

New Mexico  
**pre**  
Invest A Little  
Get A Lot



# **New Mexico PreK Programs**

## **2023-2024 Family Handbook**



# **Peñasco Independent School District**

**“Home of the Panthers”**

## **Welcome to PreK at Penasco Independent School District!**

We are thrilled to have your child and all of your family as part of our program. Please use this handbook to get to know our program and policies. If you have any questions or concerns, regarding this handbook please let any of your children's teachers know when you meet with them at pick up or drop off times, or during any of the conferences we have throughout the year.

### **School Hours:**

Our program hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 8:00 am -3:45 pm. We follow the Penasco Independent School District School (PISD) Calendar including holidays, family-teacher conferences and staff development days. A copy of this calendar is in this handbook and we will always give families advance notice when our classrooms are not open. Please keep in mind that our PreK Program starts 2 weeks after PISD and ends 1 week prior to the end date of PISD.

We enroll students and employ staff without discrimination against gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, color, religion, or political belief.

- Penasco Independent School District's PreK is located at Penasco Elementary School, 13 School Road School, Penasco, NM  
Principal: Michelle Gonzales 575-587-2502 ext.2001

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Penasco Independent School District NM PreK classrooms is to provide our community with access to voluntary, quality NM PreK programs and services. We will provide developmentally appropriate activities for our PreK students to advance their development and increase their school readiness.

## **Philosophy**

We believe children learn best through play. Therefore, we will address the total developmental needs of our students with the “learning through play” philosophy. Our instruction will include physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs, healthcare, nutrition, safety and multicultural sensitivity.

## **Recruitment**

Families are informed about the NM PreK programs through school district communications as well as community communications and collaborations.

## **Waiting List Policy**

Each site has a waiting list for all families who are interested in their child attending the NM PreK program.

These lists are kept with the secretaries and are developed for the new year each spring. Eligible families for the upcoming year are called to see if they are still interested in attending. Students are added in the order they turn in their application. Priority for placement is given to students with IEPs.

## **Eligibility**

The PreK Program provides voluntary, state-funded, pre-kindergarten programs for children who turn **four years old** before September 1<sup>st</sup> and are not age-eligible for kindergarten (**NMSA 6.30.9.10**), including students with disabilities, regardless of the disability.

## **Enrollment**

In order to enroll a child at Penasco Independent School District's NM PreK the contracting person must meet the following criteria: The contracting person must have primary legal custody of the child. (Parent, Foster Parent, Legal Guardian)

Enrollment is accomplished by providing the following information:

1. Completed registration form
2. Completed Emergency Medical Form
3. Summary of child's most recent Wellness Check (Physical)
4. Copy of child's immunization record. (Child cannot be admitted without proof of current immunizations or legal waiver.)
5. Birth Certificate
6. Photo release
7. Signed Handbook Acknowledgment Form

A Home Visit must be completed prior to the PreK start date or within the first 3 months of school. An ASQ (Ages & Stages Questionnaire) and ASQ-SE must be completed within the first three months of school, from the date of enrollment.

Selection will be the responsibility of the school and will meet the NM PreK requirements. Efforts will be made to achieve balance in each classroom.

## **B Attendance**

If your child is absent for any reason, we ask that you please call the school secretary at 575-587-2502 ext.2000. If your child is absent for more than **three** consecutive days please provide your child's school with a doctor's excuse.

A telephone call or a written excuse should include the following:

- The name of the child

- The date(s) of the absence
- The reason for the absence

If you expect your child to be absent for more than **ten** days you should contact the office immediately. Ten or more consecutive excused or unexcused absences will result in the students' immediate withdrawal from school.

Withdrawals from school will be handled by the office. Parents/Guardians must contact the office and let his/her classroom teacher know the date of withdrawal.

## **Family Involvement**

You are your child's first and most important teacher. We encourage you to be involved in our program activities.

Prior to the beginning of the school year, we will schedule one visit to your home. We will share your child's progress with you three times per year during Family-Teacher Conferences. Also, you will be invited to many school and family events during the school year.

We encourage you to participate in your child's classroom. A background check must be completed on all new hires and volunteers prior to working with children. We hope you will be involved in your child's education and feel welcomed in the classroom.

