



PENINSULA SCHOOL

## Frequently Asked Questions

9/3/09

# Table of Contents

Mission.....	4
Staff.....	4
Who are the teachers?.....	4
What is a “Swing Teacher?”.....	4
Who works in Administration?.....	4
There’s a Board of Directors?!	5
There’s a Strategic Plan?.....	5
Classroom Information.....	5
What is the order of the classes?.....	5
What is meant by the terms “Upper School” and “Lower School”?.....	5
What is “Upper School Choice”?.....	5
What are “Activities?”.....	6
Where are the “Eastside” and “Westside?”.....	6
What is the “Playspace?”.....	6
Snacks.....	6
What classes get snacks?.....	6
Getting Involved at Peninsula.....	6
Work Days.....	6
What is Fall Workday?.....	6
What are Buildings and Grounds Work Days?.....	7
What are Parent Event Work Days?.....	7
Parent Events.....	7
What are “Parent Events?”.....	7
What and when are the three main Parent Events?.....	7
Who is "Busy Fingers" and can I join?.....	8
Parent Involvement.....	8
How Does Parent Participation Succeed at Peninsula School?.....	8
What are the volunteer opportunities in the classrooms?.....	8
What is the Parent Involvement Committee?.....	9
How do I contact the Parent Involvement Committee?.....	9
Childcare.....	9
When is it available?.....	9
How do I sign up?.....	9
Who are the childcare teachers?.....	9
Parking and Traffic.....	9
How slow should I go?.....	9
How do I know where to park?.....	10
Are there places I shouldn’t park?.....	10
Annual Giving Campaign.....	10
What is it?.....	10
Communication.....	10
Hot News.....	10
What is it?.....	10
Why is it important?.....	10
How do I get it?.....	11
How do I submit an article?.....	11

May I rent the Auditorium or Playspace for an event? .....	11
Communicating with the staff .....	11
How do I communicate with administration/staff?.....	11
Other ways of being connected, getting information.....	12
Is there some kind of a notice board?.....	12
Is there an email list for school activities? .....	12
Does Peninsula School have a website?.....	12
This document .....	12
Who do I see about adding to this document?.....	12

This document contains a “whole bunch of information” as one reviewer put it. It is not our intention that you read the whole document and memorize it all. Instead, we hope it serves as a reference for your family; you might find some answers that are helpful to you now, and then return to the document later to find answers to new questions.

## **Mission**

Since 1925, Peninsula's mission has been to provide a child-centered education community that promotes the development of the whole child. Teachers and parents work together to foster creativity, independence, joy of learning, personal responsibility, and self-esteem as well as academic excellence.

## **Staff**

A complete listing of staff names is included in the front of the school directory. Be sure to see the staff photo gallery, which is part of the Parent Resource Guide, to put a face with the name.

## **Who are the teachers?**

*Each class has 1-2 head teachers (depending on the class age group) and 1-3 assistants. Several of the Activities Teachers (see “What are Activities?”) teach their subjects at regularly scheduled times in each class throughout the school. In some cases, the teachers have been associated with Peninsula for many years (some have even taught two generations of Peninsula students) while others are exceptional and talented new recruits!*

## **What is a “Swing Teacher?”**

*In the Upper School (see “In the classroom” for a definition of Upper School) there are five head teaching positions for the four classes. The fifth teacher (swing teacher) moves among the classes as needed to provide support in a variety of ways for the other Upper School teachers. The swing teacher is responsible for the overall coordination of the curriculum and activities of the Upper School as well as teaching a math class, coordinating Upper School Choice units and bringing other units or projects into the four classrooms. In addition, because s/he spends time in each classroom, s/he provides an important cross-classroom perspective on the issues and activities that go on in the Upper School.*

## **Who works in Administration?**

*The administration team is located in the Big Building. It consists of the School Director, Director of Admissions, the Office Manager and Office Assistants, the Business Director and Bookkeeper/Technology Support Coordinator, the Development Director and Development Associate, the Childcare Coordinator, our Archivist, the Maintenance Technician, the Caretaker, the Buildings and Grounds Manager and the Summer School Director. Feel free to stop in and ask questions any time.*

