

Peninsula Elementary School

# 4th/5th Grade Handbook

2025-26 School Year



We are very excited to welcome our students back for the new school year! We look forward to working with you. Here is some general information that will ensure a great year.

## Attendance

As much as possible, it's important for students to be *on time and ready to learn*. We start our day at **8am** each morning. In the event that your student needs to miss school for any reason, please contact the Peninsula Office at (503) 916-6275 to let us know.



## Breakfast / Entering the Building in the Morning

All students enter the set of double doors south of the cafeteria doors, as in years past. As they enter, school adults will help them navigate their way depending on whether they want breakfast. Breakfast this year will be “grab and go” so students will pick it up and proceed to their classrooms without stopping in the cafeteria.



### **Birthdays**

We will have one special (and BIG) party to celebrate everyone's birthday at the end of the year. Students will be involved in planning and preparing for this special event. More information will be sent closer to the date. On your child's birthday they will be acknowledged during our community circle. To ensure equity please save treats and special celebrations for after school events.



### **Cellphones**

Some parents feel comfortable having their students carry a cellphone. However, school policy dictates that cellphones and other electronic devices ***should be off and out of sight when the students are in the building***. Students that need to communicate with parents can use the school phone as appropriate. Cell phones may be confiscated if they are a distraction and returned to parents only.



### **Classroom Celebrations**

We will be celebrating our success in many different ways including: publishing and posting student work, field trips and other academic and milestone celebrations. Please let us know if you would like to be involved in planning classroom celebrations.



## **Classroom Expectations & Student Rights**

### **Classroom Management Plan**

The foundation of our classroom management plan starts with establishing a strong community. To that end we will collaborate on a list of classroom expectations that students agree upon and post in the classroom. We conduct classroom meetings several times throughout the week to build community, offer compliments, give thanks, and address shared challenges and successes. During these meetings we also address student or teacher concerns and try to come up with a solution. Often, we find that issues brought up during class meetings cease to be issues. Nevertheless, sometimes problems arise outside of a class meeting that need to be addressed promptly, fairly, and with consequences that are restorative rather than punitive.

We strongly believe that each student must be ensured the right to learn in a welcoming, calm, safe and supportive environment. Students have the right to a classroom where academic learning and community are at the heart of daily activity. As such, we will hold students accountable for adhering to the [Portland Public Schools Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#).

### **When Class is Running Smoothly**

When class is going well as a community and as individuals, we experience positive consequences: Greater opportunity and responsibility; When we complete a task successfully, it opens the opportunity for student choice time; Positive phone call or note home; Extended recess; More autonomy.

These are the fundamentals of our community expectations and we will all do our part to make sure class time and community expectations are respected.

**Calming Moment/Calming Corner:** Students will be taught how to take a quick break at their seat or in a special calming corner in the classroom and use mindfulness strategies to reset their body and brain to get back to learning. Students can request these breaks or the teacher might suggest one if it looks like it might be helpful.



### **Communication**

We believe that school is a partnership between teacher, home and child. As a member of this partnership, we will be communicating with your family regularly regarding classroom events, your child's progress, learning opportunities and classroom needs.

To facilitate communication, we have created classroom websites. Websites will be updated regularly. Please bookmark it and check it often.

On class websites you will find:

- Daily Schedule
- Calendar of Events
- Classroom Newsletters
- Academic Resources
- Classroom Values and Community

The website will also be updated with the weekly newsletter with information about the current and upcoming weeks. This will be sent via email and/or Parent Square.

Students will also be required to write in their planner everyday. It would be beneficial to help your students start learning to check their planner on a daily basis at home in order to build that habit of responsibility.



### Donations

*If you are willing and able to donate to our classroom, these are always welcome items:*

|                     |                   |              |         |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|-------------------|
| Sanitizing<br>wipes | Hand<br>Sanitizer | Paper Towels | Kleenex | Wooden<br>pencils |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------|-------------------|



### Extended Absences

I always appreciate knowing in advance about your child's upcoming absence. I also understand and respect that family time and travel can be meaningful experiences, and I know that people travel for a variety of reasons. I want to support your child's learning as best I can.

However, I want to be transparent about a common challenge we face when students are out for extended periods: in a classroom that uses best practices like formative assessment and differentiated instruction, much of the learning is dynamic and responsive to students' needs. This means lessons and assignments are often adjusted based on how students are progressing during class—not planned far in advance as a fixed set of worksheets or tasks.

Because of this, I'm not able to provide a full set of meaningful, equivalent work ahead of a vacation. Pre-packaged assignments wouldn't reflect the classroom conversations, collaboration, and feedback that shape our learning every day.

That said, I will ensure your child has every opportunity to catch up when they return. Here's what that will look like:

- I'll share a summary of key lessons, concepts, and activities they missed.
- I'll offer time during independent work periods or lunch/recess (if needed) for check-ins or extra support.
- Your child can access any resources or materials available to review missed content.
- We'll prioritize the most essential learning, so the catch-up process is manageable and meaningful.

