



# CMI Guidelines for Middle School Families

This document is designed to outline procedural guidelines for parents regarding our Middle School program, and to provide clear expectations for our students. These expectations will ensure that we have a safe environment that is focused on learning and growth. Please review these guidelines and get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. I appreciate your support in reviewing and reinforcing these expectations at home (which were already reviewed with students at school), in order to support us in creating a safe, engaging, and productive learning environment for our students.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of Student Culture, Alexis Lassus [alexis.lassus@creativemindspcs.org](mailto:alexis.lassus@creativemindspcs.org) or Director of Middle School, Collin Hill [collin.hill@creativemindspcs.org](mailto:collin.hill@creativemindspcs.org). Thank you for your team work!

## CMI's Student-Centered Philosophy and Promise

At CMI, we know that in order for our students to be ready to participate in a global society, they will require more than academic skills. They will need strong social and emotional intelligence in order to navigate an increasingly diverse, global society. Student life at CMI is characterized by a spirit of joy and creativity. We celebrate and respect individuality at the same time as we build a strong and caring community. We create opportunities throughout the school day and in our after school programs for students to explore and pursue their unique interests and talents.

Each week, our school comes together for Community Meeting, a time to share our learning experiences, honor our international connections, and practice personal goals.

### Personal Goals and Dispositions

We teach and explore the personal goals and dispositions emphasized in the IPC and IMYC. We thoughtfully create developmentally appropriate opportunities for our students to practice these traits throughout the school day and year. This is how we define the personal goals at CMI:

- **Adaptability** - We are okay with change. We are able to change our actions or attitude to fit new situations.
- **Communication** - We share and let others share their ideas. We can express ourselves in a variety of ways, with different types of people.
- **Cooperation** - We work together and support each other to achieve a goal. We understand that everyone can contribute something different when working together.

- **Inquiry** - We ask questions to learn new things. We plan investigations to seek truth and better understand important issues.
- **Integrity** - We are honest and we help others. We have strong moral principles and we act on them to improve the lives of others.
- **Resilience** - We try again, even when it is hard. We handle disappointments with maturity and continue to work toward our goals despite setbacks.
- **Respect** - We treat others the way we want to be treated. We learn about and accept one another's differences with kindness.
- **Thoughtfulness** - We think about what we have learned and how it affects ourselves and others. We reflect on our strengths and weaknesses to identify ways to better ourselves.

Our goal is to create a school culture where community members practice the Personal Goals, and are creative, responsible problem-solvers when faced with challenges. Our mission is for students to do most of the thinking about problems because we know that is how mistakes become learning opportunities and how children build the life skill of self-respect and self-regulation. Each teacher uses this promise as a conversation starter, allowing students to have thoughtful discussions about what it means to problem-solve and respect the boundaries of others throughout the school day.

The staff at CMI promise the following to students:

- We will treat each other with respect.
- You may do whatever you'd like in your classroom, as long as it does not cause a problem for anyone.
- If you cause a problem, we will ask you to solve it.
- If you choose not to solve it, we will help you fix the situation.
- What we do will depend on the special person and special situation.
- If at any time you feel we have not been fair, you can whisper, "I don't think this is fair," and we can talk.

## The Learning Environment

### **Advisory and Mindfulness**

Each morning our students will begin the day with community building and mindfulness exercises before instruction begins. During Advisory and Mindfulness our students will have an opportunity to participate in guided sharing, team-building games, and mindfulness exercises. Students will learn more about one another, explore the monthly Personal Goals, discuss common challenges facing adolescents in a safe setting, and learn healthy self-regulation skills. This time allows students to center themselves for the day ahead.

## **Community Meetings**

Students will participate in Community Meetings every Friday morning from 8:45-9:15 am in the main hall. Each week the meeting will be led by a different class. Families are welcome to come every week to Community Meetings! Community Meetings are an opportunity for the Middle School community to gather together and celebrate learning. Classrooms share their learning for that month, celebrate any international connections of importance, and recognize community members for showing the Personal Goals.

## **Health and Safety**

Health and wellness is at the heart of every initiative at CMI. From planning school schedules to include time for mindfulness, movement and exercise to providing students with sensory and project-based experiences that facilitate learning, we ensure that our program cares for the whole child. In addition to Physical Education classes, we encourage our Middle School students to engage in after school sports clubs and other activities designed to provide opportunities for them to pursue their interests.

