

Parent/Student Handbook Cresthill Middle School

9195 Cresthill Lane
Highlands Ranch, CO 80130

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Francesca Pappalardo, Principal

Sara DeLozier, Dean, 6th grade

Gina Chambers, Assistant Principal, 7th grade, Activities Director

Joe Wahl, Assistant Principal, 8th grade, Athletic Director

Mark Wakefield, Professional Learning Specialist

School Hours: 7:30-2:45

Office Hours: 7:00 - 3:30

Main Office: 303-387-2800

Attendance: 303-387-2802

Registration: 303-387-2810

Bookkeeper: 303-387-2816

School Resource Officer: 303-387-2811

Additional Resources

Cresthill Website: <https://cms.dcsdk12.org>

Facebook: facebook.com/CresthillMiddleSchool

Instagram: @cresthill_ms

Fees: <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>

DCSD Website: <https://www.dcsdk12.org>

Safe to Tell: 877-542-7233

Our Vision:

All Students Learn at High Levels

Our Mission:

The Cresthill Middle School community is dedicated to building sturdy human beings who grow academically, thrive socially, and navigate the complexities of emotions with resilience.

Together, we strive to create an inclusive environment that encourages curiosity, perseverance, and respect, ensuring that every student is prepared to face the challenges of the future with confidence, integrity, and a love for learning.

CMS INFORMATION

Monday - Thursday

Before school bell schedule:

7:00 am Building is open to students
7:25 am Students released to their first class
7:30 am Class begins

Friday

Before school bell schedule:

7:45 am Building is open to students
8:10 am Students released to their first class
8:15 am Class begins

Monday - Friday

After school dismissal and expectations:

2:45 pm End of period seven
2:57 pm Buses depart
3:00 pm Start time for athletics and activities
3:00 pm: All students are off campus if they are not participating in a sport or activity.
Students are not allowed to be on campus after 3:00 pm without permission.

Cresthill Mascot: Cougar

Cresthill Colors: Black, Gray, Red, White

ACADEMICS

Cresthill uses a standards-referenced grading system. Students receive two different grades for each class, designed to help them track their progress in both subject area content and the development of critical work habits, such as effort, responsibility, participation, and homework/classwork completion.

Grading Indicators

What do my grades mean?

Content Knowledge

A = Consistently exceeds standards for this grading period
B = Consistently meets standards for this grading period
C = Is progressing but inconsistent with standards
D = Consistently does not meet standards
I = Insufficient evidence submitted in this grading period

Work Habits

A = Work habits consistently exceed expectations
B = Work habits consistently meet expectations
C = Work habits are inconsistent
U = Work habits consistently do not meet expectations
I (0) = Insufficient evidence

Honor Roll

The Honor Roll at CMS considers both content knowledge and work habits during each quarterly grading period. CMS designates the Honor Roll using the following criteria:

- Students must exhibit work habits that “Exceed Expectations” (Grade of ‘A’) in at least 6 of 8 classes (with no grades of ‘C’ or ‘U’).
 - Advisement work habit grades are included in the 6 of 8 requirement.
- Students must have more A’s than B’s in Content Knowledge, with no C’s, D’s, or I’s. (A minimum of 4 A’s for Content Knowledge grades is required).

Homework Guidelines

Homework is part of the learning process, and CMS staff use it to reinforce skills or to complete lessons learned during the school day. Students are generally given time in class to begin or complete homework assignments, and they are expected to make appropriate use of that class time to decrease any potential homework workload.

Missed Homework/Classwork

Teachers use Google Classroom to support and manage student coursework. If students are absent due to illness, vacation, or other reasons, their first step is to check their Google Classroom(s) for assignments or email their teachers directly.

Make-up Work

Generally, students have one school day for each consecutive excused absence, plus one additional day to turn in make-up work. Completing make-up work promptly helps students stay connected with their class and engaged in learning.

National Junior Honor Society

Cresthill Middle School is a member of the National Junior Honor Society. Students interested in applying to NJHS should pay attention to the application process shared with students and families. Induction occurs each spring.

