



Handbook
2021-2022 School Year

Mission Statement

Pioneer School is committed to serving highly capable students whose primary need is academic stimulation and expects to work in partnership with parents who are significantly involved in their children's education.



Dear Parent(s):

This handbook has been prepared to help you become better acquainted with Pioneer School. It contains general information about the school, its programs, parent involvement, and important dates.

Your cooperation in reviewing and becoming familiar with the policies of the school will make a wonderful contribution toward providing a happy and productive learning atmosphere for our children.

We urge you to keep this handbook at hand for ready reference.

Sincerely,

The Pioneer School Staff

Pioneer School admits students of any race, color, sex, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Pioneer does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admission policies, athletic, and other school-administered programs.

Pioneer School is a non-profit educational organization. Pioneer has 501C-3 status as given by the Internal Revenue Service, so all contributions are full tax deductible.

Pioneer School is fully accredited by the Washington State Board of Education.

Pioneer School allows free access by parents at all times to all areas of the school that are used by their child(ren).



School Staff

Betty Burley-Wolf, Founding Director	betty@pioneerschool.com
Tina Davis - Kindergarten	tina@pioneerschool.com
Jennifer Henry - 1 st	jennifer@pioneerschool.com
Jordana Schneidmiller – 2 nd	jordana@pioneerschool.com
Annie Ginelli - 3 rd	annie@pioneerschool.com
Nicole Bronson – 4 th / 5 th /6 th	nicole@pioneerschool.com
Leah Kliment - Teaching Assistant	leah@pioneerschool.com
Nidhi Sharma - Teaching Assistant	nidhi@pioneerschool.com

Class Names

- K - Pups
- 1st - Pathfinders
- 2nd - Scholars
- 3rd - Explorers
- 4th/5th - Pioneers



2021-2022 Calendar

A more complete, up to date calendar can always be found on our website - www.pioneerschool.com

August 30: Back to School Ice cream social 6PM

September 1: School Begins

September 6th: Labor Day

November 11th: Veterans Day Observed

November 24th: 1/2 day; November 25th & 26th: Thanksgiving Break

December 18st - January 2nd: Winter Break

January 17th: MLK Holiday

Jan. 21 & Jan. 28: Cross Country Skiing @ Mt. Spokane– No school at Pioneer

February 4, 11, 18 & 25: Downhill Skiing @ Schweitzer– No school at Pioneer

February 21st: President's Day

April 2nd: 1/2 day;

April 4th -8th: Spring Break

May 18th – 20th (tentative) –Port Townsend Marine Science Center (4th/5th)

May 30th: Memorial Day Holiday

June 10th: Last Day of School with Medieval festival



Daily Schedule

8:15 AM: Outside supervision begins

8:30 AM: Class begins

10:00-10:15 AM: K Recess

10:15-10:30 AM: 1-2 Recess

10:30-10:45 AM: 3-4-5-6 Recess

11:00AM-12:00PM: K-1 Lunch/Recess

11:30AM-12:30PM: 2-3 Lunch/Recess

12:00-1:00 PM: 4-5-6 Lunch/Recess

3:00 PM Dismissal

3:00-5:00 PM: After care in Tina's Room- \$0.12 per minute used (\$0.06 per sibling)

billed monthly



All persons authorized to pick up your child must be listed on your child's registration form. Please make sure you keep this information up to date.

All children should be picked up by their parents or carpoolers at 3:00 PM. Students who have not been picked up will be escorted to After Care in Ms. Tina's classroom. There are not any playground privileges after school as no supervision is provided.

