavior does not cease, the child will be permanently dismissed from the program.

\*\*\* If at any time a problem is severe enough, we reserve to suspend the child and contact parents immediately.

NO REFUND will be given for the days of the suspension or the days following termination from the program.

**Termination:**

The following is a list of circumstances that could result in termination:

* Parent or child is physically or verbally abusive to staff or other children
* Physical Exposure
* Failure to maintain payment schedule
* Child leaving designated area without staff permission
* Stealing
* Failure of parent or child to follow the Penn Pals Child Care policies, procedures and rules.
* Failure to provide updated information and records.
* Failure to adhere to the center closing time.

When the director and owner, at their discretion, believe that the continued service is not the best interest of the child and /or Penn Pals Child Care.

**Vacation Credit Policy**

**Infant through Pre-Kindergarten:**

 During each calendar year, the fee will be waived with the use of credit days. Credit days can be used anytime that your child does not attend on his/her scheduled day. For example, you can use credit days for vacation or holidays. Your fee will be waived for the equivalent of two weeks of service. The amount of credit days that you will receive each year is based upon the number of days per week that your child attends, as well as the time of year that you first enroll. As an example, if your child attends 5 days a week, your two weeks of credit will be 10 days. If your child attends 3 days, your two weeks of credit will be 6 days. If your enrollment starts later in the year, the credit days will be prorated for the remainder of the year. If your enrollment changes during the year, adding or dropping days, the number of credit days will be adjusted accordingly. **You must give us 2 weeks notice when you use your credit.** No more than 2/3 of your credit days may be used during your first six months of enrollment. You may not carry over credit days from year to year. Credit days are only available if your tuition bill is current. **The vacation credit policy is strictly enforced throughout the year.**

**Kindergarten Credit Policy**:

During the school year in which your child is in kindergarten, you fall under the two-week per year credit policy until the calendar year ends in December. In January of the year your child is in kindergarten, there is only one credit week allowed during the summer between kindergarten and first grade. So no credit days are given to children in kindergarten between January and the end of the school year.

When your child begins first grade (it is still the same calendar year), their credit days come from all of the days that Penn Trafford does not have school, which can be anywhere from 10 to 12 days between September and December

**Always write on your checks the week(s) that you are paying for**

**School-Age Credit Policy**:

**First through Fifth Grade**

**Early Dismissal (two hours) Penn Trafford:**

If there is an early dismissal from school, which is approximately two hours earlier than normal time, there will NOT be a charge for the extra time at the center, if you are enrolled in the after school session. If your normal enrollment is for A.M. care only, and you do need care after school on early dismissal days, you will pay $7.00 for this extra time.

**Weather Delay:**

If there is a one or two-hour delay due to weather conditions, there will be no extra fee charged for this extra time, if you are enrolled for before school. Otherwise, there is a $7.00 fee for this extra time.

**School Closed for In-Service Days or Holidays:**

 Any time that there is no school because of an in-service day or holiday, the regular weekly fee for these days is waived if it falls on one of your scheduled days off. Your fee for that week is calculated as follows:

* You will deduct the appropriate number of days off of your weekly payment. As an example, if your child attends 5 days a week and Penn Trafford is closed two of those days, then you are only required to pay 3/5 of your weekly amount for that particular week. If your child will be attending Penn Pals on the days that Penn Trafford is closed, you will need to add $3.50 per hour that your child will be here to your weekly tuition check and mark it in the memo portion of your check.
* In the end, your total fee for the week will have been decreased if necessary, then increased by the hourly amount if your child will need to be at Penn Pals while Penn Trafford is closed.

\*\*\***Please Remember**\*\*\*

 We will ask you to sign up for the hours that you plan on having your child attend if Penn Trafford is closed. You will be obligated to pay $3.50/hour for the hours that you sign up for, whether or not your child attends.

**School Canceled for Weather:**

When school is canceled due to weather conditions, the same applies for days off. The adjustment in your fee can be made in your next check. Please remember to always write on the memo line of your check to explain your fee calculation ANYTIME your check is different than the amount on your fee agreement form.

**Important: In a normal week, with no school days off, you pay your weekly fee even if your child does not attend Penn Pals due to sickness, after school activities, vacations, etc.**

**Adjustments to your weekly fee are only made when there is no school at your child’s Penn-Trafford school.**

**Summer Credits**

 During the summer, all children going into first through sixth will receive one week of credit. If your child attends 5 days, you will get 5 credit days. If they attend 2 days per week, they will receive 2 credit days. This is to be used for vacation days or holidays when the child is not attending. July 4th can only be a credit day if you choose to use one of your days for it.