Attendance

Many activities planned by teachers are impossible to recreate, and daily interaction is a vital part of instruction. CMS recognizes the direct link between attendance and student success in the classroom and encourages students to attend school regularly.

Excused Absences

Excused absences result from temporary or extended illness, injury, family emergencies, funerals, or absences excused by the principal through prior requests from parents or guardians.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences occur when a parent or guardian does not call in to report the student's absence. The Principal has the discretion to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused.

Tardiness

Being in class and ready to learn at the start of each day is an important part of a student's education. CMS addresses tardiness with an intervention designed to ensure students do not miss valuable class time.

- Teachers will have a conversation with students if they notice them struggling with tardiness.
- If the pattern of lateness continues, teachers will reach out to parents to collaborate and provide support.
- If students continue to struggle with arriving on time, the school will address repeated tardiness as missed class time. This may result in students being assigned time during lunch, after school, or on release days to make up for the time missed in class.

*Periods Two through Seven	
# of Tardies	Teacher Action
1st, 2nd, and 3rd Tardy	The teacher will have a private conversation with the student.
4th Tardy	The teacher will contact the student's parent(s).
5th Tardy or more	The teacher will assign a lunch detention and contact the student's parent(s).

*First-period tardies will be addressed by the administration

Absences and After-School Activities

Students must be in school for a minimum of 4 hours (1/2 of the day) in order to participate in after-school athletics or activities.

Early Pick-Up

To arrange for a student's early pick-up before the end of the school day, contact the attendance line at 303-387-2802. When leaving a message, provide the student's name, the reason for the early pick-up, and whether the student will be returning to school. Parents or guardians must present valid identification when picking up the student. Please note that early pick-ups are not permitted between 2:30 PM and 2:45 PM. For all early departures, including illness or other reasons, students must be checked out through the main office.

Late Drop-Off

To report a student's late arrival at Cresthill Middle School, contact the attendance line at 303-387-2802. Please leave a message with the student's name and the reason for the late arrival.

ATHLETICS

Athletic Director: Joe Wahl, 303-387-2806, jwahl1@dcsdk12.org

Athletics in middle school are designed to enhance the educational experience and focus on sportsmanship, responsibility, teamwork, loyalty, and school pride. While winning is enjoyable, CMS no-cut sports teams focus on: Participation, Equity, Skill Development, and Student Involvement.

Requirements to participate in a sport include:

- A current physical on file. Physicals are valid for 365 days.
- Complete registration and sign waivers at <https://www.myschoolbucks.com> using a computer. Phones should not be used for registration.
- Payment via <https://www.myschoolbucks.com>.
- Consistently meeting work habit expectations in all classes.
- Following the DCSD Student's Code of Conduct at all times and Cresthill Athletics expectations.

If a student decides not to participate in a sport after registering, a refund will be given (upon parental request) only within the first week the sport begins. No refunds will be provided if a student decides not to participate or becomes ineligible after this time.

Sport Seasons

1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Coed Cross-Country Girls Volleyball Coed Flag Football	GirlsBasketball Coed Wrestling	Boys Basketball	Coed Track

CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

Clubs at CMS are student-driven. The school offers a wide variety of clubs and activities related to student interests. Offerings change each year or at different times during the year based on student interest and the availability of club sponsors. Interested students should connect with the Activities Director, Mrs. Chambers, at 303-387-2807 or gmchambers@dcsdk12.org, to discuss the process of starting a club.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

Communication is best handled as close to the origin as possible. The most effective form of communication is between the student and the teacher, as they are the individuals in the classroom engaged in the learning process. Students are encouraged to take initial ownership by reaching out to teachers to discuss questions, advocate for needs, or address miscommunications. Students are also encouraged to seek support in this process. Parents, counselors, and CMS administration are available to coach students on effective communication and can practice potential conversations with them.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

Advisement

Students collaborate with their Advisement teachers to foster both academic achievement and emotional well-being. This is accomplished through social and emotional lessons and dedicated team bonding activities. During intervention time, students have various opportunities, such as receiving interventions, completing make-up assessments, catching up on missed assignments, or utilizing the time as study hall to enhance academic progress.