Topic Rotations

2021-2022

Insects
Native Americans
Winter Olympics/Asia
Scientific Method & Kitchen Chemistry
Medieval Times
Events: Native American Potlatch

2022-2023

Geology
Pioneers
Human Body
Birds
Events: Fort Walla Walla (Family camp-out),
Yellowstone 4 (tentative)

2023-2024

Trees/Plants
Pacific Northwest
Space
Authors & Artists
Oceans/Rivers
Events: Water World (4/5)- May 26-29, 2020

2024-2025

Animals
American History
World Cultures
Inventions/Transportation
Weather/Water
Events: Chewelah Peak, Yellowstone 4/5
(tentative)



Annual Events

- Parent Night
- Read-a-thon & Family Carnival
- Thanksgiving Potluck
- Cross Country and Downhill Skiing Fridays
- Author's Tea
- Bike Day
- Field Day
- Spirit Week
- Community Service Projects
- End of Year Family Picnic



As families finish up enrollment paperwork for next year, many begin looking forward to the experience of a child moving up to the next classroom. Most adults who attended traditional private or public school can remember the sense of accomplishment in finishing a grade. This would usually be accompanied by a move to a new teacher and classroom. The system of age and grade – based promotion is so widespread it can seem like the only ‘normal’ course to take for our own children. It may be useful to reconsider these expectations as Pioneer families, and as a community. The traditional method of promotion considers age above all else. It is designed to break skills and understandings into discrete chunks that can be assigned to each grade and taught to large groups. The *lack of flexibility* in the system dictates the need for student advancement in order to get the next chunk. It works well enough for many students, especially if they are not at either end of an ability or maturity spectrum. It is not, however, highly responsive to the whole child. Sometimes students who are socially and emotionally young must be pushed forward because of their age. At the same time, students who are highly capable must move with their age group rather than the real pace of their learning.

At Pioneer there is a more dynamic, responsive model of education. It is simply inadequate language to refer to our classes by grade level. The truth is that any given student could be doing 2nd grade math, have a 4th grade reading level and struggle with the stamina to write as much as a 1st grader. Instead of using language and promotion that was created for homogeneity, we are determining placement by examining all aspects of the child: social, emotional and academic. In small groups we can adapt our instruction for an emotionally immature/young student with tremendous intellectual hunger. Our Topic-based instruction aids in this by making one year of study very different from the next. If a student remains in one classroom for 2 years it is by no means a repeat experience. (All of us would have much easier jobs if this were so....) Many students remain at Pioneer for 5 years, though we have only 4 classrooms. This means spending more than one year in a particular classroom. It is certainly not a failure or problem, in fact it is exactly our strength.



To attend to Pioneer's Mission and serve each student as a whole child the staff considers four major components for classroom placement:

Prerequisite Benchmarks/Entrance Expectations as set for that classroom by the teachers and director

Maturity and Social Skills

Emotional Intelligence

Character and Citizenship

These skills, abilities and behaviors reflect the child's overall readiness for the workload that has been traditional at that level in Pioneer School's enriched environment. Factoring in how a student gets along with peers and authority, their degree of self-discipline, internal motivation and situational maturity is very critical in classroom placement. The educators at Pioneer work as a team to tailor the educational environment and experience to meet the needs of the individual within their best classroom fit.

Academic acceleration is not the ONLY or even always the highest priority for a gifted child. Pioneer has had plenty of students over the years that could have easily and rapidly advanced through straight grade-level content. However, sending a young academically advanced child into a socially mature group without first catching up his/her emotional intelligence and character is a great disservice to that child, and will usually result in unfavorable consequences. At Pioneer we are learning in ways that go deeper, not just faster. The school is designed to facilitate four facets of lifelong learners: *exploring themes at a higher plane, discovering personal passions, building real experiences, and developing oneself as a scholar and a citizen.*



Pioneer School Discipline Policy

Students are to show evidence of self- discipline and self-control by respecting themselves, others and the property of others. The following student behaviors are expected:

- Cooperating with all staff members
- Demonstrating the social skills needed to get along with peers
- Working and playing without disturbing others
- Maintaining an environment which is free from physical and verbal harm or threat of harm
- Exercising good judgment (whether or not directly supervised)
- Following the Student Behavioral Expectations while on Learning Expeditions

Ensuring classroom and recess discipline is the responsibility of the staff in conjunction with parent support. To safeguard the rights of all staff and student, the following actions may be taken when an infraction of behavioral expectations is observed during school activities:

	Consequence
1 st offense	Call or e-mail home (dependent on severity)
2 nd offense	Parent / Teacher conference
3 rd offense	Student will miss a field trip
4 th offense	Suspension from school
5 th offense	Expulsion from school

Examples of behavior that will not be tolerated includes, but is not limited to the following: Failure to listen and comply with teacher directions, inappropriate language towards staff or other students, avoidance of work and staff directives, defiance, insubordination, and aggression.