## **Health and Developmental Screenings**

Health Screenings will be provided by the school nurse. Hearing, vision, and dental screenings will be conducted within the first 3 months of school. A current physical examination and a current immunization record are required to be submitted by the family.

Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ & ASQ-SE) and home visits will be conducted prior to the beginning of the school year (or within the first 3 months of attendance). ASQs can be completed at the home visit. The questionnaires are a screening tool used to assess children's current developmental levels. Communication, Motor, Problem Solving, and Social/Emotional Development are the areas assessed by the ASQ and ASQ-SE.

If a child is suspected to have a developmental delay, the family will be referred to the Child Find Team for further evaluation. We will provide support to you and your child through the process. After the evaluation is completed, a meeting will be conducted to determine if further testing is needed.

Inclusive Special Education support and services are available in the NM PreK classrooms. All services listed on the child's IEP will be provided in the school setting unless otherwise indicated. Special Education, Speech/ Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and/or Social Work Services are provided as indicated in the IEP.



## **PreK Developmentally Appropriate Classroom Practices and Curriculum Model**

We follow the New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines and our students' interests to inform our developmentally appropriate, *learning through play* curriculum. In doing so we work towards ensuring that each child reaches his or her maximum potential. *Learning Through Play* When using the learning through play curriculum model, teachers are able to set up the environment and develop activities, to build upon what children are already engaging in on their own. Research has shown that the way children learn best is through play.

Teachers use authentic observations to formulate goals and objectives that are meaningful for the children. In using this technique, teachers can provide activities to support the child's interests, learning and development.

It is our goal to communicate clearly with families about how their child is growing and learning, what steps are being taken to enhance his or her early learning and to address the family's goals and concerns. Attention will be paid to each child's unique capabilities, rate of development, and individual traits and characteristics. (New Mexico Early Learning Guidelines)

## **Transportation**

Transportation is available for NM PreK students. If your child has an IEP, the IEP team can discuss if an EA should accompany your child during transportation if necessary and individual arrangements will be made as part of their program design. Students are asked to follow the transportation rules.

## **Food Service Program**

The Food Service Department at your child's school provides a variety of services every day to meet the nutritional needs of your child. The school cafeteria provides a nutritional breakfast and lunch daily. The menu is published in the classroom. Polite table manners are practiced during family style meals. Lunch is considered a part of your child's educational day.

## **Transition Plans**

Prior to the beginning of school, teachers will support students and families as they transition to the PreK program. Relationships between teachers and families will be established through home visits and open houses.

Students with disabilities will have transition IEPs where their services in Kindergarten will be evaluated and revised as appropriate.



# Peñasco Independent School District

Melissa Sandoval, Superintendent

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ legal guardian of  
\_\_\_\_\_, have  
read and understand the Peñasco Independent School District NM PreK  
Parent Handbook.

**Peñasco School Board of Education**  
Dorothy Lopez-Sherman, Board President  
Dr. Carlos Abeyta, Board Vice-President  
Amanda Bissell, Board Secretary  
Patricia Martinez, Board Member  
[www.penascoisd.com](http://www.penascoisd.com)  
Gwen Simbolo, Board Member



575-587-2502  
575-587-2513 (fax)



P.O Box 520  
Peñasco, NM 87553



# Peñasco Independent School District

## 2023-2024

### School Calendar

**July 23**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

**August 23**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

**September 23**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30

**October 23**

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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

**November 23**

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19	20	21	H	H	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

**December 23**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	H	H	H	H	29	30
31						

**January 24**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**February 24**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

**March 24**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

**April 24**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

**May 24**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	H	28	29			

**June 24**

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

**160 Instructional Days**  
 Start time 8:00 am End time 3:45 pm  
 Oct 12 End of Q1  
 Dec 21 End of Q2  
 Mar 7 End of Q3  
 May 30 End of Q4  
 May 25th Graduation

	First Day of School
	Last Day of School
	Half Day for Students AM Parent/Teacher Conferences PM
	Holiday - District Closed
<b>H</b>	Holiday - District Closed
<b>Holidays</b>	Sept 4 - Labor Day Oct 20 Half Day for Students Nov 22-24 Thanksgiving Break Dec 22 - Jan 3 Winter Break Mar 11-14 Spring Break I Mar 28 Half Day for Students Apr 1 - Spring Break II May 27 Memorial Day