Counseling

Students have a dedicated place in the building to receive support for challenges that impact their lives. Counselors are available to assist in three main areas: social/emotional, academics, and career. Common reasons to consult a counselor include:

- **Social/Emotional:** Students are whole people, and events outside the classroom can impact them. Counselors can help with relationship conflicts, navigating friendships, mental health, and more.
- **Academic:** School can be challenging. Counselors can assist with organization, planning, learning support, teacher communication, scheduling questions, and more.
- **Career:** Students may not yet know what they want to do in the future, and counselors can help guide students by exploring interests and potential paths after high school.

The CMS counseling team supports students throughout their three years at Cresthill. When students visit a counselor, they are not in trouble; counselors are there to help, encourage, and celebrate them.

Library Media Center

The Library Media Center provides comprehensive information and literacy support, offering assistance and instruction in various formats. This includes individual, small-group, and whole-class sessions to help students effectively use information. The library is equipped with an extensive collection of fiction and non-fiction books catering to different interests and reading preferences. The library serves as the informational hub of the building as well as a center for collaboration and student exploration. It offers a wide range of digital and print resources for research and study, while providing a welcoming atmosphere for socializing and leisure reading.

AM Announcements and CANN (Cresthill Action News Network)

Listening to the daily AM announcements and CANN is a requirement for all classrooms and students. School news, information, events, and spirit days are shared during this time, and it is important for students to stay involved in school happenings.

Food Deliveries

For safety and to avoid disruptions, CMS does not accept outside food deliveries for students (including deliveries from restaurants or delivery services). If a parent or guardian needs to bring lunch, it must be dropped off at the main office and labeled with the student's name.

Messages

The school works to ensure that emergency and important messages are delivered to students as soon as possible. Families are asked to plan for non-urgent messages and communicate plans before the start of the school day.

Food Service

Breakfast and lunch meals are free and available for all students. Students may also purchase à la carte items, including snacks. Please visit the [DCSD Nutrition Services website](#) for more details.

Shared Food

Food allergies can be life-threatening. Students are asked not to share food or drinks for this reason.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL**Health Assistant**

CMS has a designated health assistant who can support students with medical needs during the day. If a student visits the health room, they may be asked to call their parents to determine if they should remain in class or return home. Staff will ask parents to pick up students if:

- The student has a temperature over 100.0.
- The student has a rash.
- The student vomits at school.
- The student experiences a severe injury.

Medications at School

Middle school provides added permission and responsibility regarding medication. Students are encouraged to take medication at home if possible. Students may bring prescription medication to school provided that:

- The "Permission to Carry" form is completed and on file in the office.
- The student only has enough medicine for one day.

Students may carry over-the-counter medication (such as Tylenol, Motrin/Advil, cold medicine, or vitamins) without a "Permission to Carry" form provided that:

- The student only has enough medicine for one day.
- The medication is in its original packaging.

Permission to carry does not include controlled medications that need to be locked and monitored while on school grounds; this requires a conversation between parents and school administration. CMS staff cannot provide over-the-counter medication to students at any time or for any reason.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Reporting Practices

Students are encouraged to speak up when they notice something regarding their own safety or the safety of others. Students often have information before adults do; if they see a concern, it is important for them to feel comfortable sharing it.

- **Best option for support:** Tell a trusted adult. Parents, teachers, counselors, administrators, and all adults at CMS are available to help and deserve student trust.
- **Next option for support:** Safe-2-Tell. It is always better to talk with a trusted adult, but reports can also be made through Safe-2-Tell if a student needs to remain anonymous or has a concern after school hours. Safe-2-Tell is a valuable resource, and students are asked to use it responsibly.

Staff members struggle to help when they are unaware of a problem, and the school promotes a culture of trust, reporting, and support. Student trust in sharing information is vital to maintaining a safe place for students to learn and grow.

