

CORNERSTONE MIDDLE SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following section in the CMS Student Handbook has been divided into three informational sections:

- I. **General**: contains items concerning PCS/CMS policies, procedures, and programs.
- II. **Dress Code**: standards and expectations of dress and grooming policy
- III. **Code of Conduct**: expectations for appropriate student behavior with discipline

All students must comply with all policies and procedures of the Putnam County Schools and Cornerstone Middle School. All CMS policies and procedures are aligned with PCS policies. This is a general list with a complete listing available at the CMS Office for parent review. Specific policies and procedures will be highlighted in each Monthly Newsletter.

I. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Academic Assistance: Academic Assistance is offered in Math, Reading, and Language on Mondays-Thursdays from 3:15-4:15. Specific starting date and rooms will be posted.

Advisory Class: CMS offers a required advisory class for all students each day. This 30 minute class assigns each student to an adult advocate that will become the primary (but not exclusive) contact between the school and the home. This class will include academic and enrichment curriculum and activities that will meet the identified social needs of each student. Home contacts should be directed to your child's advisory teacher.

Appointments: The administration and staff make every attempt to be accessible to our students, parents and community. In order to ensure time and accessibility, please make an appointment in advance, with the individual staff member to set a specific date, time, and location to meet.

Assemblies: Special assemblies and programs will be called by staff for enrichment activities and to celebrate our successes. These events will be included in the Newsletter Calendar. The CELEBRATION ASSEMBLIES will be held on the last Friday of each month. All parents and community members are welcome to attend.

Attendance: School attendance by the student is the responsibility of the student and parent. School and class attendance records are kept separately. School attendance is kept by the attendance clerk who is located in the front office suite. Truancy is defined as an UNEXCUSED absence for an entire day, a major portion of the day, a major portion of a class, or any activity during the day for which the student is scheduled. **DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN IN ALL CASES OF TRUANCY.**

All absences/tardies are unexcused until appropriate verification is presented to the attendance clerk. All verifications for absences/tardies should be submitted to the attendance clerk before 8:00 am the first day following the absence. Excused absences/tardies/early dismissals which may be excused are:

- Personal Illness; Family Member Illness; Death in Family; Hospitalization of Dr. Visit; Petitioned court appearance; Administrative Waiver; Extenuating Circumstances
- Specific attendance procedures and requirements will be addressed with each student and sent home for parent review

Cafeteria/Child Nutrition Program:

CMS offers a balanced, nutrition based breakfast and lunch program for all students. No food products will be allowed in classroom settings unless approved in advance by the teacher. All expectations and rules for appropriate behavior will be strictly enforced in the cafeteria. Student accounts for charging meals will use the student's last four digits of their social security number to use their account. Vending machines will be closed during lunch times each day. Students may select additional food items for purchase. It is the parent's responsibility to maintain funds in the accounts. Notices of negative balances will be sent home with students. No child will be denied a lunch item even with a deficit account. Meal costs on Information page.

Class Disclosure Documents: At the beginning of every new course, students will be given a copy of a class disclosure document outlining all pertinent information about that specific class. Questions can be directed to the class instructor.

Grading and Reporting: Students will receive grade reports each nine weeks to present to parents for their review. Grades are in numerical form. All grades will be exact to one decimal point and no grades will be rounded to nearest whole number.
A = 95.0-100 B = 85.0-94.9 C = 75.0-84.9 D = 70.0-74.9 F = 0.0- 69.9

Progress reports will be issued to students to take home for parental review at 4 ½ weeks and 13 1/3 weeks of each 18 week term. Report cards will be issued at 9 weeks and at the end of the term. Each course will receive one final grade.

Hall Pass: All students are expected to remain in class for the entire period. If necessary to leave class, the teacher will issue an official hall pass to be completed and always kept visible until the student returns to class.

Insurance: A group accident insurance policy is available to all members of the student body for a nominal fee when school activities begin each year. Students participating in athletics must have some type of accident health insurance in order to participate. If purchased, the group accident policy will cover all sports with the exception of football that must use their parent's private accident health insurance or purchase through the school.

Make-up Work: The opportunity to make up missed assignments, class work, and tests resulting from an absence is based upon an **EXCUSED** absence. All missed work and tests from an **EXCUSED** absence may be made up in a timely manner, provided the student has satisfied all school board policies regarding attendance. Missed class work or tests **WILL NOT** be made up if the absence is **UNEXCUSED** unless specifically defined in page 3 of Board Policy JCCC item #13 which states as follows: *"If the suspension (out-of-school) occurs during the last 10 days of any term/semester, the student shall be permitted to take such final examinations or submit such required work as necessary to complete the course of instruction for that semester, subject to conditions prescribed by the principal."* Out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and truancy are defined as **UNEXCUSED** absences.