Pioneer School Learning Expedition Chaperone Guide

Thank you for volunteering to be a chaperone for a school learning expedition. Please review the following behavior expectations with your students. Learning expeditions can be either an academic learning expedition (stay with your class/group) or a recreational learning expedition (skiing, roller skating, etc.).

School-Wide Expectation: *Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful!* The 3Bs should be followed when on a learning expedition.

Be safe – sit or stand quietly, no running, stay together

Be responsible – do not touch unless given permission, clean up your space, put away items after you have used them. Be prompt and ready when it is your turn

Respect yourself – listen carefully, stay on task, be your best, sit or stand quietly

Respect others – listen, say please and thank you, wait your turn, sit or stand quietly; be silent when others are talking

Procedures, Responsibilities and Behavioral Expectations

Be focused on the children that have been assigned to your group, but also aware of others. Don't ignore inappropriate behavior simply because s/he is not one of yours. By agreeing to be a learning expedition chaperone, you are committing to give your full, undivided attention to the children and to facilitating the experience the teachers have planned for them.

It is very important to treat all the children you are supervising with consistency. Behavioral expectations (listed below) are the same for all students and siblings when they are on learning expeditions. It is the chaperone's responsibility to make certain that these guidelines and rules are followed by every child attending learning expeditions with Pioneer School.

If you are tempted to give your group some extra, special privilege (ice cream, candy or other treats), **don't do it!** Undoing the perception of unfair privilege or entitlement is both time consuming and unpleasant. Special privileges for some compromise the total learning expedition experience for all the students.



Chaperone Procedures and Responsibilities

We will provide chaperones with the specific times they are expected to arrive at Pioneer School, type of learning expedition, directions to location, lead staff member, learning expedition departure times and returning times. Please be punctual.

Sign up in the office to drive a group on a learning expedition no later than Tuesday afternoon. The carpool list closes and will be finalized Wednesday morning at 8:30AM. NO EXCEPTIONS. Changes create a domino effect and potential confusion which can lead to safety issues.

Familiarize yourself with the schedule for the whole learning expedition. Stay on schedule.

Read any instructions/guidelines from the teacher (points of interest, student tasks, facts to share with students, etc.). Be prepared to talk with the students in your group about the learning expedition experience. Cooperate with site personnel.

Carry a list of the children who have been assigned to your group and do head counts frequently. Make sure you know each child's name.

If lunch or snacks are eaten at the learning expedition site, make sure children clean up any litter they have created or that is left in their eating area. (They will insist the litter isn't theirs; make them clean it up anyway.)

Calmly redirect children who are behaving inappropriately. (Pointing out something interesting, engaging them in conversation, reminding them of the behavior expectations, separating children who are encouraging each other to be loud, silly, uncooperative, etc., are all appropriate redirection techniques.) If one of the children in your group is particularly difficult and none of your redirection techniques is working, let a teacher know immediately. The teacher may suggest that you combine your groups, or she may take the child with her.

Safety

Before unloading students from your vehicle, please remind the students that drivers in other cars cannot see them. Students must stay with their chaperone while exiting the vehicle and walking in parking lots, driveways and crossing roads. On Bike Day, walk bikes to the trailhead.

Upon arrival at our location, please keep your students with you at all times and check in with the staff member in charge of that learning expedition. Once all the carpools have arrived, the lead staff member will provide directions to begin our learning expedition.



Student Behavioral Expectations

Students and siblings are expected to be courteous and respectful at all times to adults and children alike. They are expected to:

- Stay with their group and with their chaperone at all times.
- Speak in calm, quiet voices.
- Move at a calm, appropriate pace.
- Take turns speaking or participating in activities that are designed for one student at a time.
- Listen when others are talking and respond respectfully.
- Follow behind the tour leader and do not run ahead.
- Follow teacher/chaperone directions.
- Keep track of their belongings.
- Take care of and be respectful of the environment and property they are visiting.
- Be inclusive with each other.
- Complete any assigned tasks.