Standard Response Protocol

CMS practices ways to stay safe and ensures everyone knows how to take care of one another. All alarms and drills are treated as real events, and safety is prioritized in various situations. The drills practiced include:

- **Hold:** The protocol used when hallways need to be kept clear of occupants.
- **Secure:** The protocol used to safeguard people within the building in the event of a potential concern outside of the building.
- **Lockdown:** The protocol used to secure individual rooms and keep occupants quiet and in place if there is a concern inside the building.
- **Evacuate:** The protocol used to move people from one location to a different location in or out of the building (e.g., fire alarm).
- **Shelter:** The protocol used to respond to specifically named hazards for group and self-protection.

Safe2Tell Use

Safe2Tell allows students to anonymously report anything that concerns or threatens them or others. Safe2Tell is open 24/7, 365 days a year to take reports. Contact Safe2Tell by telephone at 1 (877) 542-7233 or online at <https://safe2tell.org>. Abuse of this service will not be tolerated. Please note that a live person is available for guidance and to ask for more details when making a Safe2Tell report.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

The culture and climate of CMS are the most important factors in student growth and learning. Maintaining a safe, joyful, kind, and supportive school environment is vital to student success. The school focuses on relationships and works to maintain an inclusive, respectful, and kind learning environment for every student.

At CMS, students are expected to monitor and manage themselves, take ownership and responsibility for their actions and decisions, and treat others with respect and kindness. While

perfection is not expected, effort, ownership, and ongoing attempts to learn and grow (even from mistakes) are required.

Discipline is designed to teach. When students make mistakes, they are held accountable for their actions and supported in learning from the experience. Consequences for mistakes (e.g., parent conversations or meetings, detention, community service, suspension) are paired with the goal of helping students learn, make things right, and continue as good-standing members of the CMS community.

Taking ownership of actions and exerting kindness are fundamental. All students are expected to comply with the following standards of behavior at all times within the building and on school grounds, both during and after the school day.

S.H.A.R.E.S.

Safety, Hospitality, Accountability, Respect, Empathy, and Stewardship serve as the fundamental core values that govern conduct at Cresthill. These values define appropriate behavior within the school community and what is anticipated from all members.

CMS School-Wide Rules & Expectations

1. Be Kind and safe
2. Always follow the reasonable requests of CMS faculty and staff.
3. Respect the rights, property, and health of others.
4. Take responsibility for actions.
5. Running, pushing, chasing, or any form of physical play is not permitted within the school.
6. Yelling, screaming, or loud voices are not permitted within the school.
7. Attend class and be on time.
8. First 10min./Last 10min. – Students are not to be out of class during these times.
9. Be prepared for learning. Maintain a positive attitude and bring appropriate materials, books, and supplies to all classes.
10. Communication Devices are to be off and stored in backpacks between 7:30 am and 2:45 pm. (phones, watches, AI glasses, earbuds, etc.)
11. Students must clean up after themselves in the lunchroom and classroom.
12. Only water is allowed outside of the commons.
13. Obtain passes for traveling in the hallways during class.
14. Staff break rooms and copy rooms are for staff members only.

Defiance

CMS faculty and staff are in charge, and reasonable requests from adults at school are to be followed. Requests to relinquish a phone, participate in a discreet discussion about dress code, or redirect distracting behaviors in the classroom are examples of reasonable requests. Failure to follow the reasonable request of an adult is considered defiance and will be addressed by CMS administration.

Restorative Practices

The Cresthill discipline policy is a proactive, restorative approach designed to create a partnership between the student, parents, and teachers before significant discipline problems

arise. The school aims to support students in learning if and when they make a mistake or struggle to adhere to school expectations.

Restorative practices also include the lessons of natural consequences. Disruptions to the environment, safety violations, or defiance will be addressed in alignment with the DCSD Code of Conduct and discipline matrix.

Student Conflict

Conflict is a normal part of life when people have disagreements or problems that need to be solved. Resolving conflicts usually involves talking, listening, and finding a way for everyone to move forward. Counselors are available to work with students to help them positively problem-solve any conflicts that may arise.

Dress Code

Dress guidelines are clear, consistent, and easy to follow. Students are expected to wear clothes appropriate for learning.