If your child enjoys reading, journaling, or exploring topics connected to our current unit while away, that can help keep their learning active, but it's not required.

Thank you for your understanding and partnership. Please feel free to reach out if you have any further questions—I'm always happy to talk more about how we can support your child's success.



### Field Trips

In past years, we have made a point of taking lots of field trips. Every student must have a signed permission slip on file for that particular field trip. It is important that we have enough chaperones to make these trips a reality. If you are able to volunteer to chaperone, we'd love to have you. Please make sure that you have a volunteer form on file in the office.



### **Go Home Plans**

At the beginning of the year, let us know how you would like your child to get home and whether or not they have permission to walk. If your child is being picked up by someone other than legal guardians, please ensure the office has that information on file. If there is a change in go home plan during the school day, please call the Peninsula office: (503) 916-6275. The office will let us know. Please do not email or text us as we might not get the message in time. Unless otherwise notified by you through a note, a phone call or an email (in advance), we will always follow the go home plan you have established.



### **Homework**

This year your child will be expected to read daily for homework (weekend reading is encouraged, but optional). At least 30 minutes is appropriate for fourth and fifth graders, but the exact timing is up to you. Adjust as is appropriate for your child and feel free to be flexible for your schedule (ex. 10 minutes one day, 40 minutes the next). Before bed is a great time to read and wind down.

Fourth and fifth graders can also expect math homework once or twice a week. These assignments are intended to strengthen students' skill at navigating the home/school connection and to give you—the caregiver—a chance to see what we're working on.



### **Panther Paws**

At Peninsula, one way we recognize students is with Panther Paws. These tickets are given when we notice students demonstrating our school and classroom values. Students can choose to bring Panther Paws home or collect them at school to be used for special privileges. Be on the lookout for these tickets and feel free to give your child lots of extra positive reinforcement when they come home.



### **Recess**

We believe that a lot of learning happens at recess and that it is an important part of a healthy school day. We take two 15-20 minute recesses per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.



### **Snack**

You are welcome to send your child to school with a healthy snack. Great snack options include: fruit or veggie sticks, pretzels, yogurt or trail mix. Please label snack containers with your student's name. Students may eat a snack during recess. Students are welcome to pick up breakfast and save it for snack time. Please, no junk food or soda.



## **Contact Information**

### **Communication/Contact Information**

#### ***Claire Skelly (Claire), Principal:***

1. Claire will be sending out regular messages. She will let you know what you can expect in her first email.
2. Send an email to [cskelly@pps.net](mailto:cskelly@pps.net)
3. Call the Peninsula office at 503.916.6275 and ask to be connected or leave a message.

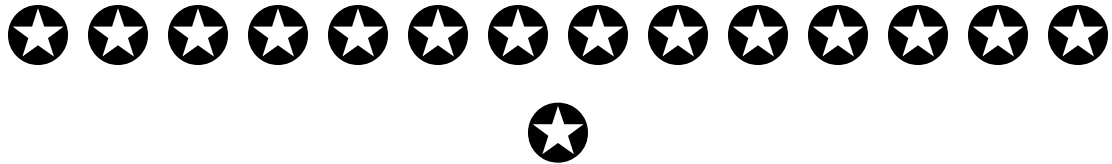
#### ***Erika Reavis, Principal's Secretary:***

1. Duties include: Budget, Ordering, Substitutes, Scheduling, Licensures, Office Organization and Communications
2. Call the Peninsula office at 503.916.6275 and ask to be connected or leave a message.
3. Send an email to [erreavis@pps.net](mailto:erreavis@pps.net)

#### ***Samara Carranza (Ms. Carranza), School Counselor:***

1. Get the latest information about the [Peninsula Counseling Program](#) and contact information for Ms. Carranza using the embedded link.
2. Call the Peninsula office at 503.916.6275 and ask to be connected or leave a message.

3. Send an email to [scarranza@pps.net](mailto:scarranza@pps.net)



### Volunteering

There are lots of possible ways to help our classroom community. Here are a few ideas:

- Organizing class celebrations
- Chaperoning on Field Trips
- Working with students to improve academic skills
- Prepping student work

If there is **any** chance you'll want to volunteer and/or chaperone field trips this year, you **MUST** have a PPS background check on file. We ***highly recommend*** completing one ***early in the year***, even if you are not sure about volunteering. They can take up to 2 weeks to be approved. (We have had situations where parents wanted to volunteer, but couldn't because they didn't have a background check on file.) To complete a background check go to:

<https://www.pps.net/volunteer> It's pretty easy and straightforward.



### Water Bottles

Please send your students to school with a water bottle that they can keep at school or bring each day. Please clearly label your student's water bottle with their first and last name.