



Center For Inquiry

Where Questions Matter

Family Handbook

Important Sections to Review Before the Beginning of the School Year

Rights and Responsibilities

Classroom Visit Expectations

Medical Procedures

Magnet Fee and Field Trip Information

Permission and Acknowledgement Forms

Dear CFI Families,

We are thrilled that you are all a part of the CFI community for our 30th year at the Center for Inquiry! When you join the CFI community, you become a member in a very special circle of families and lineage of inquirers.

The people here at CFI know that *how* we learn matters as much as *what* we learn, and one of those distinguishing features is that we learn *from* one another on a regular basis. Traditions like Gathering, Share Fairs, and even Opening Picnic help to keep our sense of community and connectedness alive and thriving. You'll find information about them and many other community traditions in this book. This handbook is designed to help you and your family access and contribute to those traditions and ways of learning together that matter so much to us at CFI. Also included in the handbook is information about district policies often referenced and school-wide logistical processes. Those additions are designed to help you better understand your family's expectations and responsibilities as a member of this community.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook and revisit it as much as you need as a reference. Your presence in our community is both welcomed and encouraged. Thank you for being willing to contribute to this unique and wonderful school!

Gratefully yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Emily Whitecotton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Emily Whitecotton, Ph. D.
Principal of the Center for Inquiry

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Foundational Information

Mission Statement

The students, parents, and staff at the Center for Inquiry, a genuine collaboration between the University of South Carolina and Richland School District Two, are responsible for developing ourselves as more thoughtful caring and intelligent people who delight in learning and are committed to creating a more compassionate, equitable, knowledgeable, and democratic world.

Vision Statement

The Center for Inquiry fosters a rigorous learning environment where everyone is a teacher and a learner committed to creating, sustaining, and investing in a culture of inquiry where all voices are heard and valued. We strive to be a compassionate community where we nurture learners who will make a positive impact on the world.

Rights & Responsibilities

At CFI, we are a learning community. To keep our community thriving and growing, all of us need to participate and contribute to the progress and success of the whole. Because that process takes all of us, instead of school rules, we have Rights & Responsibilities. When the Responsibilities are fulfilled, our Rights as community members are ensured.

Responsibilities

We have a responsibility to keep our belongings organized and clean up after ourselves.
We have a responsibility to demonstrate respect with our words and actions.
We have a responsibility to ask questions and seek understanding.
We have a responsibility to encourage others.
We have a responsibility to communicate clearly and listen carefully.

Rights

We have the right to work and play in a safe and organized environment.
We have the right to be happy and to be treated with kindness and respect.
We have the right to learn new things.
We have the right to be ourselves and express our opinions.
We have the right to hear and be heard.

Faculty & Staff Responsibilities

The faculty and staff at CFI are committed to living and learning with their students and their parents/guardians to create a productive and healthy learning environment. Some examples of the ways that faculty and staff uphold their Responsibilities to protect the Rights above:

- Sharing information through school and class newsletters, blogs, and individual calls/emails
- Providing information regarding inquiry-based and integrated learning experiences to help families understand curricular structures and classroom routines
- Pay attention to health and allergy guidelines for all students
- Provide regular reports on academic progress through a variety of means including work sent home, Comprehensive Progress Reports, Student Led Conferences, Parent Conferences, and state/district test reports
- Communicate with other staff, students, and family members in a professional and respectful manner

Family Responsibilities

Parents and guardians can fulfill their responsibilities to protect the rights above by:

- Being involved in your child's education by contributing time and talents to support the Mission & Vision of CFI
- Attend Student Led Conferences, Parent Conferences, Curriculum Nights, and read information in teacher newsletters
- Respect and listen to diverse opinions and experiences
- Communicate with faculty, staff, and students in a professional and respectful manner

USC Partnership

We started as a partnership between Richland 2 and the College of Education at the University of South Carolina, and we continue that work to this day. What this means for our students is that we will have the benefit of hosting USC Interns in several of our classrooms throughout the year. Our USC Interns are such an important part of our community, and they bring so much to our classrooms as another caring and knowledgeable adult in the room. We will also be hosting USC Early Childhood Education classes on-site at CFI. Some of our classroom teachers will partner with professors from the University to collaboratively plan lessons that will engage the pre-service educators in supporting the learning that goes on in the classroom.

Inquiry-based & Integrated Instruction

We are the place *where questions matter*. When we value questions, we allow ourselves the opportunity to develop pathways and processes that will support us in truly learning for a lifetime. We were established in 1996 as a function of a partnership between Richland School District Two and the University of South Carolina. We were designed to be a demonstration site for inquiry-based and integrated instruction. As time went on, we became a part of Richland Two's Choice landscape and Magnet programming. Last year, we reignited that University partnership with some exciting collaborations with the University on the horizon!