Medications: Specific guidelines are itemized in the Health Handout enclosed with this packet.

Newsletter: CMS will have a parent/community newsletter sent home with students on the last Friday of every month, containing pertinent information about the school activities, schedule, policies, and calendar of events. If you would like to submit materials and information, please submit to the Office personnel by 3:00 pm of the last Monday of each month. Inclusion will be at the discretion of school policy and personnel.

Prohibition of Hazing (T.C.A. 49-2-120): Hazing means any intentional act in Tennessee, on or off school property, by one (1) student acting alone or with others which is directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student; or which induces or coerces a student to endanger such student's mental or physical health or safety. Hazing does not include customary athletic events or similar contests or competitions, and is limited to those actions taken and situations created in connection with initiation into or affiliation with any organization. CMS has a very aggressive "NO Bullying" Policy and education program to prevent hazing and harassment actions.

PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization): As part of our community outreach program "GIVE US FIVE", CMS will be organizing and sponsoring a PTO group this year to get parents involved in the day-to-day functions of the school. We are asking each student and parent to "give us five" hours of community and school service. If interested in supporting this group and/or project, contact the school office for more information on meeting dates, times, location and activities.

Putnam County Schools Anti-Discrimination Statement: It is the policy of the Putnam County School System NOT to discriminate against any student, employee, or applicant on the basis of gender. The PCS will ensure that no student will be excluded from participating in or having access to any course offerings, student athletics, counseling services, employment assistance, extracurricular activities, or other school resources based on unlawful discrimination. The PCS will take necessary steps to ensure that each student's learning environment and each employee's work environment is free of unlawful discriminations based on gender. No officer, or employee of the PCS shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate against, or commit or seek reprisals against anyone who participates in any aspect of the discrimination complaint process associated with this policy.

It is the policy of the PCS NOT to discriminate on the basis of handicap. The PCS will not:

- Deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate in or benefit from any aid, benefit, or service the school system provides
- Afford a qualified handicapped person an opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefit, or service that is not equal to that afforded to others.
- Provide a qualified handicapped person with aid, benefit, or service that is not as effective as that provided to others
- Aid or perpetuate discrimination against a qualified handicapped person by providing significant assistance to an agency, organization, or person that discriminates toward the beneficiaries of the recipient's program.
- Deny a qualified handicapped person the opportunity to participate as a member of planning or advisory boards
- Otherwise limit a qualified handicapped person in the employment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity enjoyed by the others receiving aid, benefit, or service

Promotion of Students: Promotion in the 7th and 8th grades shall be determined by the number of subjects passed or failed. A student at this level shall not be promoted to the next grade if the student does not achieve an overall 70% average in the core academic areas. These include Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. In order to be promoted, the average of the final grades of the four core academic areas must be 70% or better. Passing 70% grades in Encore classes is strongly emphasized also.

Students not attaining an overall 70% average in the core academics shall be retained and may be eligible to attend summer school in order to satisfy the requirements to advance to the next grade level. Parents of students who have been retained more than one year in 7th and/or 8th grade may request an administrative review for consideration of promotion.

Safety Procedures: A Crisis Prevention Plan will be in place at CMS and include policies, procedures, and student drill practice for fire drills, severe weather drills, and emergency school closings.

Search and Seizure (T.C.A. Section 49-6-4204; 49-6-4205):

Search of Locker- (a) When individual circumstances in a school dictates, a principal may order that vehicles parked on school property by students or visitors, containers, packages, lockers or other enclosures used for storage by students or visitors, and other areas accessible to students of visitors be searched in the principal's presence or in the presence of other members of the principals' staff. (b) Individual circumstances requiring a search may include incidents on school property, including school buses, involving, but not limited to, the use of dangerous weapons, drugs, drug paraphernalia by students, which are known to the principal or other staff members, information received from law enforcement, juvenile or other authorities indicating a pattern of drug dealing or drug use by students of that school, and assault or attempted assault on school property with dangerous weapons, or any other actions or incidents known by the principal which gives rise to reasonable suspicion that dangerous weapons, drugs, or drug paraphernalia are held on school property by one (1) or more students.

