

# The Columbus Gifted Academy

**Active Learners. Innovative Thinkers. Compassionate Leaders.**



Scholar-Parent/Caregiver Handbook  
2025-26 School Year



## **CCS VISION STATEMENT**

A world-class model of public education that prepares members of our communities to reach their full potential.

## **CCS MISSION STATEMENT**

Each student is highly-educated, prepared for leadership and service, and empowered for success as a citizen in a global community.

## **CCS BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS**

- **Strengthen Reading Proficiency** - The percentage of third-grade students proficient in Reading on the Ohio State Test (OST) will increase from 34.5% in School Year 2022-2023 to 44.5% by June of 2028.
- **Strengthen Mathematics Proficiency** - The percentage of seventh-grade students proficient in Mathematics on the Ohio State Test (OST) will increase from 14.7% in school year 2022-2023 to 23.45% in June of 2028.
- **Closing Opportunity Gaps** - The percentage of 4-year graduation cohort students who complete state and district graduation requirements will increase from 78.2% in August of 2023 to 83.2% in August of 2028.



**CGA Mission:**

Active Learners. Innovative Thinkers. Compassionate Leaders.

**CGA Vision:**

Columbus Gifted Academy will serve as a world-class program, where all gifted learners feel safe being themselves and learning at their own pace at all times.

**CGA Purpose:**

To engage, enrich, and empower gifted learners through unique, rigorous, self-directed educational experiences in a collaborative learning environment that supports the whole child within and beyond the classroom.

**CGA 2025-26 Program Priorities:**

Develop systems of support and enrichment that are personalized to meet the needs of each individual student.

Staff Member Name	Position	Location
Fischer, Cameron	3rd Grade	Room 215
Palmore, Traci	3rd Grade	Room 220
Prunty, Nicole	3rd Grade	Room 218
Vermilion, Christina	3rd Grade	Room 213
Crosby, Julie	4th Grade	Room 212
Liedtke, Lisa	4th Grade	Room 105
Marshall, Edna	4th Grade	Room 207
Stegall, Stephanie	4th Grade	Room 216
Aitken, Kelly	5th Grade	Room 113
Ferrell, Deborah	5th Grade	Room 116
Toure, Fodè	5th Grade	Room 114
Douglas, Scott	ES Instrumental Music	Room 217
Jacobs, Krista	ES Physical Education	STAGE
Spellman, Corey	ES Vocal Music	Room 204
Vance, John	ES Visual Art	Room 211
Wetmore, Heather	ES Theatre	Room 217
Seiler, Trisha	6th Grade Science	Room 120
Heasley, Madison	6th Grade Mathematics/7th Grade Mathematics	Room 118
Welker, Madison	6th Grade Social Studies	Room 101
Willis, Carolyn	6th Grade ELA	Room 103
Billups-Adams, Dyren	7th Grade ELA	Room 4
Cashin, Andrew	7th Grade Social Studies	Room 6
Porr, Julie	7th/8th Grade Grade Mathematics	Room 9
Uresti-Forman, Ronda	7th Grade Science	Room 117
Hall, Matthew	8th Grade Science/Physical Science 9	Room 3

Haskell, Dr. David	8th Grade Social Studies	Room 7
Murphy, Laurel	8th Grade ELA	Room 2
Stuntz, Anastasia	8th Grade/High School Mathematics	Room 8
Daniel, Sherry	Interdisciplinary Teacher	Room 13
Alder, Michelle	MS/HS Visual Art	Room 15
Rice, Lori	MS/HS Technology	Room 16
Richards, Samantha	MS/HS Vocal Music	Room 21
Ross, Christopher	MS/HS Instrumental Music	Room 20
Scillia, Samuel	MS/HS Physical Education	MAIN GYM
Arens, Erin	Speech Language Pathologist	Room 205
Loupos, Christine	Special Education Intervention Specialist	Room 110
Campbell, Tai	PEAK Instructional Assistant	Room 201
Dorsey, Samantha	School Nurse	Main Office
Sais, Marie	School Psychologist	Room 205
Fulton, Natalie	School Social Worker	On Call
Leuenberger, Brittany	Occupational Therapist	On Call
McClelland, Amanda	School Counselor	COUNSELOR
Quinn, Pamela	Physical Therapist	On Call
Mannion, Caroline	School Counselor	LIBRARY – Office
Iningouet Daunoviet, Emmanuel	IT Specialist	Room 209
McGonigle, Megan	School Librarian	LIBRARY
Hoover, Peter	Building Substitute	On Call
Allison, Kristin	Family Ambassador	Room 119
Travis, Tyra	Head Custodian	Custodian Office