The faculty and staff at the Center dedicate themselves to constructing engaging experiences that take into account students' questions, families' cultures, and class interests to achieve our Mission Statement (see below). Our teachers *start* their planning with the grade level standards appropriate for their class, but rarely *end* with the standard. We teach the processes of inquiry throughout each Unit of Study in ways that allow students to truly experience the connections between different disciplines while holding accountability to grade-level state standards.

At CFI, we explore, think, ask questions, and solve problems as readers, writers, scientists, mathematicians, artists, athletes, and community members. We are living the lives of these learning identities, not just learning content alone. In taking up the work of a scientist, we become better at problem-solving, investigating, experimenting, calculating, and communicating while learning the content itself. Throughout the school day, you'll find teachers supporting and challenging students by employing whole-group, small-group, individual instruction, and group reflection time toward their ownership of the learning they do together. In this way, strong community bonds are built in each classroom between students, teachers, and families.

Everyday Procedures

School Hours

Start Time	End Time	Early Care	Drop Off Begins	Tardies Begin
7:40am	2:30pm	6:30am	7:10am	7:41am

The cost of Early care is \$3/day or \$12/Week. Registration is not required and parents can find and pay their fees in Powerschool.

Office hours are 8am - 3pm each day.

Students arriving after 7:40am will need to be signed in by their parent/guardian at the front office kiosk. If the number of tardies/early dismissals becomes excessive, the student may forfeit their spot at the Center for Inquiry and be required to attend their zoned school.

Drop off and Pickup each day is at the front of the school. If you need to change your child's pick-up arrangement please email their teacher or call the front office at 803-699-2969 to change arrangements.

Transportation

The Center for Inquiry is a whole-school Magnet program. All Richland 2 Magnet program students must provide their own transportation to and from school.

AfterCare

Start	End	Half Day Start	Half Day End	Holidays
2:30pm	5:45pm	11:00am	3:00pm	CLOSED

Aftercare Fees

- \$0 balance is necessary to be eligible for enrollment
- \$70/week, paid every Monday

- District and Holidays are factored into the cost
- \$10/incident for late pickups
- Accounts that are 2 weeks delinquent will be suspended for non-payment unless a payment arrangement is made ahead of time
- Students must be signed out by a parent or authorized adult before leaving Aftercare areas

By enrolling your child in the AfterCare program, you agree to pay AfterCare fees in a timely manner. Paying each week is the best way to keep your students' enrollment current.

AfterCare pick up will take place in the back of the school. Parents/guardians may park in the rear parking spots and walk to the back hallway door (Door 7) to sign out and pick up their student.

Attendance

State law requires students in kindergarten through 12th grade to attend school a minimum of 170 of the school year's 180 days to receive credit for the academic year.

Attendance is crucial to student achievement and developing a sense of belonging at school. Both belonging and achievement are cornerstones of our work and will provide your child with the very best chance for success.

To support your family in ensuring that attendance expectations are met, beyond 10 absences, we will need to create an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) together. **If attendance does not improve with the implementation of the plan, the next step for supporting school attendance will be removal from our Magnet Program.**

Accumulated absences/tardies/early dismissals often demonstrate a student could be better served at their Zoned School where transportation is available. We have developed a three-phase probation and improvement plan process that supports students toward meeting their attendance/tardy/early dismissal goals at their Center.

If a pattern of absences/excessive tardies or early dismissals develops, the last phase of the probation and improvement plan process is dismissal from the program.

School Fees

CFI's Annual Magnet Fee includes program cost, buses, and other logistics necessary to ensure a field trip happens smoothly.

Each grade's magnet fee varies by the programming they will participate in and all magnet fees will be automatically added to students' accounts before the first day of school.

All school fees are posted in Powerschool including Aftercare, charges for school spirit wear or the school yearbook. Parents can access their accounts online or on a web browser using a mobile device. Fees can be found in the left hand menu under each student. Parents are encouraged to keep fees current as unpaid fees will remain on students' accounts after they have been promoted.

To register for a Powerschool account visit the [District Powerschool site](https://psapp.richland2.org/public) at psapp.richland2.org/public

Parent Involvement & Visiting Classrooms or Lunch

Prior to visiting a classroom for the first time, a parent or guardian shall review and sign an acknowledgement form that outlines the expectations for visiting a classroom. Parents who wish to visit their student's classroom may do so following the District guidelines for Classroom Visits. CFI administration reserves the right to deny any parent who poses a threat to staff or students of the school. All visitors must sign in at the front office through Lobby Guard. The District [Parents Visiting Classrooms Acknowledgement Form](#) can be found here.