**Items That You Will Need To Provide**

 **Infants**:

* Food and bottles (labeled with child’s name)
* Disposable diapers
* 2 changes of weather appropriate clothes (labeled)
* Blanket (labeled with child’s name)
* Pacifier if desired (labeled with child’s name)
* Baby Wipes
* Child’s schedule- We will follow your schedule

**Toddlers – Pre-Kindergarten (Ages 1 – 5)**:

* Packed lunch (We provide 2% milk)
* Extra weather-appropriate clothes and footwear for basket (labeled)
* Disposable diapers if needed
* Every effort will be made to coordinate toilet training with the program stated by parent. During this time please keep 2 changes of clothes in your child’s basket.

**School-Age (1st – 5th Grade)**:

 Extra set of clothes including shoes for summer (labeled)

**Helpful Hints For All Ages**

Please dress your child with comfort and the weather in mind. Remember that we may use messy art materials, and that we go outside everyday, weather permitting.

Check your child’s basket everyday for art projects or information.

Please do not allow your child to bring in extra toys unless it is a show and tell day. If your child does bring in a toy, please label it.

**Snacks and Lunches:**

We care about your child’s nutritional needs. If your child has any allergies or dietary needs, please let the director and your child’s teacher know. We try to provide both fun and nutritious snacks. You may bring in a snack for special occasions for your child to share. If you plan on sending in a special snack, please let your child’s teacher know in advance. Please do not allow your child to walk around the center with food, as it is unfair to the other children.

**Meal Schedule:**

**Breakfast: 7:30 - 8:00 (NO EXCEPTIONS)**

 We offer cereal with 2% milk.

**Snacks:**

We provide nutritional morning and afternoon snacks with juice.

**Lunch:**

 Parents are responsible for providing lunches. We will provide 2% milk to drink. Please label lunch boxes with your child’s name. You can pack both microwaveable items as well as refrigerated items. Please make sure that all items are labeled with your child’s name. Also, please put the microwaveable items in a microwave-safe container. Please remember that by lunch time the children are hungry, and to send multiple items for lunch.

**Illness Policy**

 We ask that you do not bring your child to Penn Pals if they are ill. If your child becomes sick while at Penn Pals, you will have to make arrangements for immediate pick-up from the center. If the parents cannot be reached, the center can release the child to an emergency contact person. **If your child is sent home due to illness, your child may NOT return to Penn Pals until the symptoms have been absent for 24 hours. An individual slip will be sent home with your child saying when your child may return to Penn Pals.** Your child may be sent home for the following symptoms:

\* Temperature of 100.7 degrees using axillary

\* Diarrhea (2 or more episodes)

\* Symptoms of pink eye

\* Difficult or rapid breathing

 \* Evidence of lice

 \* Skin infection or oozing rashes

 \* Vomiting

 \* Child visibly ill – lethargic, clingy, weepy, requiring lengthy one-on-one care.

 If your child arrives at the center with any of these symptoms, he/she will be asked to leave. Staff members will notify the director of all illnesses, and a parent will be contacted for immediate pick-up if deemed necessary. No staff member can administer any form of medication unless the parents fill out the appropriate forms. You will receive an incident report should your child become injured in any way. In case of major incident that requires transportation to a medical facility, the parents will be notified as soon as possible.

**\*\*A doctor slip will need to be present in order for your child to return to the center within 24 hours if they were sent home due to any of the above symptoms**

 If your child needs medication throughout the day, you will have to bring in the labeled container. You will also have to sign a medication log, including the time and the dosage along with your signature. A staff member will administer the medication accordingly. Medication will be stored out of the reach of children, or in a locked box if refrigeration is required.

**Staff Information**

 Please be assured that all staff members have been fully trained, and meet the state regulations for child care employment. All site directors are fully qualified, degreed professionals. Our staff members are required to have a minimum of 2,500 hours of experience with children, and/or an educational background relating to teaching or childcare. In addition to initial requirements for employment, each staff member must also maintain the following:

* 12 - 24 hours of child care training annually
* CPR and First Aid certification
* Criminal Record Clearance
* Child Abuse Clearance
* FBI Clearance
* Fire Saftey
* Bi-Annual Physical (Including TB Test)

A minimum of two staff people trained in CPR and First Aid will be present at all times.

**Confidential**

 It is the policy of Penn Pals Child Care Center to discuss issues involving a child ONLY with a parent or guardian. Consent from the parent or guardian is required when discussing the child with a third party. Please direct any questions or concerns about your child to the site director or to your child’s teacher.

