



Welcome Packet

Creative Minds International
Public Charter School
School Year 2023–24

(202) 588-0370 • creativemindspcs.org

3700 North Capitol Street NW #217
Sherman Building
Washington, DC 20011

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Start-of-Year Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you're prepared for the 2023–24 school year!

TASK	COMPLETE
Read this entire document.	
Register for Extended Creative Day.	
Request a parking pass, if you have not already done so.	
Become familiar with the campus traffic flow and parking rules.	
Complete the free and reduced-price meals (FARM) application, if applicable and you have not already done so.	
Enroll in school meals, if applicable.	
Purchase items on the grade-specific supply lists .	

Welcome to Creative Minds International PCS!

Dear Creative Minds Families,

Welcome to the 2023 - 24 school year! The first day of school is Monday, August 28. We are excited that your family will be a part of the Creative Minds community for what promises to be an exciting year.

This welcome packet provides essential information about procedures and logistics to ensure a smooth start to the year. Some of the information in this packet will be familiar to returning families. Whether you're new to Creative Minds or returning to our school, please read the packet carefully.

Here is information about the online platforms we use at Creative Minds:

- PowerSchool is our student information system where you can check your child's attendance and grades. Information about using the portal is available [in this support center](#).
- ParentSquare is our communication platform. In August, new families received an invitation to create a ParentSquare account. The ParentSquare app, for [Android devices](#) and [iPad and iPhone](#), is an optional but convenient way to stay up to date on school communications. Visit our "[Getting Started with ParentSquare](#)" webpage for more information.
- Registering for Before School, After School, and Friday Enrichment requires you to register with our providers, Boys and Girls Club and FLEX. Information on registering will be sent via ParentSquare..

We look forward to seeing you in just a few weeks. As always, please contact us if you have any questions or concerns: email frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org or call (202) 588-0370.

Back-to-School Events

Open House: Friday, August 25, 2023

On Friday, August 25, we will host an open house from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. This is an opportunity for families to visit the school and for students to see their classrooms and meet their teachers before they start school on August 28. Families may also pick up their parking passes at this event. Please stop by at any time during the open house to join us for the first event of the school year! If you're driving to campus, enter and exit through [Harewood Gate and park in Lot 5](#).

Back-to-School Night: Wednesday, September 6, 2023

We invite all families to join us for Back-to-School Night on Wednesday, September 6. More information will be shared in ParentSquare.

Class Assignment

On Friday, August 18, you will receive an introductory email from your child's teacher. Please note that in order to respect the privacy of all families, we are unable to distribute the entire class list.

Student & Family Handbook

Please refer to the 2023–2024 *Student & Family Handbook* for more information about Creative Minds' policies and procedures.

First-Week Information: Logistics & Procedures for a Smooth Start to the Year

Daily Schedule

Please note that students not enrolled in beforecare are **NOT permitted** to arrive or be dropped off before 8:15 a.m. when doors open

Before School (Requires enrollment; fee-based program)	7:30 a.m.–8:15 a.m.
Breakfast	8:15 a.m.–8:45 a.m. <i>Students arriving late may pick up breakfast to go until 9:00 a.m.</i>
Start of the School Day	8:45 a.m. <i>Students are considered tardy if they arrive after 8:45 a.m.</i>
Dismissal: Prekindergarten–4th Grade	Monday–Thursday 3:30 p.m. Friday 12:30 p.m.
After School: Prekindergarten–4th Grade (Requires enrollment; fee-based program)	Monday–Friday 3:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m. Friday Enrichment 12:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
Dismissal: 5th–8th Grades	Monday–Thursday 3:40 p.m. Friday 12:40 p.m.
After School: 5th–8th Grades (Requires enrollment)	Monday–Friday 3:40 p.m.–6:30 p.m. Friday Enrichment

	12:40 p.m.–3:30 p.m.
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Transition Week

The first week of school is a transition week for our pre-K3 students; the transitional schedule is optional for pre-K4 students. From Monday, August 29, through Wednesday, August 31, all pre-K3 students attend school from 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Students eat lunch in their classrooms before pickup. Thursday, September 1, is the first full day for pre-K3 students.

Campus Access Passes

All families must have a school-issued campus access pass, a requirement for entering campus, even if walking. **All families must request new ones.**

Families that submitted license and registration information with enrollment paperwork will have passes available to pick up at the front desk by August 25. If you have not already requested a pass through the enrollment forms or if you need additional passes, please request one [here](#).