Breakfast, Lunch and Snacks

We eat lunch in the cafeteria at Summit Parkway middle school. The cafeteria staff provides a monthly lunch menu for students. Breakfast service is also provided by the middle school cafeteria staff.

Summit Parkway Middle School is currently identified as a CEP school (receiving a grant for all students to eat breakfast and lunch for free), therefore all CFI students receive one breakfast and one lunch per child, per day for free. Students who get a second or additional lunch/lunch item (milk, juice, etc) will be charged.

Procedures around sending classroom snacks to school vary by the teacher, so please see your child's teacher's communication about snacks. We want students prepared for steady decision-making throughout the day, so when sending snacks, we encourage nutritious snacks and discourage candy and soda. Read the District Policy on Birthdays and Non-School parties on page 23 of the [Student Handbook](#).

Electronic Communication Devices

Per district policy, an “electronic communication device” is a device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message, image or otherwise summons or delivers a communication to the possessor.

Richland School District Two wants to create a phone-free school environment that fosters a positive learning experience free from electronic distractions. By prohibiting the use of personal electronic devices during the school day, this policy aims to provide an environment that enhances focus and engagement, allowing students to develop the college and career-ready skills outlined in the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate. Students will have more opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions, collaborate with peers, and cultivate the essential skills necessary for success in college, careers, and life.

Per Richland 2 School Board Policy, elementary students may not use or display cell phones, smartwatches, or personal electronic communication devices while on school property during the start and end of the school day.

Additionally, CFI Aftercare policy prohibits the use of electronic communication devices during the hours of Aftercare without the permission of a faculty member or administrator. Faculty members will ask students to put the phone or smartwatch in a backpack on the first offense. Any further offenses will result in the faculty member confiscating the phone or smartwatch to be returned at the end of the day, and then losing the privilege to have the phone at school at all if it returns.

Classroom Assignments

At CFI we work hard to ensure that all children are in the most optimal learning environment and they each have a teacher who will best meet their needs. To do so, at the end of first grade and third grade, the first and third grade teachers review their two years of data (academic, social, emotional, relational, etc.) on their classes and provide

input on the best class compositions so that our administrators can make the very best decisions. We do not accept parent requests for teachers. However, we do welcome any information you'd like to share about the environments where you know your child has been most successful and productive to help us make those decisions.

Dress Code

District policy guidelines for student attire include the following:

- Pants, jeans, and skirts must be long enough to cover the lining of pockets.
- Shirts must cover students' midriff.
- Bonnets are now included on the list of head coverings such as hats that students cannot wear inside schools.
- Hoods cannot be worn on the head inside the building.
- Slippers, bedroom or house shoes cannot be worn.

These guidelines apply to all students per Richland Two Board of Trustees policy. The [student handbook](#) on the Richland 2 website has more information about the dress code. Click Dress Code to read the full policy.

Educational and University Visitors

Because the Center is nationally recognized for our innovative instructional practices, visitations are held for interested educators and pre-service teachers. CFI visitors are required to register in advance with the office. Visitors are only permitted on campus during designated visitor days. A typical visitation day includes an orientation, a tour of campus, classroom visitations, and a debriefing session with a CFI faculty member.

Medication

Medication Permission Form

In accordance with the South Carolina Nurse Practice Act and the Medical Practice Act, beginning in August 2013, a healthcare provider's original signature (not stamped or a copy) will be required for ALL medication administration in Richland School District Two Schools. This includes prescription medication, non-prescription/OTC, topical medications, eye drops, cough drops, and herbal medications.

Speak with your child's healthcare provider regarding medications that must be taken at school. The first dose of any medication cannot be administered at school; a student must have previously taken the medication. No over-the-counter (OTC) epinephrine asthma medicine inhalers (Primatene Mist) are allowed to be used on campus without a healthcare provider's prescription, a pharmacy-labeled inhaler, and a Medication

Permission Form.

All medications must be brought to school by the parent in the original factory packaging, the original prescription bottle, or the original box (ex: epipens and inhalers).

Medications will not be administered at school without a completed Medication Permission form that has been signed by your child's doctor. As the parent, it is your responsibility to obtain the physician's signature for the medication to be administered at school. The school nurse will not pursue a doctor's signature on behalf of any parent or student.

Read the Medication and healthroom guidelines in the Richland Two [Student Handbook](#) under "Health Rooms."