## **There's a Board of Directors?!**

*Peninsula is a membership organization and its members elect the Board of Directors. Members are the current staff and parents of Peninsula School, Ltd. While only members can vote for the Board candidates, you do not have to be a member of the Peninsula School Corporation to serve on Peninsula's Board. There are 13 regular board members who serve 3-year alternating terms. There are also up to three alternates who serve one-year terms and two staff representatives who are elected annually by the staff, as well as staff alternates. Everyone is encouraged to attend monthly Board meetings to learn about some of the Board activities undertaken on behalf of Peninsula.*

## **There's a Strategic Plan?**

*In May 2006 Peninsula adopted a five-year Strategic Plan. You can find a copy of the Plan in your Parent Resource Guide. The Plan is in place to ensure that Peninsula remains responsive and resilient in the face of change while remaining true to its mission at the same time. There are six specific areas with corresponding goals outlined in the Plan: Identity & Culture, Staff Succession, Retention & Development, Teaching & Learning, Finance & Development, Preparing Our Students for a Diverse World and Engaging with the Community & Beyond. We are now in the third year of implementing the Plan. Look for updates on the Plan's implementation and opportunities to participate in this process in the Hot News.*

## **Classroom Information**

### **What is the order of the classes?**

*We have an ungraded primary and there is not a predetermined order in which students move through the Lower School. Almost every class in the Lower School is comprised of more than one "grade" so that classes and "grades" overlap. This provides flexibility to meet the diverse developmental needs of our students. Children will not go through every class in the Lower School. While there are grade ranges associated with classes, each child has his or her own unique progression. We refer to classes by the head teachers' names. By Rebecca's (5<sup>th</sup> grade) the progression through the remaining grades is set. See the school directory for a list of the Upper School teachers and their associated grade levels.*

### **What is meant by the terms "Upper School" and "Lower School"?**

*As you venture around Peninsula, you may hear people refer to the "Upper School. The term is used to refer to the 5th-8th grades (Rebecca's, Garv's, Melanie's and Marcella's), while the "Lower School" includes kindergarten and primary classes (Kate's through Roger's classes). Students experience certain rites of passage as they ascend into the Upper School, including fifth graders being officially welcomed to the Upper School by the 6th, 7th and 8th graders during the first camping trip of the year.*

### **What is "Upper School Choice"?**

*Upper School Choice is a program that offers an opportunity for students to follow their passion with a small group of like-minded students. Choice is offered typically 5 times a year, and each session runs for 2-3 weeks for 45 minutes each day. Choice units are*

*taught by Upper School teachers and their assistants, activity teachers, other staff and sometimes parents. The subjects offered change each session and there are a wide variety of subjects from which to choose. Students request their preferences and teachers make the final grouping decisions. Students from different classes are often grouped in mixed-age groupings.*

### **What are “Activities?”**

*Activities are the classes (art, chorus, clay, dance, drama, math, library, music, physical education, science, weaving and woodshop) offered every afternoon to students in Annie’s and above (Josie’s class joins the Activities program in January).*

*Activities are offered from 12:30 – 1:30 for Josie’s/Annie’s through Roger’s and from 1:30 – 2:30 for the Upper School.*

### **Where are the “Eastside” and “Westside?”**

*The eastside is everything to the right when facing the front of the Big Building. The nurseries through Annie’s class are located on the eastside. Play yards are well delineated on this side of the school and children play in their own yards. All classrooms on the eastside have a phone.*

*The westside is everything on the left when facing the front of the Big Building. Elizabeth’s class through Marcella’s class are located on the westside. Kids have certain boundaries where they can play on this side. Classrooms do not have phones.*

### **What is the “Playspace?”**

*The Playspace is our half-gym located in the back of the Big Building.*

## **Snacks**

### **What classes get snacks?**

*Snack is provided by the parents in the lower grades – up to and including Gail’s class. Parents are responsible for signing up and bringing the food in the morning but not for serving it at snack time. For other questions regarding snacks, such as how often do you bring snacks, what type of snacks do you bring and dietary restrictions, please ask your child’s teacher. The answers vary by classroom and teacher.*