If your vehicle information changes—for example, you get a new car or update your plates/registration—or your parking pass is lost, damaged, or stolen, please immediately contact frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org to report the pass missing or to update your information.

Technology

Parents will receive a survey from us in late August to determine the technology needs of your household to ensure that your student has all the tools and resources they need for success.

Arrival and Dismissal

General

[See our campus map here.](#)

Please note the following:

- Creative Minds families may park only in Lot 5.
- Creative Minds families **must not** park at any time in the lot adjacent to the playground (Lot 2), the numbered school-staff parking spaces adjacent to the school (Lot 4), or any other Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) parking lot.
- If your vehicle has handicapped tags, please use the drop-off lane each day.
- You **may not** park in the drop-off lane and walk your child into the school building.
- For the safety of our students, please observe the speed limit of 15 mph and all posted stop signs on campus. Reckless or inattentive driving will not be tolerated.
- The AFRH cites drivers and vehicles that do not adhere to parking and driving rules and is authorized to revoke campus driving and parking privileges; **Creative Minds has no authority** to alter AFRH decisions. Families whose privileges have been revoked must park in the neighborhood and walk to campus. Behavior that may result in a citation or revocation of driving and parking privileges includes the following:
 - Speeding
 - Not following directions of AFRH security personnel
 - Using abusive language
 - Leaving a vehicle unattended in the drop-off lane
 - Using of Eagle Gate to drive onto campus when Harewood Gate is open for Creative Minds families

Arrival

These are the logistics for morning arrival:

Using the Drop-off Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter and exit through Harewood Gate. • Pull all the way up and remain with your vehicle. • Staff will assist your family.
Parking and Walking to the School Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter and exit through Harewood Gate. • Park in Lot 5 and escort your child to the appropriate entrance.
Walking or Biking onto Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter and exit through Eagle Gate. • Proceed to the appropriate entrance.
Family Member Escorting a Child into School <i>First two weeks of school only</i>	Follow either the “Parking and Walking” or the “Walking and Biking” instructions to access campus.

Dismissal

Our dismissal plan is based on weather.

Non-inclement Weather	Outdoor dismissal for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K: In front of the school • K–8th: Grassy lawn next to Stanley Chapel
Inclement Weather <i>If picking up multiple students, pick up the youngest first.</i>	Parents pick up their children inside the building. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K: Main lobby • K–1st: ADA Door Sherman South / 1st Grade Annex Learning Commons • 2nd–8th: Main Hall

Students Walking Home

Some parents or guardians allow their children in 5th through 8th grades to walk home or take public transportation unaccompanied. If you would like to grant permission for

your child to sign himself or herself out of school in the afternoon, we will need written confirmation from you.

Creative Minds prohibits students who are not authorized to sign themselves out from using a ride-sharing service, such as Uber or Lyft. When using a ride-sharing service, these students must be accompanied by an authorized adult; the authorization must be on file in our student information system.

Early Release

If a child has a medical or dental appointment requiring an early dismissal, please notify the registrar at frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org and your child's teacher 24 hours ahead of time and provide supporting documentation. Students are signed out at the front desk, and the person signing them out must present a government-issued ID.

The front desk will not be able to process an early dismissal without previous notification, especially from 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. If the front desk doesn't receive prior early dismissal notification for your child, you must wait until regular dismissal hours to pick up your child.

School Meals

Please note that Creative Minds is a nut-free school. Nuts and products containing nuts are not allowed on campus.

Creative Minds serves breakfast, lunch, and an after-school snack every day. We partner with Top Spanish, a local catering company, to provide our students with balanced, healthy meals and snacks as part of the National School Lunch Program.

- *Breakfast* is available free of charge to all students.
- *Lunch* is available for purchase. The cost is \$5.25 per school day. Families may qualify for free and reduced-price school lunch on the basis of income. For more information about this benefit, please see the section below entitled [“Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications.”](#)
- *Snacks eaten during the school day* must be brought from home. Please send your child to school with a nut-free snack each day.
- *Snacks* are served to all students attending after-school programs. There is no charge for after-school snacks. Please send additional snacks with your child for the regular school day.

Monthly breakfast, lunch, and snack menus are posted to our [Nutrition & Wellness](#) webpage and in ParentSquare.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals Applications

Families may qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches on the basis of income or if they currently receive financial assistance through the District of Columbia government. You must fill out the free and reduced-price meals (FARM) application for us to determine whether you are eligible for discounted or no-cost meals. **Families must reapply to FARM each year; FARM qualification lasts for only one year.**

To apply to FARM, fill out an application in [English](#), [Spanish](#), or [Amharic](#). The application should be returned to the front desk or emailed to frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org.