Birthday or Whole Class Treats

Please consult your child's teacher about any food allergies in the class before planning any whole-class snacks. There are also state guidelines that we need to follow with the snacks we share. You can find a [list of examples, put together by the Leadership at Bookman Road Elementary here](#). Please use this document for guidance when sending whole-class snacks. Teachers will determine if and when the snack will be consumed at school.

Lost & Found

We keep a Lost & Found area in the Gathering Room for students' items we find around the school. At the end of each quarter, unclaimed items will be placed in the school's Clothes Bin collection bin for donation. Notifications about donation dates will be sent out each quarter.

Academics

Integrated Arts Classes

At CFI we offer PE, Music, Art, Media/Technology, and Maker Space courses for students each week. The teachers who teach these have diligently planned their curriculum to best support the learning happening in students' core classrooms as well.

Assessing & Reporting Student Growth

At CFI we document student progress and growth in several different ways. We do not use grades on a report card, however, you will receive a comprehensive Progress Report at the end of each quarter. For 2nd-5th grade students, this report shares information on what the class has learned, a paragraph about your child's growth, a goal for the coming quarter, and a rating for every SC state standard category for each learning identity: reader, writer, mathematician, scientist, social scientist, and community member. Your child's teacher draws from multiple assessment sources to write these reports including: classwork, homework, classroom tests, conferring notes, projects, and standardized assessments. For our Kindergarten and 1st grade students, our teachers write these reports twice a year, and provide a conference and a slightly shorter report with the family the other two quarters. We also document progress for families through Gatherings (see below), Expert Project Share Fairs (see below) and Student-led Conferences (see below).

MAP & Benchmark Assessments

Students in grades 1-5 will take the Measures of Academic Progress test in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of each year. MAP is administered on students' Chromebooks.

Unlike paper-and-pencil tests, where all students are asked the same questions and spend a fixed amount of time taking the test, MAP Growth is a computer-adaptive test. That means every student gets a unique set of test questions based on responses to previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions get harder. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions get easier. By the end of the test, most students will have answered about half the questions correctly, as is common on adaptive tests.

Teachers use the results along with the other assessments mentioned above to better support their student's achievement throughout the year.

Benchmark assessments are administered each of the first three quarters of the school year to 3rd – 5th grade students. These assessments have questions that are connected to the standards students study throughout the district in each quarter. Teachers use this information to bolster student understanding towards state testing.

State Testing – SCReady Testing

All students in South Carolina public schools, grades 3–5 participate in the South Carolina testing program designed to measure whether students meet challenging state standards for student achievement in the areas of Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Science (4th grade only).

SCReady tests are administered in the spring during the last 20 days of the school year and results are typically sent home with the first progress report in the fall. Scoring results are categorized as Does Not Meet, Approaches, Meets, and Exceeds. Parents of any students scoring “Does Not Meet” on one or more sections of SCReady will be contacted by the student's teacher for a conference where the teacher will discuss instructional strategies that they feel would be especially beneficial for the school year. As parents review their child's scores, they should consider them along with all of the other information received during the year concerning academic progress --progress reports, other assessment information, performance on school work, and feedback from the teacher. SCReady is only one more important piece of information about your child's progress.

For additional information on any state tests, you may visit the South Carolina Department of Education website at ed.sc.gov.

ALERT

ALERT is the district acronym for the programming offered to students who qualify as academically gifted. Students can qualify by scoring at a certain level on the CogAt test taken in 2nd grade and the Performance Task Assessment in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades. The PTA is only given to students who did not qualify in 2nd grade but have other test scores that suggest they could qualify.

Because our curriculum at the Center for Inquiry is inquiry-based and interdisciplinary, we engage all students in similar learning experiences to those within the ALERT pull-out curriculum used in other schools. For this reason, we do not provide those extra courses at the Center for Inquiry.

Field Studies

[Field Trip Packet Document](#)

Center students are fortunate to engage in many field studies. Field studies are selected by the teachers to complement aspects of the curriculum. During fifth grade, students have the opportunity to attend an overnight field study. This trip is scheduled in advance and parents receive information regarding the trip and fee payment several months prior to the trip.

We take a whole-school trip to the Zoo each year in the fall. All grade levels study animals and plants as a part of our state science standards, so visiting the Zoo together allows all grade levels the chance for observation towards their life science studies later in the year.

Parents are encouraged to accompany classes on most field studies and to help chaperone. Often, however, field study sites limit the number of adults that may accompany the class or require additional fees. Chaperones are expected to pay any additional fees incurred as a result of their participation in the field study. The final decision on chaperone limits will be decided by the classroom teacher or field trip lead.