If your child has one of the following plans, please fill out this form.

**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEP) & INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLANS (IFSP) INFORMATION SHEET**

**Child’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your child’s growth and development is measured with developmental assessments. If your child currently has and IEP/IFSP, it would be beneficial to share a copy of this plan with us so we can work together to ensure that the guidelines are put into practice. You do not have to provide this information if you do not wish to do so.

 ⁪ I am providing a copy of my child’s IEP or IFSP.

 ⁪ I am not providing a copy of my child’s IEP or IFSP

 and/or this is not applicable to my child.

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Community/School Stakeholders

Local Schools:

Penn Trafford High School – 724-744-4471

 Penn Middle School – 724-744-4431

 Trafford Middle School – 412-372-6600

 Trafford Elementary – 412-372-6600

 Levelgreen Elementary – 412-372-6603

 Sunrise Elementary – 724-864-6700

 McCullough Elementary – 724-744-7441

 Harrison Park Elementary – 724-744-2161

Local Headstart Programs;

 Brightside Academy, Jeannette – 724-

 Kiddie U Child Development Center, Gbg. – 724-850-1600

 Greensburg YMCA – 724-834-0150

Community Action Partnership – [www.who-inc.org](http://www.who-inc.org)

 Westmoreland Human Opportunities, Inc.

 Child Development

 Family and Youth

 Housing

 Mental Health

 Emergency Services

 Self-Sufficiency

 Employment and Training

If any parent feels that there are any additional Community/School Stakeholders that could be added to the list, please let us know.



###### Keystone STARS

 Penn Pals is currently enrolled in the Keystone STARS. This is a program which enhances our center by rewarding us for going above and beyond the Department of Public Welfare’s standards. We are required to document certain aspects of your child’s development as well as information passed along to the parents.

 Upon your child’s enrollment, we encourage you to take advantage of our “Getting to Know You” meeting. Once your child is enrolled, you may have some questions or concerns about lessons, activities, tuition, vacation credit days, holidays, etc. This would be a great time to request a meeting with either the Director, Teacher or both. Just let us know, and we will be happy to help!

 Conferences are also available at any time. Please feel free to call or stop by if you have a quick question or you can also schedule a time at your convenience with your child’s teacher to discuss his/her progress.

 When it comes time for your child to transition to a new age group, classroom, a new school or even being home alone, we will do our best to help you and your child to make it a smooth and happy transition. We hold open houses twice per year to facilitate the change to another room. In addition, we have books, activities and years of experience to help you through.

At the upper level of Keystone Stars, we begin to do bi-weekly observations of the children in our care starting within the first 45 days of their enrollment. We will complete this first observation and then set up to have a conference with you about your child’s development and adjustment to our learning facility. If you are not interested in having a conference at that time we will have a paper where you can decline to have the conference

 If for any reason you need to move your child to another center, we will be happy to send your child’s records with you. This could save a lot of time.

 As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to call!

Outside Employment of Teachers

We generally do not encourage our employees to make independent child care arrangements with families at the school. However, in the event that you enter into an agreement with a Penn Pals Child Care Center employee to babysit for your family outside of the employee’s normal work hours and/or outside of the school hours, it must be done away from the center and with the full knowledge and understanding that the sitter enters into such an agreement as a private citizen and not as a Penn Pals Child Care Center employee. We cannot be responsible for our employees away from school, outside their working hours, and will not be liable for their acts or omissions when not on our property including the transportation of children. You may be required to sign an acknowledgement and waiver to this effect.

Dear Parents,

 Your child will be allowed to bring their DS, iPods, iPads, Tablets or other electronic devices. Children will not be allowed to share their belongings with other children. They will have time set aside each day to play them. Penn Pals **will not** be responsible for any systems that are stolen, broken or misplaced. It is up to the child’s parent if they want their child to bring these devices to the center. All devices **must be** charged in the morning when child arrives at the center and labeled (including games). Devices will not be allowed to go on field trips.

Penn Pals only allow games that are rated “EC” (early childhood) or “E” (for everyone). We do not permit games rated Everyone 10+, teen, mature, adults only and rating pending. If a child would bring a game with one of those ratings, and is caught playing it, we will ask the child to put it away. We will be checking games on a regular basis to determine that they are appropriately rated. If you have any questions, please feel free to see either of the Directors.

Parents, if you allow your child/children to bring these items to Penn Pals, you and your child must sign below and return to the center.

I **allow** my child to bring their device to Penn Pals and will not hold Penn Pals responsible if anything should happen to these items.

Parents Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Childs Signature:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_