Search of Persons and Containers – (a) A student may be subject to physical search because of the results of a locker search, or because of information received from a teacher, staff member, student, or other person if such action is reasonable to the principal. (b) All of the following standards of reasonableness shall be met:

- A particular student has violated school policy;
- The search will yield evidence of the violation of school policy or will lead to disclosure of a dangerous weapon, drug paraphernalia or drug;
- The search is in pursuit of legitimate interests of the school in maintaining order, discipline, safety, supervision, and education of students;
- The search is not conducted for the sole purpose of discovering evidence to be used in a criminal prosecution; and
- The search shall be reasonably related to the objectives of the search and no excessively intrusive in light of the age and gender of the student, as well as the nature of the infraction alleged to have been committed.

Section 504: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights statute which provides that: “No otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States...shall, solely by reason for his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation

in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity.”

Special Education Services: CMS offers an individualized program of special services to eligible students whose educational progress is hindered by physical handicap, emotional disabilities, and/or learning disabilities. The program for each student is planned by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of a school administrator or designee, a special education teacher, a regular education teacher, any other necessary school personnel, parents or legal guardian, and the student (when appropriate). *Special education classes and/or services are provided for students who have been certified for the program according to the results of an evaluation process administered by qualified personnel.*

Student Activities, Clubs, and Organizations: CMS is in the process of developing and implementing a diverse program of a student activities, clubs and organizations in the areas of academics, student government, athletics, arts, community service and social development. A current listing will be included in the school website.

Student Concerns and Complaints: Conflicts between students such as disagreements, bullying, name-calling, intimidation, or any other potential conflict(s) that could result in a physical confrontation and/or could reasonably be considered to cause emotional distress should be reported to a school official immediately. Students are expected to resolve all conflicts in a non-violent, non-threatening, non-demeaning way. Additional training for students will be included in the CMS “No Bullying” program.

Decisions made by school personnel such as assistant principals, teachers, or teacher assistants which student’s believe are unfair or in violation of pertinent policies of the Board or individual school rules may be appealed to the principal or a designated representative. Procedures to appeal can be obtained from the principal or counselor.

Student Harassment/Discrimination – Grievance Procedures:

Filing a Complaint: Any student who wishes to file a discrimination/harassment grievance against another student or an employee of the district may file a written or oral (recorded if possible) complaint with a complaint manager. Students may also report an allegation of discrimination/harassment to any teacher or other adult employed in the school who shall inform a complaint manager of the allegation. The complaint should include the following information: identity of the alleged victim and person accused; location, date, time, and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident; identity of witnesses; and any other evidence available.

Detailed procedures for the investigation and decision and appeal procedures may be obtained from the complaint managers in the school.

Student Messages/Telephone Usage: Students are expected to come to school prepared. All arrangements for transportation, money, assignments, books, materials, etc. should be made prior to arriving at school. Messages received from parents and family members will be delivered to students during non-instructional time. Students will not be called out of class for a message, unless it is an emergency situation. Office phones may be used by student only in the case of an emergency. Students may use the public telephone only during break times (Not lunch). Student telephone access may be denied or terminated by any school personnel if abused.

Student Records per Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A cumulative record shall be kept for each student enrolled in school. The folder shall contain a health record, attendance record, and academic record; shall be kept current; and shall accompany the student through his/her school career. Specific requirements of this law can be obtained from the school office.

Student Riders (Drop-off and Pick-up): Students that are brought by means other than a school bus should be dropped off and picked up in the parking lot in front of the school building. Teachers will be standing safety guard in the morning and afternoons. The field house parking lot is **NOT** a designated or monitored drop-off or pick-up zone. No teachers will be on duty at this location. No vehicles should be in the marked bus zones.

Technology/Internet Acceptable Use Policy: All students will be required to read and sign an internet use agreement in order to have access to school computers. Access to the internet is provided to students as an educational resource and a privilege. Failure to observe the expectations set forth in the acceptable use policy may result in a loss of access to the internet as well as any appropriate disciplinary and/or legal actions.

Tennessee Child Labor Act: The Tennessee Child Labor Act (T.C.A. Section 50-5-101-et al) lists the following guidelines for employing teenagers under the age of 16;

- Minors under the age of 14 may not be employed
- Minors may work no more than three (3) hours daily when school is in session
- Minors may work no more than eighteen (18) hours weekly when school is in session
- Employers must comply with record keeping requirements

Visitor Policy: All visitors are to report directly and immediately to the Main Office upon arrival to the CMS campus. Any person wishing to visit an area beyond the office area must be approved to be in the building, wear a visitor badge, sign in and out, and comply with all visitation requirements. The school reserves the right to deny or discontinue visitation privileges at any time to any individual.