## **Getting Involved at Peninsula**

### **Work Days**

#### **What is Fall Workday?**

*Workday in the fall is considered the first day of school and is a time for parents, children and staff to work together to get the school ready for the start of the year. It’s also a good time for children to check out their new classroom, become reacquainted with their friends and meet their new classmates and teachers. It’s a good time for parents to meet their child’s teacher and other parents.*

## **What are Buildings and Grounds Work Days?**

*The Buildings and Grounds committee periodically schedules work days, almost always on Saturdays. These work days are a time to work on a special project to support the school's valuable buildings and grounds. The project might be anything from building a fence or play structure, clearing underbrush, doing repairs and maintenance to sweeping out areas that have been ignored for too long. The Buildings and Grounds work days are a good way to save some money on maintenance but they're also a wonderful way to meet other parents, especially parents you might not normally meet if their children are in a different class from your child. Once school has started, watch Hot News for scheduled Buildings and Grounds Work Days.*

## **What are Parent Event Work Days?**

*The day before a parent event (see "What are "Parent Events?" immediately below) involves lots of set-up to prepare our campus for these great events. There is plenty to do! Erecting canopies, setting up booths, constructing the climbing wall, stocking bathroom supplies, cleaning the front porch, and on and on. Participating in work days are a fun and important way to bond as a community. Sign-up sheets for the jobs that need doing are posted on the Front Porch in advance of the event.*

## **Parent Events**

### **What are "Parent Events?"**

*"Parent Events" are the fund-raising events that are planned and executed by the parent community. All parents are invited (and counted on) to participate in every major event.*

### **What and when are the three main Parent Events?**

***The Craft Fair** is held the first Sunday in December. It is a seasonal social and opportunity to shop for unique gifts. Local vendors, including parents, students, and alumni, present their distinctive, and often handmade, wares in booths arranged in and around the Big Building. The Playspace is turned into a Café offering delicious homemade soup and baked goods and a chance to sit down with friends. The entire family may gather in the Library for magical Storytelling. Youngsters can play or create their own crafts in the Children's Area (without their parents even—so you can shop!). Attendees enjoy a variety of live music, including the Peninsula children's chorus which opens this event with a charming performance on the front porch steps.*

***The Peninsula School Auction** is held in mid-March. You'll enjoy delicious food and hundreds of great auction items. The Silent Auction features a huge variety of toys, crafts, activities and services, and a chance to mingle with friends old and new. During the rousing Live Auction you can participate in the bidding for your favorite specialty items which are as varied and imaginative as the Peninsula community itself (consider teaming up with another family to bid on your favorite items together). The Auction is a great way to spend an evening with fellow parents, staff, friends and other community members. It's a night out so you'll want to line up a sitter!*

***The Spring Fair**, held the first Sunday in May, is a carnival of food, arts and crafts, games and great music that lasts all day! Beloved by Peninsula families and well*

*attended by the wider community, the Spring Fair provides an engaging and relaxing way to spend an afternoon with your family. Come hear Peninsula student musicians and singers, as well as professional local musicians, perform. Participate in a crafts project – there's a wide variety available around campus for all ages. Visit our petting zoo. Buy a book at the big book sale. Relax with a massage. Enjoy delicious food, drinks and desserts of every description. Have your face painted. The Spring Fair is a great way to celebrate our unique Peninsula School community.*

## **Who is "Busy Fingers" and can I join?**

*Busy Fingers is a group of people who gather to enjoy each other's company while working on creating hand crafted items. The crafts are sold at the Craft Fair and also from time to time on the front porch. All proceeds from the sale of Busy Finger craft items go directly to support the school.*

*If you can open a safety pin then you can participate in Busy Fingers. (They're not kidding about this!)*

*Busy Fingers usually meets once a week in the mornings at a neighborhood house. Other meetings are often scheduled just before the Craft Fair to finish up projects that will be sold at the fair. See Hot News for details on meeting times and places.*

*If this schedule doesn't work for you but you love to keep your fingers busy there are projects you can take to work on at home.*