- Shoes must be worn in the building at all times (flip-flops are acceptable). Slippers are not allowed.
- Hats, hoods, beanies, bandanas, capes, and/or dark glasses must be removed while in the school building.
- Shorts, skirts, and tops must be of an appropriate length for school.
- Undergarments must not be intentionally visible or worn as outerwear.
- No costumes, flags, or blankets are to be worn.
- Sexually suggestive clothing, or clothing promoting foul language, violence, gang affiliation, drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products, is prohibited.
- Perfume/cologne spray is not allowed on campus.

Teachers will have discrete conversations with students if they notice a violation of the dress code policy to help students understand and choose differently. Students will be asked to change their outfit to comply with the dress code. Teachers will reach out to parents and school administration if a student shows a pattern of dress code violations. Continued disregard of the CMS Dress Code policy will be addressed as defiance and handled in accordance with the DCSD Code of Conduct and Discipline.

Student Communication Devices (CD)

A CD is defined as any portable technology device capable of internet access, making/receiving phone calls, sending/receiving messages, or creating/accessing non-school-related digital content. Devices under this definition include, but are not limited to, cell phones, wearables (smart watches, earbuds/headphones), cameras, audio/video recorders, and all other handheld or mobile electronic communication and data storage devices. Laptops or tablets used for school purposes are excluded.

At DCSD middle schools, students with CDs must keep them silenced and stored throughout the school day, except where:

- Supervising DCSD staff gives permission for instructional purposes and/or to address an urgent situation; and/or

- The terms of a student's 504 plan, Individual Education Plan (IEP), a documented health need (e.g., diabetes tracker), and/or any other state or federal law require the use of a CD.

Student use of CDs with cameras and/or video recording capabilities is prohibited in locker rooms, bathrooms, or any other location where such use could violate another person's reasonable expectation of privacy.

If a student violates the CD policy, a staff member will intervene. The student must surrender the CD to the staff member, who will submit it to the main office. If the main office receives a student's cell phone three times within a quarter, a parent will be notified, and the student will be placed on a cell phone contract. This contract will require the student to hand over their CD at the main office from 7:30 am until 2:45 pm for a two-week period.

Personally Owned Devices

Cresthill is a one-to-one student device school; students are required to have their device (Chromebook, MacBook, or laptop) for both school and home use. Cell phones cannot be used as a substitute. If families are unable to purchase a device, the school will provide one to borrow. Students are responsible for any damages or losses incurred to borrowed items, including both the computer and the charger.

Students bringing personally owned devices or CDs to school take full responsibility for the care and safekeeping of their items. The school is not responsible if items are lost, stolen, or broken. The school will partner with the Douglas County Sheriff for all investigations involving potential theft or destruction of valuable property.

Student Bus Behavior

School rules apply at bus stops, on the bus, and on field trips. Students must follow bus expectations as outlined in the DCSD Code of Conduct. Violations are subject to disciplinary consequences by District Transportation.

Bike Racks, Bikes, Skateboards, and Scooters

Bikes and scooters must be locked to ensure safety. Bikes, skateboards, scooters, and roller blades must be walked on and off campus.

Bathroom Policy

Students are encouraged to make use of passing periods for bathroom visits.

- Students must request permission from their teacher, obtain their initials, and sign themselves in and out of the classroom when using the restroom.
- Each student is allowed three opportunities per class, per quarter, to take a bathroom break. Once these opportunities are used, students should utilize the passing period.
- Staff members understand that students may need more than three passes.
- Only one student is permitted to leave the classroom at a time.
- Bathroom passes cannot be used during the first 10 or last 10 minutes of class.
- Students cannot use a bathroom pass to fill water bottles.

Searches

At CMS, safety is the priority. To protect the welfare of all students, school staff may search a student, their backpack, desk, or storage area as allowed under District policy JFG.