Thank you for providing this valuable service to our students. Your participation and partnership with us is essential and appreciated.

Policies

Allergies

For the safety of your child all food allergies must be in writing on your child's enrollment form. If we need to make accommodations for your child in the classroom then please schedule a time to talk with Betty and your child's teacher.

Arrival

Students may begin to arrive at 8:15 AM. There is supervision on the back playground starting at 8:15AM. School starts promptly at 8:30AM.



Attendance

Regular attendance is important for your child's social and academic growth. However, please keep your child at home if they are running a fever, have vomited/diarrhea within the last 24 hours, or have any other contagious illness. Please email us if your child is home sick. If you are going to be gone for a family trip, please contact your child's teacher a couple of weeks in advance to determine their policy on make-up work. A complete attendance policy will come home with your child. We are mandated by the state to track absences and tardies. While Pioneer supports families taking a vacation during the school year, we ask that you limit it to **one** week.

Birthdays/Holidays

If you would like to bring in a treat to celebrate your child's birthday, please contact their teacher in advance to arrange a time. Ready to serve treats are appreciated.

Birthday invitations may only be passed out at school if all of the children of your child's gender in their class (or the whole class) are invited. Please only depart from school grounds for a party if all of the children of your child's gender are invited. These policies help to avoid hurt feelings.

At Pioneer School major holidays are acknowledged, but the celebration of these holidays is not emphasized in the curriculum. Students do not dress up for Halloween, but we will enjoy a topic related celebration. Before the Thanksgiving break we celebrate family with an all school feast. In December, we celebrate the "Spirit of Giving" through community service projects. On Valentine's Day students share valentines with their classmates.

Calendar

An updated school calendar will be sent home monthly with your child. While our major holidays, breaks, and events are set at the beginning of the year, we add learning expeditions throughout the year. The up to the minute school calendar is always available on our website. To access Pioneer School calendar, go to <https://www.pioneerschool.com/parent-login> and type in password-Pioneer1980

If you have a Google calendar you can click on a link to have our calendar automatically added to yours.

Chaperones

Chaperones are essential to our Learning Expeditions. By agreeing to be a learning expedition chaperone, you are committing to give your full, undivided attention to the children and to facilitating the experience the teachers have planned for them.



Communication

Pioneer School communicates primarily through e-mail. A weekly newsletter is sent home with important information about what is happening at school, learning expeditions, and upcoming events. It is very important that you read this information weekly and respond to any requests that apply to your child. Copies of all newsletter and handouts are posted on our school Facebook page for easy retrieval should you need them at a later date. To join our Facebook group (only open to current families) type "Pioneer School " in the search box in Facebook, choose the closed group (apple icon) and ask to join. An administrator will approve you.

Conferences

Conferences are held twice a year in early December and May and are an important part of the educational process. Each family should sign up directly with their child's teacher.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Throughout the year we offer a variety of optional fee-based extra-curricular activities. Student accounts (tuition, before/after care) must be current for students to be eligible for these extra programs.

Immunizations

A current immunization record is required to be on file for each student within 30 days of enrollment per state law. Any students who do not have an immunization record on file within 30 days will be withheld from school until the immunization record is turned in.

Learning Expeditions

We rely on parents to drive and chaperone our various learning expeditions throughout the year. Thank you for your willingness to support this important part of our curriculum. Please make sure to sign up in advance in the office for any trips you plan to attend so that we can adequately plan carpools. Last minute changes have a domino effect and make it very difficult for us to stay organized and on schedule. Pioneer will pay any applicable admission fees for chaperones that drive students (in addition to their own) to and from learning expeditions. Parents who are not acting as chaperones and siblings must pay their own way.



Music Lessons

Piano and strings lessons are offered during the school day for a fee paid directly to the music teacher. Please visit the office for more information.