## **Parent Involvement**

### **How Does Parent Participation Succeed at Peninsula School?**

#### ***Every Parent...***

- ***Gives*** what they consider a valuable and significant contribution of their time each year—a commitment they can definitely uphold
- ***Considers*** their own time commitments and chooses their involvement so it works with other commitments
- ***Helps*** in some way with all three major parent events (Craft Fair, Auction and Spring Fair). For some parents this will include taking on a leadership role for an event they feel strongly about.
- ***Joins*** in to manage, coordinate, facilitate and develop the participation levels of new parents coming into the community each year
- ***Supports*** every coordinator

### **What are the volunteer opportunities in the classrooms?**

*Parents are welcome to volunteer in most classrooms. Volunteer opportunities vary class by class. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher if you're interested in volunteering. There may also be volunteer opportunities in classrooms other than your own child's classroom.*

## **What is the Parent Involvement Committee?**

*The Peninsula School Parent Involvement Committee was established to build on Josephine Duveneck's founding vision that parent participation is crucial to support the school. That message holds true to this day.*

*The committee has been put in place to:*

- *Serve the needs of the parent body in a sustainable way*
- *Provide "go to" people for key programs*
- *Provide support and collaboration for Parent Event coordinators*
- *Offer communications and coordination of parent participation*

## **How do I contact the Parent Involvement Committee?**

*Send an email to any of the members listed in the school directory or contact the school's director. Your class representative will have information about who may best be able to answer your questions.*

## **Childcare**

### **When is it available?**

*Childcare is available early morning (7:45 am – 9:00 am), afternoons (12:30 pm – 5:30 pm) and for all vacation periods **except** national holidays and from Labor Day to the first day of school. It is also available during the summer.*

### **How do I sign up?**

*Talk with the Childcare Coordinator by calling (650) 325-2584, extension 20, or sending an e-mail to [childcare@peninsulaschool.org](mailto:childcare@peninsulaschool.org).*

### **Who are the childcare teachers?**

*The childcare teachers are drawn from different backgrounds and most have a long history at Peninsula. They have all been registered with the Department of Social Services as is required by California State law.*

## **Parking and Traffic**

Note: please relay this Parking and Traffic information to anyone who regularly drives your child to/from school.

### **How slow should I go?**

*We ask that you drive so slowly that you feel ridiculous when in the driveway! This applies not just to entering the driveway but to exiting too! While we talk about safety with the kids, they are still kids. Also, the Big Field is a playground and kids need to cross the driveway to get there. 5mph is too fast in the driveway!*

*Please also drive slowly from the time you enter the neighborhood around Peninsula until you leave. There are no sidewalks and the shoulder is narrow. Our kids and the neighbors walk and ride bikes. Please be respectful at al*

## **How do I know where to park?**

*Parking is tight at Peninsula! We ask everyone to carpool whenever possible. (Even once a week helps.) If you do not find parking in the driveway, try parking along Peninsula Way in designated parking areas. Alternatively, circle through the driveway one more time.*

## **Are there places I shouldn't park?**

*In no event should you block traffic in the driveway or the fire lanes. There are fire lanes on each side of the Big Building and one right in front of the front porch steps. Occasionally you'll see cars parked near classrooms; this only happens for a specific reason such as packing or unpacking for school camping trips.*

*Please do not park behind the school on Colby, even on school property; the street is very narrow and it makes it hard for our neighbors to exit their properties or for garbage, recycling, and fire trucks to get through.*

## **Annual Giving Campaign**

### **What is it?**

*The Annual Giving Campaign (AGC) provides significant support for the day-to-day operations of the school. Funds raised in this campaign help close the gap between school expenses and tuition income. Annual Giving provides a **tax-deductible** way to sustain and enhance school programs and keep tuition more affordable for all families. Each classroom has an AGC Class Representative who provides information and encourages participation.*

*Each generation of Peninsula School children has relied on the support and generosity of alumni and families who have gone before. The campaign provides funding to continue and strengthen our programs and resources for children, and helps build the future of the school.*

## **Communication**

### **Hot News**

#### **What is it?**

*Hot News is the weekly newsletter of the school. Teachers often attach letters to Hot News with important information about your child's class.*