Fitzgerald, Bryan	Night Custodian	Custodian Office
Neice, Jaymison	Night Custodian	Custodian Office
Shedd, Theodore	Night Custodian	Custodian Office
Latham, Michael	Food Service Manager	Cafeteria
Maye, Paulette	Food Service Manager	Cafeteria
Moore, Kathleen	Treasurer	
Athey, Maureen	School Secretary	Main Office
Reed, Amanda	Director	Main Office

Staff contact information is available on our school website:

<https://www.ccsqh.us/ColumbusGiftedAcademy>

# Habits of a Scholar

## Thirst for Knowledge

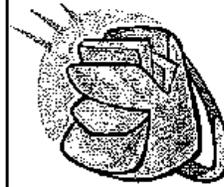


Scholars know there is always more to learn.

## Preparation

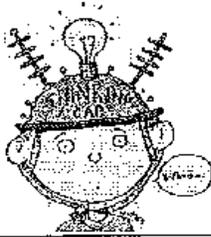
Scholars are prepared and ready with all the

necessary tools for the job.



## Ponder

Scholars take time to think about what they are learning.

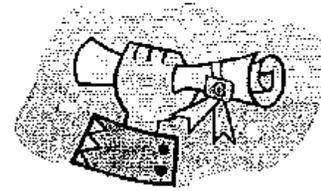


## Multiple Perspectives

Scholars look at the world from many different viewpoints.



## Goal Setting



Scholars set long-term and short-term goals in life.

## Risk Taking

Scholars take intellectual risks and think outside the box.



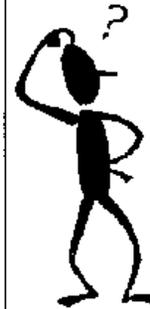
## Excellence

Scholars take pride in their work and seek excellence.



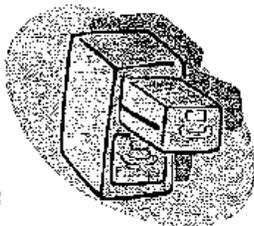
## Intellectual Curiosity

Scholars are curious about learning, willing to ask questions and seek answers.



## Save Ideas

Scholars organize their learning and save ideas.



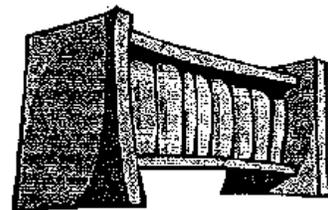
## Perseverance

Scholars don't give up. They keep going, even when the work is hard.



## Varied Resources

Scholars use varied resources when learning.



## **Scholar Responsibilities**

The Columbus Gifted Academy is a self-contained program dedicated to teaching, leading, and loving gifted learners. Building on the history of the ECLIPSE program, it includes a collection of self-contained, gifted classrooms for students in Grades 3-8 identified as gifted and talented in either a). Superior Cognitive Ability or b). Reading and Mathematics . The program offers scholars the opportunity to participate in accelerated curricular opportunities throughout the school day.

Our scholars have certain responsibilities, both as citizens and as members of the Columbus Gifted Academy Phoenix Community. These responsibilities must be met at all school functions whether the scholar is in the school building or traveling to and from school via district-provided transportation. In order to guarantee student and parent/caregiver rights, each person will assume responsibility for his or her own behavior, and refrain from infringing upon the rights of others. All scholars are expected to be engaged as active participants in the learning process:

Scholars should:

- Attend school on time each day;
- Have respect for themselves and conduct themselves in ways that will bring respect to their families, their school, and to the Phoenix Community;
- Have respect for the authority school personnel are given by law to ensure that learning proceeds in an orderly, safe environment;
- Have respect for adults, peers, and the rights and personal property of others;
- Not bring materials or objects prohibited by law or school policy to school or school activities;
- Dress and behave appropriately for school;
- Follow school policies for positive behavior, as well as learn the rewards and consequences of their actions.

