

2011-2012 Chicago Academy Parent Handbook

3400 N. Austin Avenue, (773) 534-3885

School Security

All parents and visitors must enter the school through the main Austin or Meade entrances only. Please do not use the Cornelia entrance as it is an entrance for staff only. All parents and visitors are required to report directly to the office or security desk to obtain a visitor's pass before reporting to any other location in the building. A security station is located inside the main school entrance.

Weapons and certain other dangerous objects are forbidden on school premises. All persons entering the school are subject to personal search and examination of their hand-carried possessions. Metal detector screenings of students and their personal effects will be conducted periodically.

School Atmosphere

We strive to maintain a school atmosphere of Safety, Respect, and Learning. We want students, teachers, and parents to experience school as a very safe, violence-free environment. We want communications between students, parents, and teachers to stand as models of respect and concern for each other. We want academic rigor that holds students, parents, and teachers to a focus on learning.

School Day

The school day for students begins at 8:20 a.m. and ends at 2:15 p.m. The line-up bell rings at 8:20 a.m., at which time students line up by classroom and wait for their teachers to pick them up to enter the building. Breakfast is served in the classroom, and instruction begins promptly at 8:30 a.m. Students who arrive in the classroom after 8:30 a.m. are marked "Tardy." Students should not be on school property before 8:00 a.m. or after 2:30 p.m. unless they are supervised by their parents or participating in a supervised school activity.

Calendar

Please refer to the CPS Calendar that is included in the "Back to School Packet" that your child has received. Refer to the calendar often to be aware of CPS holidays, report card pick-ups, and other non-attendance days. Chicago Academy also sends home a monthly calendar with your child with important dates and events. Staff Development Days and Professional Development Days are non-attendance days for students.

Vacations

Included are the official CPS scheduled breaks for the 2011-2012 school year. Use these dates to schedule all of your family trips and vacations. It is extremely important that students are in attendance days for all school days leading up to, or immediately following these breaks. *Absences for extended vacations will be considered unexcused.*

WINTER VACATION - Schools close at the end of the school day on Friday, December 23, 2011 and re-open on Monday, January 9, 2012. **SPRING VACATION** - Schools close for students at the end of the school day Friday, March 30, 2012 and re-open on Monday, April 9, 2012.

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is extremely important. Successful learning is directly related to coming to school every day. The basic responsibility for a student's regular attendance lies with the student and the parent. Parents of children who are absent from or late for school should call the office (773) 534-3885 between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. We will try to reach parents who do not call the school to notify us of their child's absence. A child returning to school after an absence must bring a note from a parent explaining the reason for the absence within 48 hours of said absence. There are four acceptable causes for student absences: illness, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and observance of religious holiday. Students absent for any other reason or students returning without a note will be marked "truant" (absent without a valid cause) in the daily attendance. **According to Board policy, students in grades 3, 6, and 8 with 9 or more unexcused absences must attend summer school.** The school will not provide the dates of each absence for the purpose of allowing parents to write 'excused for absence' notes to avoid summer school. Parents may request homework for an excused absence when they call in the child's absence. A message will be given to the child's teacher. The school will attempt to have the homework books and assignments ready for pick-up in the office by the end of the school day.

Late Arrival

The **school day starts at 8:20 a.m.** for students. **Please have your children at school before 8:20.** At the 8:20 bell, all students line up and are escorted into the school by their teachers. Students arriving after 8:20 a.m. may be marked tardy if they are not seated in their classrooms, ready to work, by 8:30 a.m. The responsibility for prompt arrival to school belongs to the parent/guardian. Late arrivals will report to the security desk (first floor center hallway) for a tardy slip. Tardy arrivals to school will also be recorded and will appear on the student's report card and permanent student record. **Remember, students with more than 3 tardies do not qualify for perfect attendance** or incentives such as the ice cream social, raffles, or certificates. Class tardiness may be reflected in a student's grade, and excessive tardiness may require referral to the appropriate administrator, as well as disciplinary action. Students with more than a few tardies will be issued a misconduct report for excessive tardiness.