CFI's Annual Magnet Fee includes program cost, buses, and other logistics necessary to ensure a field trip happens smoothly. Each grade's planned field trips will look different. Each grade will receive a detailed field trip packet with the information for the field trips for that year. The Annual Magnet fee will be automatically added to every student's account as it applies to their grade. Parents must contact their student's teacher to inform them of any absence on a field trip day. Fees will be adjusted accordingly. Documentation is necessary for each absence.

Media and Communication

Communication Through ParentSquare

ParentSquare is our district's communication platform. ParentSquare provides updates and communication from schools and the district through an app, emails, and texts. Families will receive school-wide, classroom, and grade-level communication through ParentSquare. To set up your Parent Square account, visit www.psapp.richland2.org/public.

Home/School Communications

You can expect *Center Connections*, our school newsletter to show up on your ParentSquare feed (with the email or text alerts that you set) every other week, usually on Sunday evenings. It features school-level announcements and information about upcoming school events. Each month, a calendar of events is also included.

You can expect weekly communication from your child's classroom teacher regarding class news, information about class events, and curriculum. You can expect faculty to respond to your emails within 48 business hours.

At the beginning of the year, your child's teacher will send out their communication plan for their parents which details times and methods for contacting them during non-school hours. Parent Conferences should be arranged by reaching out to the teacher to set up an appointment.

District Issued Electronic Communication Devices (Acceptable Use of Technology)

Students in Richland School District 2 have access to a Chromebook through the district. Families will receive further communication regarding the Acceptable Use Policy that students must sign in, in order to use their device and district email account. These devices and accounts are to be used for school assignments only. Additional information about this topic can be found in the Richland School District Two [Student Handbook](#).

Emergency Procedures

CFI participates in practices and drills throughout the year, often at the same time as the students at the middle school next door. By law, we are required to hold fire drills, inclement weather drills, earthquake drills, secure drills, and lockdown drills. In the event that something happens in the surrounding area that requires us to follow our standard security procedures, you can expect communication from either school or district personnel.

Emergency School Closings

In the case of inclement weather, the district decides whether schools will be closed or delayed. This decision will be communicated in multiple ways from the district level. In the case of an emergency closing during the school day, the decision will be communicated through multiple district channels as well. AfterCare is not available during emergency school closings.

Safety and Emergency

Photo, Video, and Media Release

During annual registration each year, parents are asked to complete a **Directory Information Form**. This form allows you to decide whether you give permission for your student to be pictured, filmed, or videoed for various school and district purposes (such as newsletters, the school website, or celebratory social media posts) and if you allow your students information to be included in any school or district publications including but not limited to yearbooks, award/graduation programs, honor rolls, etc.

You can access, review, or update this document at any time by logging into your **PowerSchool Portal** account and navigating to the "**Forms**" section on the left-hand menu.

Security & School Resource Officer

To ensure security on our campus, we appreciate your cooperation in the mornings, ensuring that students are the only people entering through the back doors. If you need to visit school (to deliver a project or for a scheduled meeting with a teacher) from 7:10-7:40am before the school day starts, please plan to sign in at the LobbyGuard Kiosk in the front office area. Throughout the day, we will keep all doors but the front door locked. Teachers have key cards that will allow them access throughout the day, coming in from lunch and recess, etc. We have our own School Resource Officer through a Richland County Sheriff's Department grant. Please keep in mind that anyone not listed on the Family Information Sheet or in Powerschool will not be able to pick up your child from campus without direct communication from a parent/guardian. More information is available in Richland School District Two's [Student Handbook](#) on the district website.

Sexual Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying

Board Policy JICFAA outlines a definition for harassment, intimidation, and bullying that reads, “harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students is prohibited.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying of students is prohibited. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is defined as a gesture, electronic communication, or a written, verbal physical, or sexual act reasonably perceived to have the effect of the following: harming a student physically or emotionally or damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of personal harm or property damage; or insulting or demeaning a student or group of students causing substantial disruption in, or substantial interference with, the orderly operation of the school.” Each school in the district conducts a bullying protocol when there is suspicion of bullying at school to determine whether or not we consider a situation bullying or a mutual conflict. When situations are determined to be mutual conflict and not bullying, even those conflicts are taken very seriously and responded to with the appropriate support in place to better move forward with the positive, productive, and orderly operation of the school.

It is important to distinguish between mutual conflict, harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Often elementary students have mutual conflicts with each other as they learn and grow socially. We support, teach, and encourage students to work through conflicts together with each other to become independent problem solvers with the help of their parents and faculty members at CFI. If a parent or student has a concern, it is best to begin a discussion with the classroom teacher, possibly involving the school counselor.