## **Anti-Harassment Policy**

On April 7, 1998, the Board of Education adopted a policy that in accordance with federal and state laws and district policy, the Columbus City School district will not tolerate harassment against any scholar or staff member on the basis of gender, race, national origin, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. Harassment shall be defined as slurs, jokes, intimidation, or any verbal or physical attack directed at an individual's gender, race, national origin, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation.

## **The Phoenix Five**

The Columbus Gifted Academy Learning Community is a robust, courteous learning environment. To that end, the following are expectations for student behavior:

CGA Scholars are:

Safe

Kind

Respectful

Responsible

Ready to Learn (at all times!)

Types of Infractions:

1. Self (e.g. harmful behavior, fighting, truancy, use of threatening language or profanity, cheating)
2. Peers (e.g. threats to others, disruption of the learning environment, coercion, verbal and/or physical assaults to others)
3. Adults (e.g. disrespect, insubordination, verbal or physical assaults)
4. Property (e.g. theft, breakage)

Interventions will be designed to promote a positive adherence to these principles. Parent involvement will be highly solicited.

Possible:

1. Redirection
2. Development of a Student Behavior Plan
3. Conference with Parents, Scholar, and Teacher
4. Removal of a Privilege
5. Removal from Room for Specified Time
6. School Suspension
7. Expulsion

The Columbus City Schools' Guide to Student Success prescribes the rules and regulations for management, discipline, suspension and expulsion of scholars. These rules are intended to promote a positive atmosphere within the school that is conducive to learning and ensures the

protection of students' rights. The Guide to Student Success is available on the CCS website and will be provided to you during the first week of school.

### **Problem-Solving Process**

In the event you perceive a problem with the school and/or services and/or school environment being provided, please follow this process:

1. Act early, before the problem becomes a major one.
2. Communicate directly with the person involved (teacher, support staff, director).
3. Put your thoughts down in writing if you can. Be as specific as you can.
4. Suggest possible solutions to the problem.
5. Write down the possible solutions suggested by school staff.
6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of potential solutions with school personnel.
7. Collectively decide upon the best course of action.
8. Set a specific time to evaluate the suggested problem resolutions.
9. If the problem is not resolved, repeat the process or contact Amanda Reed, Director.

**PLEASE** – Act Early

Be Specific

Be Honest

Be Patient

We can work out anything, if we work **together!**

### **Daily Start Time**

The school day will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. Breakfast will be served from 8:30 a.m. until 8:55 a.m. Scholars are not permitted to arrive before 8:30 a.m. As staff are not yet on duty, we are unable to provide supervision prior to that time. We currently do not have a latchkey program. We will begin dismissing scholars from the cafeteria at 8:55 a.m. Classes will begin on time each day at 9:00 a.m.

## Arrival and Dismissal

### Scholar Drop Off and Dismissal

- Buses will enter the neighborhood from 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. by turning SOUTH on Dennison Avenue. Buses will drop off scholars along W. Greenwood Avenue and exit EAST on Denison Avenue turning South at Access Way toward 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Buses will exit the neighborhood via 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Cars will enter the neighborhood via W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. then turn SOUTH on Apollo Place. Parents will drop off and pick up scholars at the front of the school along Apollo Place, then continue traveling SOUTH on Apollo Place to exit the neighborhood via 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- During the school day (9:30-3:00), please use the front entrance on W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue

*Please consider:*

- Whenever possible, utilize CCS bus transportation or neighborhood carpools to reduce the number of cars in the area.
- Residents may be trying to leave or return to their homes. Please make room as possible for them to do so.
- When dropping off or picking up, please do so quickly to keep the flow of traffic moving through the neighborhood.
- If you need to enter the building with your child, please park in a designated space.
- Please do not drive on W. Greenwood Ave. This will create a traffic jam with the buses.
- Please follow the instructions of school staff during parent drop-off and pick-up.

For the safety of all children, the drop-off process must be continuous – Stop, Drop, and Go. There will be no available parking on school grounds during the morning.

Families picking up scholars during the school day are to use the school's front entrance on W. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Since we are focused on instruction, early sign out of scholars is discouraged and is not to occur after 3:00 p.m. In the case that early sign out becomes necessary, please provide notice to both your child's teacher and the main office with a note in advance.

Scholars walking to/from school will enter the building at the cafeteria doors on Dennison Avenue and proceed directly to breakfast.