Early Dismissal

Parents must come to the office to pick up their child. No child will be released from school without an authorized adult signing him/her out. An authorized adult is an adult that is identified as one of the emergency contacts on the student's emergency form.

Reminder: All medical and dental appointments should be scheduled before or after school.

Play Lot Safety Rules

School staff will provide play lot supervision only from 8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. on school days when students are outside before school begins. Students from grades 1-3 only will be allowed to use the play lot at this time. Play Lot Safety Rules are as follows:

1. Remove glass or other objects from the "soft surface". Be courteous and use common sense.
2. Slides – No walking or running up; no hood perching; no side hanging; no going down head first.
3. Overhead Ladders – No balance beaming; no perching on top; no foot/knee hanging
4. Students will not be allowed to leave the gated area after 8:10 a.m.

In the mornings, for safety reasons, the football field and area to the west of fence is available to students in grades 5-8. The area to the east of the fence is available to students in grades K-4.

Student Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school. For Gym, students should wear T-shirts, gym shoes, and sweat pants or shorts. For safety reasons, no clothes with zippers or buttons allowed.

Items that students are prohibited from wearing include:

- ✓ Black-hooded sweat jackets--no black "hoodies," including those with other colors or designs printed on them
- ✓ Makeup (only clear lip balm will be permitted)
- ✓ Earrings on male students
- ✓ Facial piercings
- ✓ Short shorts or short skirts (shorts should not higher than 2 inches above the knee)
- ✓ Tight clothes
- ✓ Any clothing that exposes the midriff, the back, or thighs
- ✓ Sagging pants that hang below the waist
- ✓ Open-toed shoes, including sandals, flip-flops
- ✓ Shoes with retractable wheels
- ✓ See-through clothes
- ✓ Tank tops, bandanas, and sunglasses
- ✓ Leggings/tights (unless they are covered by a skirt or long top that falls no more than 2 inches above the top of the knee)
- ✓ Any clothing sponsored by or depicting alcohol or tobacco companies or products
- ✓ Hats and jackets may not be worn inside the building
- ✓ T-shirts with slogans in "poor taste"
- ✓ Students are not allowed to wear gang colors or display gang signs

Finally, all clothing should be appropriate. Students who come to school inappropriately dressed will be sent to the main office. A parent will be contacted and asked to bring proper clothing or take the student home. If a parent cannot be reached the student will be given a warning letter stating this is a first offense. The second offense will result in an automatic suspension. The final judgment as to the appropriateness of dress and appearance rests with the administrators. **Our goal is to eliminate any distractions from student learning.** We believe that this dress code will result in a better education for our children at Chicago Academy.

Student Code of Conduct -SCC

Appropriate behavior is necessary in order for instruction to take place. Every student received a copy of the Student

Code of Conduct. The CPS Student Code of Conduct describes inappropriate behavior, prescribes equal disciplinary actions for misconduct, and suggests specific actions for remediation of prohibited behavior. Please read over the code with your child. Make sure that your child understands his/her responsibilities and the actions that will be taken when rules are not followed.

Parents are expected to review the SCC with their children, sign the Receipt that is located in Appendix H of the SCC, and encourage their children to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Students are also expected to sign the Receipt and exhibit appropriate behavior by observing school rules and Board policies. **Please return your signed receipts by Thursday, September 22, 2011.**

Grading Scale

The TCA grading scale is as follows:

92% - 100% - A
83% - 91% - B
74% - 82% - C
65% - 73% - D
64% or below - F

Guidelines for Promotion

According to the promotion policy (07-0926-PO1), students in grades 3, 6, and 8 are placed in one of six categories based on their results on the district wide assessment for reading and math, followed by a review of academic performance, attendance, and conduct. Students who do not achieve promotion criteria may be required to attend summer support programs. The Guidelines for Elementary School Promotion which were adopted by CPS on September 26, 2007, were distributed to teachers and parents. Extra copies may be available in the office or on the CPS website. ***Please be aware that students in grades 3, 6, and 8 are required to attend summer school if they have a "D" or "F" in Reading or Math, or have 9 or more unexcused absences, or are 8th graders that have a failing grade in writing and fail the district writing exam.***