#### **Why is it important?**

*Administration and teachers use Hot News to pass on information about class meetings, current events, school news, schedule changes and announcements. They count on you to read Hot News each week. Besides keeping you informed about the big events at Peninsula, it's also a good way to keep in touch with the little (but often just as important) events.*

## **How do I get it?**

*Your child will bring it home from school every Thursday (or if you have a younger child it will be placed in the child's cubby for you to retrieve at pickup time).*

*Hot News is also available as an email. To subscribe you may sign up in the main office, or send email to [hotnews@peninsulaschool.org](mailto:hotnews@peninsulaschool.org) and request that your name be added to the Hot News distribution alias. BUT... be sure to check the paper copy your child brings home each week for class notes attached by the teacher. The teacher's classroom specific notes will not be included in the email version.*

## **How do I submit an article?**

*Handwritten or typed articles can be delivered to the office by noon on Tuesdays to be included in the Hot News for that week. Drop them off in the office or email your article to [hotnews@peninsulaschool.org](mailto:hotnews@peninsulaschool.org), or fax to (650) 325-1313, again by noon on Tuesdays.*

*Be sure that all submissions contain your name and contact information (phone including area code and/or email address) and keep all submissions brief and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.*

## **May I rent the Auditorium or Playspace for an event?**

*Use of the school grounds and buildings for events is limited to people affiliated with Peninsula School. Peninsula affiliates include all school year staff, parents and students, past and present. Events are limited to one-day use. Events must be scheduled around Peninsula's event calendar and in total are limited to four to six events per year. Weddings, fundraisers or private parties of any kind are not permitted. Schedule must permit and rental fees and liability insurance are required.*

*For more information about facility use and rentals, see the Facility Use policy in the Parent Handbook or contact the Office Manager.*

## **Communicating with the staff**

### **How do I communicate with administration/staff?**

*At Peninsula School there's a tradition of direct communication. Please talk with whomever you think would be the most appropriate person to answer your question. If you're not sure whom to contact, feel free to ask a teacher, someone in the office or the school's Director.*

*You can call the office during the day. You can leave a note in the teacher's mail cubby in the main office or talk with the teacher when children are not present. Ask your child's teacher what's the best way to communicate with him or her.*

## **Other ways of being connected, getting information**

### **Is there some kind of a notice board?**

*The **Parent Events Board** is located on the front porch of the Big Building, just to the right of the front doors. This super-sized bulletin board is used to advertise all sorts of information related to Parent Events specifically, as well as about other events that affect the Peninsula parent community. Check this board regularly for information about Peninsula goings-on, for volunteer opportunities that need filling, and for the sign-up sheets that will appear a few weeks prior to each Parent Event.*

*The **Community News Board** is located on the opposite side of the front door from the Parent Events Board. This bulletin board is the place to browse for information about a variety of interesting events taking place in the wider community. If you are interested in sharing information about something of interest to you with the rest of the Peninsula community, this is the place to post your flyer.*

*The **Driveway Sign** is located as you drive onto the Peninsula School grounds. Look here for general announcement information regarding happenings and events at the school.*

### **Is there an email list for school activities?**

*No. But there is an unofficial email list that is not sponsored by Peninsula School. It includes an extended community of folks who may or may not be currently connected to the school. It's a great place to ask questions and post information that may be of interest to the community. Because the group is not sponsored by Peninsula School nor is the content reviewed, approved, or substantiated by Peninsula School, it's important to use good judgment when "discussing" potentially sensitive or confidential issues in this forum.*

*To join go to [www.employees.org/mailman/listinfo/peninsula](http://www.employees.org/mailman/listinfo/peninsula)  
Enter the appropriate information in the "Subscribing to Peninsula" section. If you are not listed in the Peninsula School Staff or Parent Directory the moderator of the unofficial email list will contact you to verify how you are connected to the school.*

*Once you've joined you can send your email to the list at:  
<[peninsula@employees.org](mailto:peninsula@employees.org)>*

### **Does Peninsula School have a website?**

*Yes! Peninsula has a website at <http://www.peninsulaschool.org>*

## **This document**

### **Who do I see about adding to this document?**

*Did you have a question that wasn't answered that you think should be included? Did you find an error in this document? If you have improvements, corrections or additions for this document, please submit them to the school's office staff.*