\*There is to be absolutely NO parking at Thompson Recreation Center/Hunter Pool for any reason. This includes school events.

## **School Attendance**

The Board of Education has established the following policy: Schools shall keep record of every excused and unexcused absence of each scholar. Schools shall notify parents and guardians of the expectation that the parent or guardian **MUST** report the scholar's absence to the school at 365-6961 for each day a child is absent or tardy. In the event that such a report is not made, school officials shall notify the parent/guardian of the absence. If no report of absence and no written excuse is received, the absence shall be deemed unexcused.

Chronic and habitual truancy may result in court intervention. Additionally, a student who has unexcused absenteeism in excess of 10% of the required school seat time may fail a grade or course.

The following are acceptable excuses for scholar absence:

1. Personal illness or quarantine
2. Illness or death of an immediate household member
3. Emergencies or any other occurrences or situations which, in the judgment of the director, may necessitate an absence from school as a last resort
4. Religious Holidays
5. Superintendent's Designation

At Columbus Gifted Academy, a parent or doctor note is required each time a scholar has been absent from school. The note should include the date(s) of absence, the reason for the absence, and the parent's signature. If your child is to stay at home for any reason, we ask that you notify the office by calling 365-6961.

## **House Bill 410 – Truancy Law Revisions**

This bill changes the definition of 'habitual truant' to any student who is absent without legitimate excuse for 30 or more consecutive hours, 42 or more hours in one school month or 72 or more hours in one school year. It also requires notification to the student's parent/guardian of the student's absences (both excused and unexcused) once they reach 38 or more hours in one school month or 65 or more hours in one school year. Students that meet these criteria must be assigned to an attendance intervention team within ten days. The attendance team must meet within 14 school days and must develop an intervention plan to reduce or eliminate future absences, as well as connect the scholar and family to appropriate outside agencies and resources. A complaint may be filed with the juvenile court no later than 61 days after the development of the plan, if the student fails to participate or make satisfactory progress.

The Ohio General Assembly and Department of Education are emphasizing the importance that missing any school is a loss of instruction. Furthermore, the State is monitoring our chronic absenteeism rate, which does not differentiate between excused, unexcused, and parent authorized absences. Please make every effort to make attendance a priority by scheduling appointments and family vacations on non-attendance days or before/after the school day. It is critical scholars are on time every day and stay for the entire day of learning.

### **Emergencies**

Families/caregivers are encouraged to log in to the Infinite Campus Parent Portal to update their residential and emergency contact information each year. You will receive your Parent Portal Activation Code during the first days of school. Please be sure all residential and emergency contact information is accurate in the Infinite Campus system. Please update this information if it should change during the school year. Incorrect telephone numbers can delay life-saving treatment. Parents or guardians will be contacted when any emergency treatment is provided. In addition, scholars will not be permitted to attend off campus visits/field trips without emergency information on file.

Please make arrangements for friends or relatives to provide transportation if you are unable to come to school in the event of an emergency. List their names and contact information in the emergency information section of Infinite Campus. Children will only be released to those individuals listed as emergency contacts. If anyone who is not specified in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal will be picking up your child, you must notify the office. Please ask those picking up your child to carry a photo I.D. The office reserves the right to request photo identification.

School staff have been trained and will administer common first aid: ice, Band-Aids, and compresses may be applied. No medication will be administered unless specified by a physician.

### **Fire, Tornado and Safe School Drills**

Fire, tornado, and safe school drills are conducted on at least a monthly basis to ensure safety in all situations. Since safety is our primary concern, scholars must pay strict attention to and follow exact directions. Safe school drills are conducted to prepare children in the event an intruder would enter the school building.

## **Emergency Closing**

On occasion, the school will be closed on days other than those indicated on the school calendar. Weather conditions such as extreme heat, flooding, ice, and snow may necessitate closing schools. Additionally, in the event of a building emergency, such as a gas, electric, heating, or water malfunction, the school may need to be closed.