If there is ever a suspicion of sexual harassment, administrators at CFI follow the administrative processes at the district level through the Title IX office. The definition of sexual harassment in the federal legislative language that we use includes, “Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient’s education program or activity.” See the Code of Federal Regulations for more detailed and varied definitions. Please reach out to CFI Leadership, if you suspect sexual harassment.

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Disciplinary Procedures

The majority of disciplinary situations are best handled in the classroom within the context of a caring relationship with the teacher and supportive community. However, there are times when a student needs space out of the room, a more serious boundary, or a school-level consequence to help reset and get back on track. Each situation is different, but the goal is always for students to be back in the classroom meeting teacher and family expectations and learning productively and peacefully. Just as there are MTSS supports for Academics, there are MTSS supports for Behavior as well. If we see patterns or repetition in student choices, we will be starting the work to get the school-wide help through these MTSS channels, and the Magnet program procedures listed below.

There is an expected code of conduct that includes all School Board Policy and District-wide conduct expectations when you enroll in a Richland 2 Magnet Program. At each Center, there are school-wide and classroom-specific expectations for how students, staff, and families should live and learn alongside one another. Following these school-wide and classroom expectations will help all students avoid any behavioral infractions.

At the CFI, accumulated behavioral infractions sometimes demonstrate that a student could be better served at their zoned school. Sometimes a traditional setting is able to offer support in ways that we cannot due to our staff size. In tandem with our teachers' strong classroom communities and consistent behavioral instruction, Centers' Leaders have developed a [three-phase probation and improvement plan process](#) to support individual students toward meeting behavioral goals at their Center.

However, if a pattern of 3 suspensions develops, the last phase of the probation and improvement plan process is dismissal from the program. Level Three disciplinary infractions (see Richland School District Two website for Board Policy) may result in immediate dismissal from the program.

CFI Traditions & Learning Community Connections

CFI Teacher Appreciation Week

A place like CFI doesn't exist without incredible teachers who generate energy and enthusiasm for the work we do every single day. Appreciating them is a very important part of our life here at the Center. Each year CFI celebrates Teacher Appreciation week in February. Our families always know how to share their love and appreciation for our teachers.

Family Cultural Share Fair

Our Cultural Share Fair is a celebration of all the incredible cultural diversity we have in our families at CFI. In years past, we learned about Juneteenth, Jamaica, HBCUs & Greek Life, Jewish Culture, Autism, Mushroom Hunting, the Philippines, food from Thailand, and so much more! We learned how to write our names in Korean and all about Greek Dancing. We have such deep and diverse roots that nourish our CFI families. Cultural Festival is our way to celebrate where we come from, understand how it shapes who we are, and share the wisdom that our families' ways of being offer the world. But we need your help to make it happen. Each year we seek support from families for you all to develop projects that highlight and teach about your heritage, traditions, practices, games, places to visit, foods, or other ways of being.

Curriculum Nights

Curriculum Nights are designed as 45-minute sessions (K-2 from 6-6:45 & 3-5 from 6:45-7:30) for teachers to host families in classrooms, providing you the opportunity to live the learning that your children live each day. Teachers make decisions about what they will do on Curriculum Night based on what they want to help families better understand. For example, they might structure parts of a workshop for them to live or set up math games and a reflection time about the math students used to strategically play the games. Curriculum Nights are also a fantastic way to help families have clarity around ways to support their child with learning at home. These nights will happen once per semester.

Fall Festival

Fall Festival is our version of a field day in October. Our PTP and Homeroom Parents do an amazing job each year planning and facilitating 6 fun and challenging stations for students to enjoy.

Gathering

When anyone asks what makes us different at CFI, one piece that former families never leave out in their answer is Gathering. It is the structure that supports our students in learning how to confidently and competently publicly speak to a larger group, even at 5 years old. Gathering is a time on Friday afternoons (or the last full day of the week if there is a student holiday at the end of the week) from 2:00pm to 2:20pm where one class shares their learning with the whole school. The class responsible for Gathering also takes care of morning announcements for the week. The families of the class responsible are invited to Gathering. The Gathering schedule will be posted on our events calendar on the website, which will include a link to the GoogleMeet for Gathering each week for any families who can't make it in-person.

Inquiry Matters Conference

One of the early commitments of the school was to serve as a demonstration and inspiration site for inquiry-based and interdisciplinary learning and teaching. This is a commitment we sustain year after year with the Inquiry Matters Conference. Each spring we invite teachers from across the state to join us for a professional learning conference on-site at CFI. Teachers who attend get to join CFI faculty members and other inquiry-based teachers to learn about innovative ideas they are using in their own classrooms. Students often join us to help the teachers present. Who better to talk about the learning we do here than the learners themselves?