Parent Conferences

Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with their child's teacher whenever they have questions or concerns about their child's progress. A conference request may be made by sending a note or email to the teacher. Teachers will respond to the request, and a mutually agreeable conference time will be arranged. Generally, parents should make a request at least one day in advance of a desired conference time. Parents are asked not interrupt the instructional day, by trying to speak with their child's teacher during school hours (8:30 – 2:15). Parents coming to school for a parent-teacher conference must report to the school office before proceeding to the teacher's room.

Honor Roll Criteria

Student honor roll lists include "A/B" and "A" lists. Both lists are prepared at the end of each quarter and also at the end of the school year. Students qualify for the A/B honor roll by receiving A's and B's in all subjects. Students qualify for the A honor roll by receiving A's in all subjects. The year-end honor roll lists are based on grades received in all four quarters. At the end of each quarter classroom teachers submit names of students qualifying for honor roll.

Student Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities

Students must meet certain academic requirements for eligibility in Chicago Academy's extracurricular activities which include all sports teams, Student Council, choir, etc. Students must maintain a "C" or above in language arts, math, science, and social studies. Individual assessment of student conduct and behavior may also affect eligibility. Classroom teachers will evaluate student progress at the end of every week. Students determined to be ineligible will be removed from the activity until the "D" or "F" is raised to at least a "C." Ineligible students may not attend practice sessions, meetings, or games/events.

Emergency Information

Due to the seriousness of emergencies which sometimes occur, it is imperative that the school has correct emergency information on file for each student. This information includes:

- A correct home telephone number and address
- The work telephone number of a parent
- The telephone number of a relative or neighbor who lives within the school's attendance area
- The name of the family doctor

Parents are required to complete emergency information forms each school year and to keep the information current. Students are released for early dismissals only to adults that are listed on the emergency form. Our primary responsibility is the safety and well-being of our students while they are at school.

Food Sources

Food dispensed to children in schools must be prepared by facilities inspected by Health Department Personnel. For example, store-bought food or restaurant-prepared food is acceptable. The dispensing of food products prepared in private homes is an unacceptable practice. Please see an administrator if you have any questions about what food is acceptable to give to children at school. Parents must make arrangements with teachers before sending food to school.

Additionally, we have a number of students with nut allergies. Parents should refrain from sending food items that contain nuts or were processed on machinery that also processed nuts to avoid allergic reactions.

Junk Food

In this era of health consciousness, it has been deemed necessary and appropriate to prohibit certain junk food items from our cafeteria. For the 2011-2012 school year, in an effort to prevent students from overindulging, students are limited to a single-size bag of chips and a "fun-size" candy bar. Students *may not bring soda pop* or other carbonated beverages (including energy drinks), full-size candy bars, or large bags of chips.

Breakfast/Lunch Money

Breakfast and Lunch are available to students at school. The costs of breakfast and lunch are as follows:

- ❖ **Breakfast - Free**
- ❖ **Paid Lunch - \$2.25**
- ❖ **Reduced Lunch - \$0.40**

Students may pay for lunch in lump sum. The cost of student breakfast/lunch is automatically deducted from their paid accounts when their lunch tickets are scanned as they go through the lunch line. **It is the parent's responsibility to keep lunch accounts current.**

Friends of The Chicago Academy Parent Organization

The Friends of The Chicago Academy promote school goals through educational, social, and fundraising activities directed towards parents, teachers, and students. We encourage every parent to join and participate in Friends of TCA activities.