All school-closing decisions involving the entire school district are made by central office administration. Notices are published on major radio and television stations. On inclement weather days, please watch the news for specific information. Closings are also listed on the following websites:

[www.ccsdh.us](http://www.ccsdh.us)

[www.wbns10tv.com](http://www.wbns10tv.com)

[www.nbc4i.com](http://www.nbc4i.com)

[www.wsyx6.com](http://www.wsyx6.com)

School closing decisions involving building safety will also be made by district administrators. If school has not started, notices will be publicized by the radio and television media. If the building is closed during the school day, attempts will be made to contact parents or other designees. Contact information for parents and other designees should be regularly updated. **Every family should have an emergency plan for school closings.**

## **Requests for Documentation**

Documents and forms that are to be completed by school personnel require 24 hours' notice. Thank you in advance for your patience and consideration.

## **Food Service Program**

Columbus Gifted Academy has a breakfast and hot lunch program. All CCS scholars are eligible to take advantage of the **FREE** breakfast and lunch program.

**\*Parents/Guardians – Due to an increase in food sensitivities and allergies, no foods or snacks are to be taken to classrooms (including the cafeteria) without clearance through the school nurse or director. In addition, parents are asked not to bring or send in treats for their child's birthday or other personal occasions.**

**Also, please advise your scholar not to share his/her packed lunches with other scholars. Thank you.**

## School Bell Schedule – 2025-26

8:30 AM	Breakfast Begins
9:00 AM	Students Dismissed to Class
9:10 AM	ALL CLASSES BEGIN
11:35 AM	Lunch Session
12:15 PM	Lunch Session
3:30 PM	School Dismissal

### Guidelines For Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit Columbus Gifted Academy and their scholar’s classroom(s) to observe our school’s instructional program. In order to preserve an optimum learning atmosphere, we ask that all visitors follow these guidelines:

1. If you would like to visit a classroom, please schedule an appointment with your child’s teacher for the date, time, and purpose of your visit **at least 24 hours in advance**, so that we may accommodate your specific needs.
2. **FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY REASONS, EVEN IF WE KNOW YOU, WE ARE REQUIRED BY COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS TO HAVE YOU REPORT TO THE OFFICE, SIGN IN USING THE LOBBYGUARD SYSTEM AND OBTAIN A VISITOR’S PASS BEFORE GOING TO THE CLASSROOM.** The office will notify the classroom teacher of your visit.
3. Report directly to your designated location. Do not disrupt instruction by roaming the hallways, and leave immediately once visitation has ended.
4. Please do not bring other children with you for classroom visitations.
5. To protect privacy of visitors, students and staff, cell phones/tablets are not to be used in the presence of scholars.
6. If you anticipate needing to talk with other staff, please contact them to arrange a time to do so during your visit or during another time.

Following these simple guidelines will ensure a positive visit for you, your child, his/her classmates, and school staff. Thank you for your cooperation.

## **Disruption on or Near School Property**

### **ORDINANCE NO. 1316-19**

#### **"2327.015 - Disorderly conduct, interference with school activities:**

No person shall go upon any school property within the City of Columbus and make or do any offensive act, utterance, gesture, or display which tends to disrupt or interfere with educational classes or social and athletic activities then in progress."

#### **"23127.16 - Distributing printed matter near schools:**

No person shall sell or offer for sale, or give or offer to give or attempt in any manner to distribute any pamphlets, circulars or other printed matter which is directed at inciting or producing imminent lawless action and is likely to incite and produce such action, at any entrance or exit to any school house, school athletic field or within 100 feet of any school property."

### **Campus Safety**

Families and scholars are encouraged to use heightened awareness at all times while on school grounds. Please secure belongings in your vehicle, travel with a buddy, and stay alert. If you see something, say something. Please alert school personnel of anything that concerns you or contact 1-844-SAFEROH (723-3764).

### **Health Services**

Currently, there is a full-time nurse on staff at Columbus Gifted Academy. Duties include checking immunization records to be sure all children are in compliance with state law. The nurse is happy to talk with you regarding any health concerns that may affect your child's performance. Please call the school office for an appointment. When your child is at school, the school nurse will be responsible for monitoring his/her health condition. Students will have routine health screenings at school. Health referrals, such as vision or dental, will be sent home as needed.

Scholars may be permitted to use prescribed medication and over-the-counter drugs (for example, Advil, cough medication, etc.) only when the following have been received:

1. A physician's verification of the necessity for the medication to be taken during school hours and identification of the medication, dosage, and the time interval it is to be taken.
2. A prescribed medication authorization form completed and signed by the parent or guardian.