It's a Grand Day

This is a very special way that we celebrate grandparents, other visitors who serve as students' grandparents, and Veterans Day at CFI. Each year we invite students Grand Visitors (grandparents or older members of students' family/community). This event allows students' extended family members and community members the chance to see what learning is about at CFI. The Visitors arrive around 12 noon, and enjoy a reception and video in the Gathering Room. By about 12:45, we welcome them with a short talk about learning at CFI, and what they might notice in classrooms. From about 1pm-1:45pm, grand visitors join students in classrooms. There are some teachers who use this as an opportunity to let the grand visitors experience the learning in general ways (playing math games, sharing students' published writing, read-alouds, sharing a class discussion of different historical events they may have lived through, etc). Some teachers use this as an opportunity for students to honor their Visitors with artifacts students create for them or even interviewing them for their perspective on certain events.

Opening Picnic

Opening Picnic is like our version of an Open House. It is a time for our families to share a meal together and then tour classrooms. Other schools host this time before the school year starts. Here we host it in late August or September, and it is a time for students to show their families what they've created together with the rest of their class. We love seeing the joy and confidence that students bring when they get to take ownership of their learning homes and learning communities, even at the very beginning of the school year!

Passing of the Cans

At CFI we are a community that values service and taking action toward a better world. One of the ways we express that value and encourage contribution is through Passing of the Cans. This is the name for our annual Center-wide food drive right before the winter holiday break. We call it Passing of the Cans because before the school had a building, we were in portables. When we collected canned foods in the classrooms, they had to get out to their central location for pickup and delivery to the food bank. Students lined up, bucket brigade style, and passed the cans, hand over hand until all the cans were in the trucks ready to go. Now that we have a building, this is less necessary. However, the passing process allows the students a chance to understand the impact of our collective efforts in a hands-on way, so we've continued the practice each year.

PTP

PTP, Parent Teacher Partnership, is our parent and family organization at CFI. All families are members of the PTP by being a part of the CFI community. This organization is supported by a budget that we fundraise for throughout the school year with CFI nights at restaurants in town, CFI events, and some merchandise sales. Our major fundraising push is through what we call the Annual Fund. Be on the lookout for ways to contribute your time and talents through PTP. We have a PTP Board made up of committed parents who lead our PTP Committees and an Executive Board of leaders for the organization as a whole. Be on the lookout in Center Connections for our invitations to be a part of the PTP Facebook group and to get involved on the PTP Committees. Reach out to Bobby Frankenberger rjfrankenberger@gmail.com for more information.

Share Fairs

One of the ways that we enhance motivation and provide students an authentic audience for their work is through a structure we call a Share Fair. Once students complete an Expert Project, the teacher will schedule a time in the Gathering Room for

them to present their work to the other classes in the school and families who rotate through. These are always joyful celebrations of learning that offer the presenter another opportunity to publicly share their ideas and the attending audience a chance to get really good at listening, asking questions, and providing thoughtful feedback to other inquirers.

Student Led Conferences

Student Led Conferences are individual conferences that the teacher schedules with each family to feature a prepared presentation of their child's growth as a reader, writer, mathematician, scientist, social scientist, and community member through the current school year. We love Student Led Conferences at CFI because they are such a beautiful way for our students to reflect and set goals for themselves. Teachers help in the preparation, but seek to support the student in truly leading the celebration of their growth during the conference.

Movie Night

This is a night that we share a movie and some pizza together as a CFI community. The PTP uses the pizza sales as a fundraiser for our PTP budget.

Family Dance

We love to dance together at CFI. In May each year, we gather together to celebrate the year coming to a close and boogie down. Over the past few years, we have included another pizza fundraiser and a photo booth.

Splash Day

Splash Day is our spring field day. We just add water to the same kinds of fun and challenging events that we host for the Fall Festival. This is another wonderful opportunity to volunteer and celebrate the end of the school year with us.

5th Grade Graduation

Each year we close the year with this final event for our fifth grade students, celebrating the incredible young people they are growing to be. Fourth and fifth graders and their families gather together to share in the celebration because it is also the time that the fifth graders literally pass the torch of their leadership at CFI to the fourth grade students. Several families volunteer their time to help decorate the gym at Summit Parkway Middle to prepare for the event.

We hope this handbook serves as a helpful reference throughout the school year. If you have any questions, concerns, or need clarification regarding any of the policies, procedures, or information outlined in this document, please do not hesitate to reach out. Our staff is always here to support you and ensure a successful year for your student.