Volunteers

Parents should consider volunteering at Chicago Academy. We regularly need volunteers to help out in the lunchroom and on field trips. All volunteers must complete an application, which includes a background check and certification of freedom from tuberculosis.

Damage to Books and Property

The cost of school books and equipment has increased substantially over the years. Many textbooks cost \$50.00 or more. Students must take care of school books and equipment. Should a student lose a new textbook, the student will be responsible for the full cost of a replacement book. If the book is damaged in any way beyond normal wear, we will assess an appropriate damage fee. Students are expected to put book covers on textbooks.

Radios, iPods, CD Players, and Electronic Toys

These items are not allowed at school. Students should not bring them to school. Note: Unauthorized cellular phones, laser pointers, iPods, mp3 players, PSPs, or other handheld electronic devices are strictly prohibited. These items will be taken from students and sent to the office with appropriate misconduct referral forms. In order for the item to be returned to the student, **a parent or guardian must personally come to the school office.**

Electronic Devices

Cell phones, iPods, cameras, music players, handheld video game devices, or any other type of electronic devices or toys are not allowed to be brought to school and will be confiscated by staff. Parents may apply for special authorization for a student to bring a cell phone to school, but must be able to provide strong reasons for the student to do so. Applications are in the main office, and must be reviewed and approved by an administrator, before students are allowed to bring a cell phone to school. A new application must be filled out every school year. Authorized cell phones must be stored in lockers or in bags on student hooks, and must be turned off while students are in the school building or on school grounds, at all times. **Staff**

members will confiscate any student cell phone that is seen, and a parent will be required to come to the main office to pick up the device and meet with an administrator. The school is not responsible for any lost or stolen cell phones, nor will any school staff members use their time to investigate lost or stolen cell phones. Please consider this before you submit a request for you to bring one to school. Students with authorized cell phones who violate this policy may have their authorization revoked.

Student Fees

School fees are an integral part of ensuring that our teachers and students have the supplies and tools they need for teaching and learning. Unfortunately, school budget challenges require our school to assess a \$30 student fee to offset the cost of consumable materials. Students use these items during the school year. All items are necessary. Please send the total fee(s) by Tuesday, Sept 20, 2011. Payment can be made in cash or by check to Chicago Academy. Payments must be submitted to the classroom teacher in an envelope clearly marked with the student's name and room number. No student will be denied materials because of financial hardship. Determination of financial hardship will be made upon completion of a Student Fee Waiver Form. These forms are available in the main office.

Money Collection

Throughout the school year, money is collected from students for field trips. Money should be paid to the classroom teacher in an envelope with the student's name and room number.

Medication Policy

Only those medications which are absolutely necessary for the critical health and well being of a student and to maintain the student, as determined by a doctor, in school shall be administered during school hours. If at any time it becomes necessary for a child to take medication at school, there are certain procedures that must be followed. The following is a brief explanation of the Board of Education's revised policy. This policy is designed to reduce the number of medications given in school, and at the same time, assure safe and therapeutic administration for those students who require them. If you would like a more detailed copy, please see the school nurse or principal.

1. Two forms must be filled out, one by the doctor and one by the parent. These forms state that the student, under supervision, can self medicate. This is necessary because there is not a nurse in the building on a daily basis to administer medication.
2. These forms will be given to the school nurse. If necessary, the nurse will confer with the doctor and/or parent to determine if the time of administration can be adjusted so that it doesn't have to be given during school hours.
3. If the student must take medication in school, it will be brought to school in the labeled prescription bottle. This must be brought to the school by the parent, not the student.
4. The medication will be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet, as designated by the principal. The student will take the medication at the appropriate time under the supervision of the principal's designee.
5. The doctor's and parent's request forms must be renewed whenever there is a change in the medication or on a yearly basis.
6. Medication will not be administered if the required forms are not supplied, if the parent refuses the school access to the doctor or medical records, or if the nurse and the student's doctor agree it is not medically necessary.
7. Medication may not be administered if the student continually refuses to accept medication, the parents fail to provide medication in the appropriately labeled container or refuse to deliver the medication to school, or there is an adverse reaction to the medication.