PACE

Pioneer School participates in PACE (Partners Advancing Character Education) to promote the importance of good character. Working from a common list of monthly character traits, we, along with schools and businesses throughout Spokane Valley, promote and integrate these traits in our daily interactions and curriculum. A monthly assembly is held to celebrate students who have exemplified each month's highlighted trait.

Parent Files

Teachers use the Parent File/Mailbox located in their classroom as the main place to distribute communications/student work to parents. Please make sure you (or you child in the older grades) are checking your/their student file/mailbox daily.

Parent Involvement

Parent Involvement at Pioneer School as described in the mission statement is fulfilled in the following areas:

- **Home Support:** We believe a critical component of a child's success at school is parent support. The staff asks parents to help their children at home with special projects, homework, and by spending time reading to their children as well as encouraging them to read.
- **Classroom Support:** The staff of Pioneer School welcomes parents into the classrooms. They appreciate assistance and the students love to share school experiences with their parents.
- **Driving:** Pioneer parents are asked to drive and supervise students for the many topic related learning expeditions we take throughout the year.
- **Fundraising:** Tuition payments cover only a part of the actual cost of educating a student at Pioneer School. Pioneer School is committed to keeping tuition reasonable. Parent fundraising becomes an important resource to offset major expenditures that cannot be funded through tuition and fees alone. The major fundraiser of the year is the annual auction. Each family is asked to contribute to this event. In addition to the auction, we have a variety of ways that families can contribute to the school through their regular shopping, such as selecting Pioneer School as their charity through Amazon and Fred Meyer.



Parking

For the safety of our students please drive slowly through the parking lot and only park in designated parking spots. There is additional parking adjacent to the school parking lot in the Valley Assembly lot– this parking is perfect for larger vehicles. Please escort children through the parking lot. Our school is a No-Idle Zone so please turn your car off when parked. Parents of Nicole’s students should drop-off/pick-up children in front of the office, NOT at the Sullivan Building.

School Clothing

Pioneer School is a fun and very active place! Expect kids to paint and play in the sand or on the soccer field and basketball court. Please do not spoil their fun by sending them in good clothes which they will have to worry about ruining. The staff suggests tennis shoes for running and jumping. No flip flops.

We go outside in almost ALL weather. Please dress your children appropriately– hats, boots, gloves, etc.

Skiing

A large part of Pioneer School’s PE curriculum is cross-country and downhill skiing. School takes place off-site for 2 Fridays of cross-country skiing at Mount Spokane and 4 Fridays of downhill skiing at Schweitzer. Information regarding equipment rentals, lessons, and discounted ticket prices will be sent home in December. Carpool from the school is available for cross-country skiing but there is no school carpool for skiing at Schweitzer (everyone meets on the mountain). Kindergarteners MUST have an adult chaperone for all ski Fridays and parent participation is strongly encouraged for downhill skiing for grades 1-5. There is no school at Pioneer on ski Fridays.

Testing

All students are given the QRI (Qualitative Reading Inventory) prior to fall and spring conferences/report cards. Students in grades 3-5 take the ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) each spring to assess how they perform compared to their same aged peers across the nation. Math assessments vary by grade.

Tuition

All tuition and fees are NON-REFUNDABLE. Payment of registration fee is a commitment for the entire school year. The registration fee is due by the end of March to hold a place for the following school year.

Tuition is due no later than the 5th of each month. Any tuition not received by the 10th of the month



will incur a \$25 late fee. We encourage families to sign up for automatic bill pay through their bank.

Weather Related School Closures

Pioneer School rarely closes for inclement weather. If the need to close arises, Pioneer will send notification via our closed Facebook group, e-mail, and local news stations by 6:30AM.

Whom To Contact

When questions arise related to things going on in the classroom, behavioral, or academic concerns, please always contact your child's teacher first as they are the person who has the best knowledge of your child's daily school experience and progress. If you have questions related to learning expeditions, skiing, fundraisers, etc. please stop by the office or e-mail- office@pioneerschool.com. Sign-up sheets for learning expeditions, the school calendar and current newsletter can always be found on the wall in the office. Tuition, forms, and box tops can be turned into the appropriate place on the blue shelf in the office.