Douglas County Student Code of Conduct

The Cresthill discipline policy was crafted from the DCSD Code of Conduct. During online registration, families acknowledge that students are responsible for compliance with school district policies outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Severe Infractions

Students are sent immediately to the Main Office for administrative intervention, parent contact, and disciplinary processes for offenses including:

- Any violation of safety
- Willful and open defiance
- Fighting
- Use and/or possession of tobacco, including matches, lighters, or other paraphernalia
- Possession and/or use of drugs or alcohol
- Possession and/or use of any type of weapon, real or fake, including any type of knife, gun, star, or any other weapon not outlined in the district policy for mandatory expulsion
- Stealing
- Vandalism
- Harassing, threatening, or attempting to intimidate a student or staff member
- Any action that threatens the welfare and/or safety of any student or staff member.

Drug, Alcohol, Tobacco, Use and Abuse

Cresthill Middle School enforces District Policies on Drug Abuse/Alcohol Use (Policy JICH-B) and on smoking and tobacco use (Policy JICG). Any drug, drug paraphernalia, substance falsely represented as a drug, or items presented or used as drug paraphernalia are prohibited and subject to disciplinary action. Disciplinary action for tobacco, drug, and alcohol violations involves the School Resource Officer and the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

Bullying and Harassment

At CMS, bullying is defined in alignment with Board Policy JICB as any written or oral expression, or physical or electronic act or gesture, including cyber-bullying, that meets the following characteristics:

- It is intentional, repeated, and marked by an imbalance of power, including physical, social, or socio-economic power.
- It is intended to coerce, intimidate, or cause any physical, mental, or emotional harm to any student.
- It is sufficiently severe that it has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or significantly offensive environment, or unreasonably interfering with or disrupting the educational performance or participation of any student in school-sanctioned activities.

The faculty and staff of CMS work diligently to address, teach, and restore instances of witnessed or reported bullying. Repeated, unwelcome, aggressive, hostile, or hurtful words or actions impacting someone with less power are not tolerated. The bullying prevention and

response program addresses bullying at the school, classroom, individual, online, and community levels. Students are expected to:

1. Act as leaders of a positive culture.
2. Work to include those around them.
3. Stand up and speak up if/when witnessing a concern or potential bullying; if a student knows someone is being bullied, they must tell an adult at school and an adult at home.
4. Try to help students who are bullied.

Parallel to building cultural understanding of bullying, Cresthill staff implement a systematic intervention and response protocol, including school-based discipline and consequences. Additionally, the school works with students to activate bystander support, encourage speaking up, build and restore relationships, and foster an environment of kindness.

Threats: An expression of intent to physically or sexually harm oneself, the school, or others. This expression can be spoken, written, or gestured.

Harassment and Discrimination: Engaging in any unwelcome physical or verbal conduct or written/pictorial communication directed at a student or group of students because of membership or perceived membership in a protected class, which is objectively offensive to a reasonable individual in that same protected class. Protected classes include:

- **Race and Color Discrimination:** Racial slurs, exclusion based on race, or differential treatment.
- **National Origin Discrimination:** Insults or exclusion based on nationality/ethnicity, or harassment due to accent/cultural practices.
- **Sex Discrimination:** Unequal treatment based on gender, sexual harassment, or comments.
- **Disability Discrimination:** Bullying or exclusion based on physical or mental disabilities, or denial of accommodations.
- **Religion Discrimination:** Insults or exclusion based on religious beliefs/practices, or harassment for wearing religious attire.
- **Age Discrimination:** Differential treatment based on age.
- **Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination:** Bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or discrimination against transgender or non-binary students.
- **Language Discrimination:** Harassment or exclusion based on primary language or proficiency in English.

Consequences for Severe Infractions

Consequences may include:

- Parent/student/administrator conference
- Removal from class
- Restitution
- Saturday School
- In-school detention
- Out-of-school suspension
- Contact with the Douglas County Sheriff's Department

- Expulsion for up to one calendar year
- Completion of a class through Douglas County Social Services

Habitually Disruptive Students

Students who have “significantly disrupted” the educational process will be suspended and placed on a remedial discipline support plan after the first suspension. Three suspensions of this nature will initiate the expulsion process for habitually disruptive students.