Safe Passage to and from School

The most dangerous part of a child's day is going and coming from school. Some safety tips that all Chicago Academy families should discuss with their children are as follows:

For children walking to school:

- Stay alert at all times while walking. Accidents happen most often when we are not paying attention.
- Parents need to designate the safest route. Children must always follow the designated route to school. Stay out of alleys and stay away from abandoned buildings.
- Never talk to strangers. Never accept rides from strangers. If someone you don't know offers you a ride, run away from him/her. Run where there are other people. When you get home, tell your parents what happened.
- If a stranger tries to grab you, fight and yell, "Help! This is not my Mommy (Daddy)!"

- Look for and obey traffic lights. Cross the street only when the sign says WALK. If there is no WALK/DON'T WALK sign, then cross only on the green light.
- Especially watch out for cars making right turns on a red light.
- Always look both ways before crossing the street – look left, look right, look left again – then proceed carefully.
- Never run across the street; if you fall, you might not be able to get up in time. WALK.
- Always cross the street at the corner. Don't cross in the middle of the block or walk between parked cars.
- Wear bright reflective clothing, especially during the winter months.
- Pay attention to traffic sights and sounds. Don't wear headphones on the way to school.

For students riding a school or CTA bus:

- While waiting at the bus stop, stay at least six feet from the street curb.
- Never walk behind a bus or cross within ten feet of the front of the school bus.
- Stay in your seat at all times, and to avoid falling, only get up after the bus has come to a complete stop.
- Always listen to the directions of the bus driver.
- Always be quiet on the bus when it stops at railroad crossings.
- Keep the aisles clear at all times and help keep the bus clean and safe for everyone.
- Never throw anything out of the bus window and always keep your head, hands, and arms inside the bus.

For parents driving children to school:

- Obey all traffic safety rules.
- Drivers must never block crosswalks. (Police enforcement)
- Drivers must not double-park. (Police enforcement)
- Drivers must not park in the circular drive of the main parking lot.
- Drivers must have children enter and exit cars from curbside doors.
- Do not unintentionally cause problems by blocking traffic, getting in the way of school buses, or by dropping children off in the middle of the street or on the side of the street opposite to the sidewalk of the school entrance.
- Be patient and exercise caution. We must all be responsible for keeping all children safe.

Homework Success

Studies indicate that students who spend more time on homework do better in school. They also score higher on standardized tests. While the schools are responsible for educating children, they cannot do it alone. Parents must work together with teachers to help children achieve their full potential. That is why parental involvement is at the heart of our homework policy. Parents must help their children succeed in school by becoming involved in their study habits. The following are daily suggested time allocations for teacher directed homework assignments by grade level:

- Kindergarten – 15 minutes per day
- Grades 1, 2, 3 – 30 minutes per day
- Grades 4, 5, 6 – 45 minutes per day
- Grades 7, 8 – 90 minutes per day

Additionally, the following activities should be included in planning and structuring time for homework:

- Kindergarten – 15 minutes per day of parent reading to their child and other activities designed to reinforce teacher-assigned homework.
- Grades 1, 2, 3 – 30 minutes of parent-led reading, writing, and listening activities
- Grades 4, 5, 6 – 120 minutes per week of parent involvement in home-based activities which could include visits to museums, libraries, etc., and assisting with long-term assignments such as book reports, creative writing, etc.
- Grades 7, 8 – 120 minutes per week of parent involvement in home-based activities which could include research papers, reading projects, and creative writing.

Parent Portal

This tool will allow for monitoring of student grading and attendance data for students in grades 1-8. All questions or inquiries related to Parent Portal, whether related to functionality or the management of your account, should be directed to your local school administrator. To register, go to <http://parent.cps.k12.il.us>

You must have your child's ID number and 5-digit pin number, which you may obtain in the main office.