## **Personal Device Policy – Including Phones, Watches, and Other Internet Devices**

With the passage of the state’s two-year budget, state law prohibits the use of cell phones and other devices that connect to the Internet during the school day under most circumstances. In order to limit distractions and keep our scholars safe, scholars will not be permitted to use personal devices (cellular phones, digital watches, AirPods, and other like devices) during the instructional day. We understand families provide their children with these devices to ensure their safety. Students will have access to their phones before and after the school day. Use of cellular phones as specified in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 Plans, and medical plans will be permitted. During the day, devices will be secured in a locked location. If a student needs to use a phone they may access one in the main office. Students in violation of this policy will be subject to consequences as outlined in the *CGA Discipline Matrix*.

### **Use of Drugs and Alcohol**

Scholars are not permitted to use drugs, alcohol or tobacco in any form (with the exception of prescribed medication with appropriate physician’s verification on file) in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school-controlled vehicles. No smoking is permitted on school property at any time.

### **Illness at School**

When a child becomes ill at school, the school secretary, nurse, or principal will contact the parent or other emergency contact person(s). **It is expected that the family’s designee will come to school to take the scholar home as soon as possible.** Arrangements should be made by each family to anticipate this situation.

Scholars may be determined ill if they exhibit:

- Vomiting
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Ear Infections
- Diarrhea
- Head Lice
- Fever of 100 or More
- Excessive Sleepiness
- Severe Headache
- Communicable Skin Disease
- Others at the Nurse’s or Director’s Discretion

**PLEASE NOTE: If a child is sent home for any of these symptoms, he/she should not return to school until at least 24 hours after the fever has completely cleared without medication, or 24 to 48 hours after treatment, as directed by your physician.**

Children displaying illness at school will be isolated in the office with adult supervision until a parent or the family's designee picks up the child. In the event a scholar feels too ill to participate, a parent/caregiver will be contacted.

*We want every scholar engaged and learning every day, but not if they are too sick. In fairness to peers and staff, please keep your scholar home if they are ill.*

The criteria for readmission of a child after a serious illness includes written permission of the doctor or permission of the school nurse and/or director. The decision of the school nurse and/or director will be based upon the scholar's condition at the time of readmission, as well as the reason for the absence.

### **Immunizations**

According to Ohio law, all children entering the Columbus City Schools should be appropriately immunized. Parents are required to submit official documentation of immunization to the school prior to the beginning of classes. A fourteen day (14) grace period will be allowed for the completion of immunizations not current at the start of the school year. Children are not allowed to attend school if they are not immunized.

All children from outside the United States are required to have a tuberculin skin test prior to enrollment.

### **Playground Rules**

Here are some basic guidelines that will promote a safe, enjoyable atmosphere for everyone:

- Once scholars arrive at school, they are not to leave school grounds without the permission of a parent/caregiver or the director, unless in the event of a scheduled off-campus visit or other activity.
- Scholars must stay in designated playground areas (inside of fence, out of stairwells).
- Fighting, throwing snowballs, and stone-throwing are not permitted.
- Jumping on other children, lifting others in any way, wrestling, tripping, and other rough play is prohibited.
- Walk in mulched areas. Use caution.
- Be a good sport. Play games according to CGA Rules.
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Do not bother others.

- Share equipment and return it to the proper areas at the close of recess.
- Accept positive direction from the entire staff. We are here to help you, watch you grow, and have fun learning!
- Freeze at first whistle. Walk to the line or door at the second whistle.
- Respect the rules and regulations necessary for the orderly operation of the school.
- Respect school property, as well as the property and rights of others, at all times.
- Do not use obscene or abusive language at any time. This includes name-calling.
- All toys should be left at home, unless requested by the classroom teacher.
- NO WEAPONS – Any object which can be used to intimidate or injure another individual is considered a weapon.

Our foremost focus at Columbus Gifted Academy is **the safety of our scholars.**

### **Bus Rules**

The bus driver is responsible for the management and safety of scholars and is responsible for enforcing rules. Any disruptive or disorderly behavior shall be reported to the director. Continued disruptive or disorderly conduct will result in removal from the school bus.