While we focus on positive behavioral supports and preventive measures, when students engage in behaviors that hurt others or the learning environment, we rely on the Love and Logic framework for implementing individualized consequences. To the extent possible, we engage students in coming up with their own consequences that are logical and support them in learning from their experiences in order to make better choices.

## **Logical Consequences**

When faced with a misbehavior, staff discuss and implement logical consequences, ensuring students' understanding, and balancing accountability with a desire to provide supports to prevent the misbehavior in the future. Logical consequences are related to the function of the misbehavior, are respectfully delivered, and are reasonable in duration and severity depending on the child's developmental level. Logical consequences are meaningful opportunities for students to make things right, realizing the real weight of cause and effect when it comes to decision-making. Our goal is to empower students to solve their own problems and identify ways to remedy any harm that they may have caused. Staff also utilize restorative conferencing with those who have been affected in order to restore damaged relationships and reintegrate the student back into the learning community.

If rules are continuously broken in ways that interfere with our students' safety, security, or ability to learn, and we are unable to address a student's negative behavior through positive

interventions and classroom redirection, families will be contacted and administrative disciplinary action will be taken. As our school's philosophy views each individual and behavioral situation as unique, we do not utilize a one-size fits all approach, but tackle each situation by thoughtfully prioritizing the physical and emotional safety of all students. Our staff will document students' social, emotional and behavioral challenges and communicate with parents as needed.

## **Lunch Reflection**

Students may be asked to participate in Lunch Reflection if they have a major behavioral incident during the day, in order to reflect on the problem and come up with a solution with adult support. Lunch Reflection may be required on topics including, but not limited to, the following: chronic tardiness, chronic failure to complete classwork, frequent use of inappropriate language or disrespect to others, or failure to follow lunchroom expectations upon multiple reminders. Lunch Reflection is a space for students to restore mistakes they've made and brainstorm solutions for the future. It is a space for the staff member to support the student in his/her reflections. The staff member and student discuss actions that may be impeding the student's learning and ask the student to come up with better strategies to deal with the underlying problem. If a student earns a Lunch Reflection, it will be communicated with his or her parent or guardian.

## **Inappropriate Public Displays of Affection**

Students are not to engage in inappropriate public displays of affection while at school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. Inappropriate touching with hands or other parts of the body is not permitted.

## **Bullying**

CMI expects all students and staff to demonstrate and behave in a way that promotes an understanding of the Personal Goals outlined in the social-emotional curriculum, derived from the IMYC. These Personal Goals allow us to maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all students, CMI staff, and community members. CMI expects students and staff to treat each other with respect and does not tolerate acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Similar to violent or highly disruptive behaviors, bullying violates the rights and abilities of students to engage in learning and makes it difficult for CMI staff to adequately educate students in a safe environment. CMI has created a bullying prevention and intervention policy in order to protect our school culture, safety, and the wellbeing of all members of our school community. CMI staff will utilize this policy to immediately investigate and address reports of bullying, harassment,

and intimidation and determine appropriate next steps for all involved in an incident. Potential consequences of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Conference with staff, Director of Culture, or Middle School Director
- Reprimand
- Losing opportunities for participation in group activities for a specific period of time
- Bans on participating in optional CMI activities
- In or Out of School Suspension

If you are concerned that your child may be the bullying is witnessed or if you are the target of bullying, you can notify our school counselor, Tara LaCroix ([tara.lacroix@creativemindspcs.org](mailto:tara.lacroix@creativemindspcs.org)) or complete the bullying report form (included as an appendix at the end of this document). The full bullying prevention and intervention policy is available on our website or by request.

## **Suspensions and Expulsion**

Suspension and expulsion are the school's most serious disciplinary actions and will only be considered when serious or repeated conduct violates the rights of others to feel safe and engaged in learning.

### **In School Suspension**

Students may receive a half day or full day(s) of In School Suspension (ISS) as a consequence for dangerous, harmful behaviors towards their classmates or behaviors that make learning extremely difficult. During this time, students put forth their best effort in determining next steps that will restore any damage created by their behaviors. Students will also use this time to brainstorm and reflect upon why they are participating in actions that impede learning and safety. Before returning to class, students will help create an action plan for improved behavior, including student goals and any needed proactive supports. This plan will be shared with parents and guardians. If a student does not meet the expectations of In School Suspension, they will have another opportunity to attend ISS. If after that extra day they are still unable to meet expectations, they may be referred back to administration for out of school suspension or an alternative consequence. For more detailed information about which behaviors may earn an In School Suspension, please see our [Student & Family Handbook](#).