II. **DRESS CODE** (The CMS Dress Code is in compliance with the PCS Dress Code/policy)

Rationale: In order to maintain a schoolwide-focus on learning and achievement, not on extremes in individual dress, students are expected to dress in a manner that does not create a distraction in the learning environment. Consideration and respect for others by using good taste and cleanliness in personal grooming is expected by all. These standards of dress should support the purpose of student learning while promoting a safe, orderly learning environment. Teacher will monitor student dress throughout each day and refer those students to the office who, in judgment of the teacher, are improperly dressed and who refuse and/or are unable to immediately comply with the dress code.

The principal or designee will make the final determination of appropriateness of student dress when unresolved by the teacher and student.

Parent and Student Responsibility- The parent and student shall be responsible for ensuring that the student is in compliance with all aspects of this code when the student enters the school premises and during the time the student is on school premises during regular school hours.

No apparel, accessory (ie. Jewelry) or any mode of appearance may display, advertise or denote any of the following:

- Gang affiliation or gang signs/symbols
- Alcohol or tobacco products
- Profanity or vulgarity
- Drugs and/or drug paraphernalia/related themes
- Sexual themes or symbols
- Racist overtones/hate themes or symbols
- Themes of death or destruction
- Violent, aggressive, or combative themes
- Other suggestive or offensive sayings or graphics

Dress Standards

- Soled shoes must be worn – no flip-flops, shower shoes, house shoes
- No hats, knit caps, bandanas (unless for religious or medical purposes)
- No clothing revealing the midriff or lower back – no bare skin shows
- No clothing with substantial holes or jagged/frayed ends
- No sunglasses (unless medical purposes)
- Pants, shorts, skirts must be appropriately sized and worn at the waistline – No sagging waistlines or bottoms will be tolerated
- Shorts, skirts/skorts, and dresses (including any slit) must be of a decent and modest length while standing or sitting (as long as extended arms/fingers)
- All shirts, blouses, sweaters must have sleeves. No bare shoulders or low-cut necklines and/or backs.
- Appropriate athletic wear may be worn only during athletic or similar activities

Grooming Standards

- Hairstyles are to be moderate, clean, kept and of natural color
- No visible tattoos
- Only ear piercing is acceptable. No other facial or visible body piercing is allowed.
- Make up should be modestly applied

These standards of dress and grooming do not prohibit the principal from allowing special celebrations which involve variations in dress and grooming. Stricter standards may be imposed upon a student with three or more dress code violations.

III. CODE OF CONDUCT:

All student and parents should become familiar with and adhere to all aspects of the following Code of Conduct which is based on the PCS conduct policies and procedures, common sense, consideration, and respect for self and others. The requirements of the code of conduct shall apply equally to all CMS students and shall be enforced in a consistent, fair, and non-discriminatory manner. Each student will be held accountable for strict adherence to the code of conduct on school property before, during, and after school hours; at all school related events; and all phases of student transportation.

The Code of Conduct is not intended to include every responsibility of school personnel as specified by federal and state law or PCS Board policy. Nor can it address every possible behavior which may occur in a school setting. Additional classroom rules and procedures covering minor infractions and the appropriate consequences shall be considered desirable as well as necessary in fully implementing the code.

Student Rights and Responsibilities as provided by PCS policy and procedures will be covered under this code. CMS has implemented a detailed discipline structure with appropriate ranges of disciplinary action for the following:

- Disruption/disrespect of the learning environment
- Damage or theft of school or private property
- Assault/injury on a school employee
- Fighting with another student or other person to include physical fighting; assault/injury; intimidation/bullying
- Weapons and dangerous instrument
- Tobacco and tobacco products
- Alcohol and drug use
- Continuous and persistent misconduct
- Discrimination/harassment of students (sexual/racial/ethnic/religious/handicap)
- Bus conduct

Disciplinary Actions

CMS has developed and implemented a progressive disciplinary structure that matches a series of disciplinary actions with specific code infractions. At any time the principal, assistant principal or their designee may assign a more severe disciplinary action of the severity of the infraction warrants.

Disregard for the student code of conduct may result in any one or a combination of the following disciplinary actions. (NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

- Demerits issued within a classroom setting
- Written reprimand
- Disciplinary academic assignment
- School service project
- Parent/guardian conference
- Probation with individualized behavioral contract
- Loss of school privileges
- Loss of breaks./recess
- After school detention
- In-School Suspension
- Out-of-School-Suspension
- Expulsion
- Filing charges with the local law authorities
- Other actions as designed by the administration and school personnel

Students that are eligible for and/or receiving special education services will be disciplined according to Putnam County School Board Policy in accordance with Federal and State statutes.

A complete listing of all infractions and disciplinary actions will be addressed in student advisory classes and sent home with all students for parent review.