Bus rules include:

- Remain in assigned seat; changing from seat to seat while the bus is in motion is prohibited.
- Scholars must ride their assigned bus. CCS Transportation no longer allows students to transfer to unassigned routes.
- A respectful level of conversation must be maintained. Excessive noise is prohibited.
- Quiet must be maintained at railroad crossings and other danger points.
- A scholar's extension of any part(s) of his/her body through the window is prohibited.
- When exiting the school bus, scholars must observe rules for crossing streets.
- Throwing objects or spitting from bus windows is prohibited.
- Scholars will refrain from eating, drinking, or littering on the school bus.
- Scholars are to follow directions given by the bus driver at all times.
- Animals, pets or glass containers may not be transported on the bus.
- Parents will assume all responsibility for any damage or markings on the bus by the scholar.
- Scholars will speak kindly and respectfully at all times; profanity is prohibited.
- Scholars should arrive on time at designated stops; school buses will not wait for tardy scholars.

Contact the CCS Transportation Department at 365-5074 for questions about bus routes and late buses.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

The law of the State of Ohio requires that school personnel who suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect report that suspicion to the county children's services board for investigation.

Our staff has been trained in recognizing the signs of abuse and neglect and is aware of those guidelines set forth by the Columbus City Schools. We will follow the procedures for reporting to children's services boards promptly and completely when such action is necessary.

### **Counselor**

Our school counselor is available to work with classrooms, with individual scholars, and with teachers and parents to help scholars become successful learners and leaders. If you would like to speak with the school counselor, please contact her via email or the main office.

### **Personal Dress**

Parents/caregivers should ensure that children are appropriately dressed for the professional learning environment. The school has the right to regulate dress and grooming in the interest of health, safety, and effective instruction. Improper dress will be defined on an individual basis according to the Columbus City Schools' dress code.

The Columbus Gifted Academy does not have a uniform, though we do follow the Columbus City Schools' dress code. You can access this information in the CCS Guide to Student Success. Children should be dressed appropriately for the season of the year and specific daily weather conditions. Rubber-soled shoes are the safest and will be needed for Physical Education classes. Scholars will have outdoor recess unless weather conditions or temperatures are so severe (**below 22 degrees Fahrenheit with wind chill**) as to be unsafe. During cold weather, scholars should wear:

Warm Coats	Gloves	Sweaters
Pants or Tights	Hats	Boots

Thank you for your attentiveness to ensuring scholars are safe in all weather conditions.

**For safety reasons, scholars are required to wear athletic shoes during physical education classes.**

## **Personal Property at School**

Scholars should not bring toys, radios, headphones, electronics, skateboards, or scooters to school. These items have the potential to interrupt the learning process. If the items are lost, the school is not responsible for personal items brought from home. Exceptions are in the case of a sharing activity or when the teacher gives specific approval for bringing personal items to school. This also applies to “look-alike” devices, such as toy guns or knives.

## **Lost and Found**

**ALL ARTICLES WORN OR CARRIED BY SCHOLARS (COATS, HATS, MITTENS, SWEATERS, LUNCHBOXES, AND SO ON) SHOULD BE MARKED WITH THE CHILD’S NAME.**

There is no guarantee items will be recovered when lost. A Lost and Found area is located in the cafeteria.

## **Lockers**

Each scholar will be assigned a locker and will be responsible for the safe care and maintenance of the locker. Scholars are to provide their own locks. Number/word combination locks are strongly recommended. A copy of the combination/key will be recorded and kept on file with the child’s homeroom teacher. Lockers are the property of the school and can be searched at any time. If the child’s combination/key is not shared with the teacher, the lock will be cut off and removed from the locker.

## **Care of Books and Supplies**

Scholars are urged to take care of textbooks and supplies by carrying them in book bags, plastic bags, or sacks when it is rainy or snowy. A fee is assessed for all lost or damaged books and/or assigned devices. For additional information on care of school-issued laptops, please consult the CGA Chromebook Policy.

## **Physical Education**

As a safety factor, all scholars should have tennis shoes for activities in the gymnasium. All tennis shoes should be labeled with the scholar’s name.

## **Homework**

Homework is an extension of the learning experience. It should help scholars learn to accept responsibility, organize time, and establish independent study habits. Each grade-level team and teacher will individually notify you in writing of his/her/their homework policy.

## **Off-Campus Visits**

As part of The Columbus Gifted Academy philosophy of expeditionary learning, scholars are provided the opportunity to apply their learned skills to real-life situations. Students often learn better by experiencing real events instead of discussing abstract concepts. Consequently, we take scholars into the community to see, hear, feel, taste, and smell a variety of activities. These trips are carefully planned by your scholar's teacher(s) to accomplish specific learning objectives. The trips receive prior approval by the director and school district.