## **Out of School Suspension and Expulsion**

CMI works hard to be a low-suspension and no expulsion school by implementing consequences that give students an opportunity to restore their relationships, fixing the problem they have caused, rather than be excluded from a learning environment. In keeping with our Core Beliefs, our goal is to keep students in class and learning, and we believe that punishing students does not alter behaviors, but that interventions do. Suspension is defined as the denial of the right of a student to attend CMI, including all classes and school activities, for a defined period of time, not exceeding ten school days. Expulsion is the denial of a student's right to attend CMI, including all classes and school activities, for at least one school year or longer.

The Executive Director and Director of Student Culture will determine the number of days for a suspension based on the severity of the infraction, the developmental stage of the student, and any previous infractions. CMI requires that a parent/guardian attend a meeting with the administrative team before a student may return to school after such a consequence. For more detailed information about Out of School Suspensions and Expulsions, please see the [Student & Family Handbook](#).

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

CMI is required to follow DC public school policies regarding absences. Students who have ten or more unexcused absences are considered to be chronically truant under the law and must be reported for truancy and investigation to Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) at 202-671-7233. For more details about what is considered an excused absence or for more information about the CMI Attendance Policy, please see the [Student & Family Handbook](#).

All students who enter the building after 8:45 AM are marked tardy by the classroom teaching staff. If you have an excuse for your child's tardiness, please be sure to submit a written note to the classroom teacher or to the registrar. If a child has a note from the parent, the note will be added to his/her file.

Children who eat breakfast at school should arrive by 8:15 AM so they will be ready to start the school day at 8:45 AM. The attendance committee will review each student's attendance on a monthly basis and will contact parents to discuss regular absences or tardiness. Parents will

receive a letter when a student reaches five unexcused absences and will be invited to the school for a meeting.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are scheduled throughout the school year to provide CMI students with learning opportunities outside of the classroom environment. Participating students are required to submit a completed field trip permission slip. A student will not be permitted to attend a field trip without a signed permission slip. If a student has exhibited unsafe behaviors at school or on previous activities outside of school, the Middle School Director may decide that a student will not be permitted to attend a field trip unless accompanied by a parent/guardian chaperone.

## **Homework Policy**

Homework will be given to students every week and the assignments will be communicated to parents in our weekly Middle School Team Newsletter. Homework assignments are intended to serve as opportunities to review knowledge and practice skills learned at school. At times students may be asked to work on projects at home. Since many of our students stay and participate in after school clubs until 6 P.M., our goal is to coordinate homework assigned by various subjects teachers to ensure that students are spending on average one hour per night on homework; exceptions may be made when students are working on completing a project or preparing for an assessment. If you have concerns about the amount of time your child is spending on homework, or the appropriateness of the level of challenge presented by the homework assigned for your child, please contact teachers to request modifications.

## **Lockers**

Each Middle School student will be assigned a locker. Students are expected to use only the locker that is assigned to them. Locks will be assigned to students to secure all belongings inside the locker. Students are allowed to use their lockers during designated periods of the day. Lockers are meant to help store belongings and are also an opportunity for practicing responsibility. The middle school team will occasionally conduct locker checks to ensure proper use of lockers and to give students an opportunity to clean out and organize their lockers.. If you or your student feel that locker expectations need to be modified, please contact your child's homeroom teacher.

## **Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices**

CMI students are not allowed to use cell phones or similar personal electronic devices, including smartwatches, within the school grounds, except under unusual circumstances. If a student brings a cell phone to school, it should remain off and stored in the student's locker during the school day and aftercare. In a situation in which a student believes that he or she needs to use a phone to communicate with parents or guardians, the student must request permission from a teacher or staff member. **Violation of this policy will result in confiscation and that item will be held until a parent or guardian can come to retrieve the device from the school.** If a student consistently violates the cell phone policy, the student will be required to check-in their cell phone with an administrator at the beginning of the school day and will only receive their cell phone when they are leaving school at the end of the day.

## **Dress Code**

While there is no formal dress code, Creative Minds International Public Charter School expects students to wear appropriate attire. This includes safe footwear (no flip-flops), clothing depicting appropriate language, and clothing that provides adequate covering of the body. For Middle School students low cut-tops or short shorts are not considered appropriate. Pants should fit at or above the waist. In addition, certain physical activities may require specific attire based on your child's P.E. schedule, after school sports, or special occasions that you will be notified of by teachers.