Dr.Whitecotton - Principal - ewhitecotton@richland2.org
Danielle Burnell - Office Assistant - dburnell@richland2.org
Phone: 803-699-2969

Annual Field Study Packet Permission

School Year: 26-27

Grade Level: _____

Classroom Teacher: _____

Student Name(s): _____

[] **Chaperone Interest:** I am interested in serving as a volunteer chaperone during this school year. I understand that checking this box does not guarantee participation/approval as a volunteer chaperone on a field study. This is just to show that I am interested and would like to be considered.

PARENTAL CONSENT (CHECK ONE)

() My child(ren) **HAS/HAVE PERMISSION** to attend and participate in the field studies listed above. I understand that the school will make every effort to provide a safe environment. However, I understand the school district and its personnel are not responsible for any loss or injury that may result and I agree to hold the school district and its personnel harmless for any loss or injury that may result in my child(ren)'s participation in these field studies.

() I **DO NOT give permission** for my child(ren) to participate in or attend the field studies listed above.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

In the event of an accident or illness, I understand that reasonable effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian or other emergency contact listed below. If I am not available, or the other contact listed below cannot be reached, I hereby authorize school district personnel to secure emergency medical care, as needed, and understand that I will be financially responsible for any costs related to securing emergency care for my child. Please provide one phone number where a parent, guardian, or authorized person may be reached to give consent to medical treatment.

EC Name: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Phone: _____ Alternate #: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

My child(ren) will / will not need a bag lunch for these trips? (Please circle will or will not.)

Student 1 Full Name: _____

Student 2 Full Name: _____

Student 3 Full Name : _____

Teacher / Homeroom: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____



Parents Visiting Classrooms

Parent Acknowledgement Form *(One current copy required to be kept on file each year per parent)*

I, _____, understand:

- **The purpose of a classroom visit** should be to enhance an understanding of the teaching and learning activities experienced by their student and to understand their student as a learner.
- **Parents/guardians should not interrupt the classroom** by attempting to communicate with the teacher or with other students. A parent/teacher conference should be scheduled if necessary.
- **An administrator/counselor** may plan to observe the class concurrently.
- **Cell phones should not be used** while visiting a class and should be turned off or on silent. No photos or videos should be taken during the visit unless approved in advance by administration.
- **Classroom visits should not be overbearing.** Elementary visits should be limited to no more than 30 minutes. Middle and High visits should be limited to no more than one class period. Any extended visits should be approved by administration in advance.
- **Parents/Guardians wishing to bring in lunch** and eat with their student are permitted to do so. The same procedures should be followed as above with the exception of the visitor will be escorted to the cafeteria rather than the classroom. Parents/guardians may only bring lunch for their student(s).
- **Young children and babies** should not be brought whenever a parent/guardian visits a classroom in order to protect the learning environment and avoid any potential disruptions.
- **Parents who are attempting to visit a classroom as they are visibly upset** will be asked to meet with an administrator to investigate the matter. Based on the meeting, the administrator will determine if the visit will proceed or be rescheduled.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

CFI Family Acknowledgement

**Please initial and sign this document and return it to the front office by Friday,
August 7th, 2026**

Behavior & Attendance Accountability Processes

_____ (initial) *I acknowledge that my student(s) and I have read and understand the Behavior and Attendance Accountability Process. We agree to abide by all District policies, school rules, and attendance expectations. I understand that failure to meet these standards or maintain positive behavior may result in my student'(s) dismissal from the magnet program.*

Rights and Responsibilities

_____ (initial) *I acknowledge my student(s) and I have read and understand the rights and responsibilities of the Center for Inquiry. I understand these expectations and commit to supporting a safe, respectful, and organized learning environment both in school and online.*

Field Trip Permission and Information

_____ (initial) *I acknowledge that my student(s) and I have received, read and understand the information, procedures, and expectations outlined in the Field Trip Permission and Information document. I understand the purpose, guidelines, and transportation methods outlined for the upcoming school-year field studies. I agree that my student(s) will abide by all behavioral expectations, safety rules, and instructions provided by the classroom teachers and supervising staff during these trips. I acknowledge the designated magnet fee deadlines and grant full permission for my student(s) to participate in the field studies scheduled for this school year.*

I understand that my initials above are necessary to show that I agree to the guidelines and procedures practiced at the Center for Inquiry, and that I am committed to participating in the learning community as an active partner in my child's education.

Together, we can ensure a supportive, safe, and enriching environment for all students.

Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Student 1 Full Name: _____

Student 2 Full Name: _____

Student 3 Full Name: _____

Date: _____