## **School Communication**

Teachers send class newsletters or other bulletins to communicate specific academic instruction and activities in the classroom.

PTO communications will inform you of PTO activities and opportunities for volunteering at upcoming events. Their website: [www.columbusgiftedacademy.com](http://www.columbusgiftedacademy.com) has timely information about these activities.

The school sponsors both a website and a Twitter page, as well as weekly phone dialers. Transcripts of phone dialers, as well as other important flyers and information, are posted to Peachjar. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to review weekly school communications with their scholars.

Conferences to discuss/review scholar progress are held in October/November and January/February of the academic year. Report cards are viewable in the Infinite Campus Parent Portal after each academic quarter.

Parents are encouraged to call, email, or schedule an appointment with their assigned teacher at any time to discuss concerns.

## **The Parent-Teacher Organization**

The Columbus Gifted Academy is fortunate to have a very active, invested parent/caregiver association. The PTO raises money for school purchases and conducts meetings to provide opportunities for enhancing the CGA program. Your participation is encouraged at regularly scheduled meetings and PTO-sponsored events.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteers are a vital component of the learning process at Columbus Gifted Academy.

Volunteers are visible in classrooms and in the school's hallways. Volunteers are welcome. We have many daily situations where a special skill, individual attention, or just another pair of hands would be greatly appreciated. These might include:

- Sharing a special talent with scholars;
- Assisting with the supervision of activities and experiential learning trips;
- Making materials for instructional projects.



## Joint Statement of Support

Columbus Gifted Academy Administrative Team

and

Columbus Gifted Academy Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

The primary goal of our relationship is to collaboratively and equitably foster an environment that embodies the purpose of Columbus Gifted Academy:

**to engage, enrich, and empower gifted learners through unique, rigorous, self-directed educational experiences in a collaborative learning environment that supports the whole child within and beyond the classroom**

and the Columbus Gifted Academy Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO):

**to enhance and support the educational experience at CGA, to develop a closer connection between CGA and home by encouraging parent involvement to improve the environment at CGA through volunteer and financial support.**

We are committed to ensuring scholars have access to high-quality, culturally-responsive gifted instruction.

Equipping our families to ensure they have what they need to support learning at-home.

Our commitment will be fostered through

- Maintaining transparent communication between CGA Leadership, Staff, and CGA PTO
  - Proactively planning and problem-solving in ways beneficial to our scholars
- Ensuring the safety of our scholars, staff, and parents/caregivers through adherence to CCS district policies

# CGA Parent/Caregiver-Scholar-School Agreement

2025-26

This agreement outlines how parents/caregivers, scholars, and CGA Staff will share the responsibility for scholar success throughout the 2025-26 school year. The school and its community will continue developing strong partnerships that foster scholars' growth and success.

Please read and sign below to indicate you have reviewed the 2025-26 Scholar-Parent/Caregiver Handbook with your CGA Scholar. The signed agreement must be returned to your child's homeroom teacher no later than Friday, September 5th. Thank you!

CGA will support scholars' learning at Columbus Gifted Academy in the following way:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and meaningful learning experiences geared toward meeting the needs of gifted learners.
- Help support scholars' social-emotional development through regular SEL learning opportunities.
- Provide support and frequent home communication regarding scholar learning progress, as well as ways parents/caregivers can support their scholars at home.
- Provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to volunteer at school activities and events.

*Amanda R. Reed, Director*

As the parent/caregiver, I will support my child's learning at Columbus Gifted Academy in the following ways:

- Establish a home routine and learning space that supports my scholar's success.
- Help develop healthy habits, such as: limited screen time, practice coping techniques, encourage and praise effort.
- Communicate regularly in collaboration with school staff.
- Regularly check the Infinite Campus Parent Portal and promptly review all notices from the school (phone dialers, newsletters, and so on).
- Maintain nutrition and hygiene.

Parent/Caregiver Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

As a CGA Scholar, I will:

- Attend school regularly and be on time.
- Complete all projects/assignments and return them on time.
- Be an active participant in all off-campus visits.
- Ask for help when I need it.
- Treat myself and others with respect.
- Keep my parents/caregivers informed of my progress in school.

CGA Scholar Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_