

Family Involvement

- Penikese involves community and family resources in activities ranging from island visits to family counseling and treatment planning.
- After an initial 42-day acclimating period on the island, students are eligible for twice-monthly contracted home passes that are awarded on a merit basis.
- Home passes are viewed as opportunities for students to demonstrate their progress and rebuild trust with their families.
- Penikese supports student families in setting reasonable and effective limits, thus thoroughly preparing students and their families for success after graduation.

Clinical Services

- Penikese provides comprehensive services which include individual and group counseling by licensed clinicians, family support and intervention, substance abuse treatment, and if needed, psychiatric consultation.
- Penikese staff are professionally trained and supervised to take team approaches to individual student needs.
- Penikese also offers biofeedback for the brain, a particularly effective treatment for ADHD and those related disorders that often contribute to acting out behaviors.

-Parent of Penikese student: *“He continues to surprise me with his maturity. There’ve been several situations this past month that could have blown into the tornados of days of yore but didn’t. Two things are different now:
-he has the skills to communicate and insists that I do so also.
-I have the backbone to say ‘no’ and he accepts ‘no’ as an answer without the former drama.
We’re getting along really well. Most of this is Penikese”.*

Structure

- Rather than one-size-fits-all, Penikese’s behavior program is flexibly tailored to the needs and expectations of individual students with emphasis on community service and redemption, rather than punishment, as consequences for poor choices.
- Penikese behavioral goals include improved self control, accountability, mature judgment and positive leadership.
- Penikese uses a point system that targets behaviors and abilities essential for growth and change. Acceptable behaviors and positive choices are reinforced with an allowance for each point earned and privileges that include home passes.

Aftercare and Transitional Support

- Aftercare and transitional support is available to all Penikese students and their families.
- Penikese’s Aftercare attempts to maintain support and connection for its graduates over time, sometimes years, just as a family would for its children as they leave home for the first time.
- Aftercare provides community visits from Penikese staff, mentoring, individual and family consultation, and community liaison and advocacy.
- Penikese graduates are also invited back to the island for refresher weekends with staff and students with whom they were enrolled.

-Deborah Hornstein, Social Worker, Cambridge Dept. of Social Services: *“Penikese is unique. It forces the kids to get along with one another and social skills become a necessity. Not only will staff tell you this, but the kids will also. Penikese provides these kids time away from everyday stressors and temptations and forces them to look internally. They learn about themselves and learn to be comfortable being themselves around peers and authority figures. It’s an extremely healthy environment.”*



The Penikese Island School

E s t a b l i s h e d i n 1 9 7 3

An incomparable therapeutic school emphasizing authentic connections, interdependent and responsible community, lasting internalized change, and stable transition supported by graduate aftercare.



The Penikese Island School

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A fully accredited special education program established in 1973. Full members of NATSAP (National Association of Therapeutic Schools and Programs) and MAAPS (Massachusetts Association of Chapter 766 Approved Private Schools).

Teaching Community by Living & Working Together *in* Community

With a maximum enrollment of 9, Penikese is geared for those students who have not succeeded with previous interventions and community settings, and who have been resistant to traditional therapies.

Rather than isolate and separate its students from community, Penikese immerses its students into the island's genuine, work-intensive and interdependent community in which students develop the connections, life skills, responsibility and accountability essential for successful and stable young adulthood.

As students grow and change in the island community, they gradually and carefully practice their new behaviors and strategies through contracted time at home until they prove themselves ready to bridge from one supportive community to another with the help of Penikese's Aftercare program.



What is Penikese?

The Penikese Island School was founded in 1973 and remains an incomparable therapeutic boarding school. Penikese's mission is to prepare struggling boys ages 15-18 to lead productive and fulfilling lives with the help of graduate aftercare, and to share its experiences and resources with the community at-large. Penikese strives to promote long term internal change rather than impose superficial and often temporary conformity.

Penikese is a powerful advocate for those who seek change in all aspects of their lives, and dedicates its resources to helping struggling adolescents "get better at what they are not good at."

-Tim Carey, MSW, Juvenile Probation Officer, Middlesex Juvenile Court: *"In all my years as a social worker and probation officer, I have never come across a program that is so right-on with how to address the needs of adolescent boys. This program makes all other programs pale in comparison."*



Doing Treatment "With" Rather Than "To"

Because of its small program size, Penikese can adapt its treatment approach to the individual rather than *mold the individual to the program*, and takes into account the underlying factors motivating the problematic behavior, rather than the behavior alone.

By doing so Penikese avoids most of the power struggles at which its students are already so adept and instead seeks to build connections and genuine authority based on shared experience, perceptions, and goals of daily living, in effect doing treatment *"with"* its students rather than *"to"* them.

Building genuine connections with those who generally avoid closeness and undermine their relationships and success involves patience and clinical understanding. Once these relationships grab hold, treatment becomes driven internally by the student's own motivation and choices, and students become more invested in their own process of change and the impact their behavior has on those around them.



Program Elements

The Island Location and Staffing Pattern

- Penikese's island location – remote, rustic, natural, beautiful and timeless – provides opportunities for change no similar land-based program can offer.
- The island provides a safe, contained and calming environment where students, together with staff, live, work, learn and play in a family-sized community
- Penikese's rusticity creates a work-intensive, interdependent, positive and community-focused culture in which staff and students work together for the collective good.
- Penikese features a unique staffing pattern where, rather than rotating eight-hour shifts, island staff work 4 and 5 consecutive days on the island in teams, creating a parent-like feel to their roles and lessening the "us versus them" dynamic familiar to other similar schools.

Education

- Penikese is accredited by the Massachusetts' Department of Education as a Chapter 766 school with special commendations for its reading program, health and safety policies and procedures, and aftercare programs.
- Students attend formal academic instruction from special education certified teachers in Penikese's one-room school-house with a **2:1 student teacher ratio**.
- Penikese's vocational program provides its students with applicable job skill training and strengthened work ethic.
- Penikese offers diverse recreational opportunities as only a beautiful, natural outdoor setting can, with winding paths and shorelines for exploration and room to move.
- Penikese's academic curriculum is aligned with the state's curriculum frameworks, and students typically score well on the MCAS.