We urge all families that think they might be eligible to apply to FARM. If you are determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals, you will also receive discounts on our before- and after-school programs.

If you have any questions about the FARM application, please contact Heather Hesslink,

director of operations and compliance, by emailing frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org or by calling (202) 588-0370 ext. 112.

Selecting Meals by School Day We ask that families indicate days that their students plan to eat school lunch so we can estimate the demand. By the 25th of the previous month, a signup form for the upcoming month will be sent out to Parent Square (e.g., October's menu sign-up will be released by September 25). Complete one form per child per month. Use [this link](#) to sign up for meals in September.

Paid School Lunch

Students who eat lunch and do not qualify for free or reduced-price meals through the FARM application will be billed based on meals consumed. Payment will be made through [PowerSchool](#).

Questions or Concerns about School Lunch

If you have questions or concerns about school lunch, please contact frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org or call (202) 588-0370.

Extended Creative Day Program

Creative Minds boasts a dynamic and inclusive Extended Creative Day (ECD) program FLEX (PK and Kindergarten) and Boys and Girls Club (1st grade through 8th grade). Students may participate in Before School, After School, Creative Clubs, and Friday Enrichment. A complete description of our programs, as well as pertinent policies and procedures, can be found in our *Student and Family Handbook*. What follows is a brief overview of these programs.

Before School

Prekindergarten–8th Grade

Our **Before School program** offers families the convenience of an early drop-off in the morning. Before School takes place between 7:30 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. Students attending Before School play games, read, and have breakfast before school begins.

Start Date: August 28, 2023

Monthly Cost: \$125 per child

After School

Prekindergarten–8th Grade

Our **After School program** runs from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and provides students with homework supervision, a nutritious snack, and free play, both indoors and in our outdoor playspace. Families may sign up for a monthly After School plan.

Start Date: *August 28, 2023 (1st grade - 8th grade)*

Tuesday, September 5, 2023 (Prekindergarten)

Monthly Cost

Monday through Friday Friday Enrichment included	\$325 per child
Part-Time (4 days/week)	\$265 per child (PK and Kinder Only)

Friday Enrichment not included	
Part-Time (3 days / week) Friday Enrichment not included	\$210 per child (PK and Kinder Only)

Creative Clubs

5th–8th Grades

Creative Clubs have been designed to allow our older students the opportunity to make choices and exercise leadership and self-direction. This program runs from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The fall session will begin in October.

Monthly Cost: FREE for all middle school students

Friday Enrichment

We offer an enrichment program on Fridays when staff members have an afternoon of professional development. Enrichment activities include homework time, read-alouds, art projects, and math learning. Our ECD partner hosts the Friday Enrichment program.

Start Date: September 1, 2023

Monthly Cost: \$95 per child

Questions or Concerns about Extended Creative Day?

You will receive information from FLEX (PK and Kindergarten) or Boys and Girls Club (1st grade through 8th grade) via email once your account has been created. If you have not received this information by Friday, August 23, 2023, please contact Shannon Smith, Family Engagement Manager, at Shannon.Smith@cmipcs.org.

Appendix A: School Leadership & Administration

Executive Leadership	
Charles (Chuck) Jackson Head of School	Chuck.Jackson@creativemindspcs.org
Nayamka Long Chief Academic Officer / Deputy Head of School	Nayamka.Long@creativemindspcs.org
Craig Bednarovsky Chief Operating Officer	Craig.Bednarovsky@creativemindspcs.org
Instruction	
Sara Sryla Director of Prekindergarten–1st Grade	Sara.Sryla@creativemindspcs.org
Jillian Gillespie Elementary School Director	Jillian.Gillespie@creativemindspcs.org
Marcus Moore Middle School Director	Marcus.Moore@creativemindspcs.org
Special Education	
Dr. Emmanuel Taiwo Executive Director of School Performance	Emmanuel.Taiwo@creativemindspcs.org
Administration	
Jessica (Jessie) Curry Director of School Performance	Jessica.Curry@creativemindspcs.org
Lorna Dill Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction	Lorna.Dill@creativemindspcs.org

Margaret Ward Director of Development and Communications	Margaret.Ward@creativemindspcs.org
Operations	
All questions	frontdesk@creativemindspcs.org
Jessica Jones Director of Operations	jessica.jones@creativemindspcs.org
Esmeralda Sullivan Deputy Director of Operations	esmeralda.sullivan@creativemindspcs.org