## **Nut-free Policy**

In order to ensure there is a safe learning environment for all of our students, CMI is a nut-free campus. This includes peanut and other nut butters, nuts, and products made with nuts including granola bars and cookies. Please adhere to this policy when bringing snacks or lunch items to the school by checking the ingredient lists on wrappers. Even though a student may not be affected by food allergies, others in the school or classroom could be adversely affected if nut items are present.

## **Personal Items**

Middle School students will be issued lockers and a lock for storing their belongings during the school day. Nothing of value should be left in jacket pockets. Please avoid bringing large equipment such as athletic gear to school. Toys should be left at home unless the teacher has made a special request that students bring them to school. Children who do not follow this rule may have the toy taken away until the end of the school day. Please note that CMI will not allow



any toy weapons on campus at any time.

The school's policy is that, in cases of accidents that happen in the normal course of the school day, we do not pay and do not require parents to pay for other students' damaged materials. For instance, if, in a basketball game, a student's glasses are accidentally knocked off and broken, the school will not take responsibility for the loss.

## **Technology and Digital Citizenship**

Digital citizenship is another important part of the CMI Instructional Technology program. Based on [Common Sense's Digital Citizenship](#) resources, the program aims to instill in students an understanding of the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities associated with technology use. At the beginning of each school year, students agree to follow age-appropriate guidelines for appropriate technology use at CMI such as:

- Using electronic resources for school approved educational purposes only;
- Avoiding waste of resources such as printer toner and paper;
- Respecting intellectual property and copyright laws;
- Protecting oneself and respecting others when accessing the internet;
- Reporting any incidents of cyberbullying immediately;
- Reporting any offensive materials or computer viruses immediately;
- Acknowledging that any message or files saved on, sent from, accessed, or received on CMI equipment may be inspected;
- Keeping one's passwords private and respecting the privacy of others' passwords;
- Taking care of the school's hardware, electronic systems, and network;
- Protecting one's safety by not sharing any personal information online; and
- Protecting oneself and the school's technology equipment by not viewing, sending, displaying, or downloading any illegal, inappropriate, or offensive materials.

Any questions regarding CMI's Instructional Technology program may be directed to Kathleen Fugle at [kathleen.fugle@creativemindspcs.org](mailto:kathleen.fugle@creativemindspcs.org).

# CMIPCS BULLYING PREVENTION & INTERVENTION INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

1. Name of Reporter/Person Filing the Report: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*\*\*This line may be left blank if an anonymous report is being made\*\*\**

(Note: Reports may be made anonymously, but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of an anonymous report.)

2. Check whether you are the:  Target of the behavior  Reporter (not the target)

3. Check whether you are a:  Student  Staff member (specify role) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Parent  Administrator  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Your contact information/telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

4. If student, state your school: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

5. If staff member, state your school or work site: \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Information about the Incident:

Name of Target (of behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Aggressor (Person who engaged in the behavior): \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Time When Incident(s) Occurred: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Incident(s) (Be as specific as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Witnesses (List people who saw the incident or have information about it):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Student  Staff  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Student  Staff  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Student  Staff  Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. Describe the details of the incident (including names of people involved, what occurred, and what each person did and said, including specific words used). Please use additional space on back if necessary.

\*\*\*\*\*FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY\*\*\*\*\*

9. Signature of Person Filing this Report: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: form can be filled out anonymously)

10: Form Given to: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_



## ***CMI Guidelines for Middle School Families Acknowledgment of Receipt***

\*Please Sign & Return to your child's Homeroom Teacher by Monday, September 18, 2017\*

### **Student Acknowledgment of Receipt**

I have received and understand the expectations outlined in these Guidelines. I will strive to show the Personal Goals and be a creative problem-solver when faced with a challenge. If at anytime I need support or am having difficulty meeting CMI's behavioral expectations, I know that I can ask my teachers or the Student Culture Team for support.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment of Receipt**

I have received and understand the expectations outlined in these Guidelines for Middle School Families. I will work with the school-based team to support my student in meeting these expectations.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Best Contact Information:**

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns about any content, please contact the Director of Student Culture, Alexis Lassus [alexis.lassus@creativemindspsc.org](mailto:alexis.lassus@creativemindspsc.org) or Director of Middle School, Collin Hill [collin.hill@creativemindspsc.org](mailto:collin.hill@creativemindspsc.org). For questions or concerns about specific behavioral incidents, please first reach out to your child's teachers.