



Student Code of Conduct Handbook
2026-2027

The Center School
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About This Handbook.....	4
Academic Integrity (Artificial Intelligence Use Policy)	27
Activities Room	9
Attendance	7
Calendar.....	5
Classroom Expectations	9
Code of Conduct Policy	13
Dress Code Policy	16
Electronics Policy – UPDATED 2026-2027	18
Emergency Drills.	12
Emergency School Closing	7
Food & Drinks	9
Grading	10
Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying	12
Homeroom.....	8
Homework	11
Honor Roll	10
Lockers.....	9
Music and Headphones	22
Photos and Videos	22
Promptness.....	8
Reporting Students Suspected of Being Under the Influence.....	15
School Behavior Expectations.....	11
School Issued Laptops	22
School Schedule.....	6
Smoking Policy.	14

Student Activities	7
Student Driving	8
Substance Abuse Policy	14
Transportation-Buses	27
Valuables	13
Vaping Policy	14
Weapons.....	16

ABOUT THIS CODE OF CONDUCT HANDBOOK

The following information is meant to be a guideline and reference for students on The Center School policies. Much of what has been provided has been derived from questions raised by students, parents, and guardians regarding daily operations and basic behavior questions.

We hope by sharing the following information most of your questions will be answered and you may understand the expectations we have for you as students on a daily basis. We also hope that by clarifying and listing the following information we will be able to work together more efficiently in providing a safe and positive learning environment for all the students at The Center School.

The Center School 2026-2027 CALENDAR (180 Days)

School Hours 8:35 AM - 2:35 PM

(Revised 8/19/26)

August

31- Staff In Service - No Students

September

1- Staff In-Service - No Students

2 - First Day of School (Full Day)

4 - Early Dismissal

7 - Labor Day (Closed)

21 - Yom Kippur (Closed)

24 - Back to School Night

SEPTEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MARCH 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March

3 - Early Dismissal - Students

(Staff Development)

26 - Spring Break (Closed)

29-31 - Spring Break (Closed)

October

13-14 Parent Conferences

(Early Dismissal)

28 - Early Dismissal - Students

(Staff Development)

OCTOBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

APRIL 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

April

1-2 - Spring Break (Closed)

5 - Return to School

28- Early Dismissal - Students

(Staff Development)

November

5-6- NJEA Convention (Closed)

25 - Early Dismissal

26-27 - Thanksgiving (Closed)

NOVEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

MAY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May

14 - Early Dismissal - Students

28-31- Memorial Day Weekend (Closed)

December

9 - Early Dismissal - Students

(Staff Development)

23 - Early Dismissal

24 - 31 Winter Recess (Closed)

DECEMBER 2026

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

JUNE 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

June - Last Day of School 6/15

11, 14, 15 -Early Dismissal - Students

15 - Last Day of School- Students

16-17- Staff In-Service

January

1- New Year's Day (Closed)

4 - Return to School

18 - M.L. King Jr. Day (Closed)

19 -Staff In-Service - No Students

JANUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

JULY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

July 1-30, 2027 - ESY (20 days)

1 - Start of ESY

2-5 - Independence Day (Closed)

30 - Last day ESY

EMERGENCY MAKE-UP DAYS:

If we close before 2/1

1st Make-up day - Feb 12

2nd Make-up day - June 16

3rd Make-up day - June 17

4th Make-up day - June 18

If the first closing is after 2/1

1st Make-up day - June 16

2nd Make-up day - June 17

3rd Make-up day - June 18

If more than 4 days are needed, add on days will be TBD

February

12-15 President's Weekend

(Closed)

FEBRUARY 2027

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

Key

Closed

Early Dismissal

Staff In Service - No Students

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

FULL DAY			EARLY DISMISSAL			DELAYED OPENING		
HR	Homeroom	8:35 - 8:45	HR	Homeroom	8:35 - 8:45	HR	Homeroom	10:35 - 10:40
P1	Morning Meeting	8:45 - 9:00	P1	Morning Meeting	8:45 - 9:00	P1	Morning Meeting	10:40 - 10:55
P2	Snack	9:00 - 9:15	P2	Snack	9:00 - 9:15	P2	LAL	10:55 - 11:25
P3	LAL	9:15 - 10:15	P3	LAL	9:15 - 9:45	P3	Math	11:25 - 11:55
P4	Math	10:15 - 10:55	P4	Math	9:45 - 10:15	P4	Elective 1	11:55 - 12:20
P5	Elective 1	10:55 - 11:25	P5	Elective 1	10:15 - 10:45	P5	Story Time	12:20 - 12:45
L	Lunch	11:25 - 11:50	P6	Story Time	10:45 - 11:10	L	Lunch / Recess	12:45 - 1:10
R	Recess	11:50 - 12:15	P7	SCI/SS	11:10 - 11:40	P6	Elective 2	1:10 - 1:35
P6	Story Time	12:15 - 12:45	P8	Elective 2	11:40 - 12:10	P7	SCI/SS	1:35 - 2:00
P7	Elective 2	12:45 - 1:25	L	Lunch / Recess	12:15 - 12:40	P8	Choice	2:00 - 2:30
P8	SCI/SS	1:25 - 2:10	P9	Choice	12:40 - 1:00	HR	Homeroom	2:30 - 2:35
P9	Choice	2:10 - 2:30	HR	Homeroom	1:00 - 1:05	D	Dismissal	2:35
HR	Homeroom	2:30 - 2:35	D	Dismissal	1:05			
D	Dismissal	2:35						

MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEDULE

FULL DAY			EARLY DISMISSAL			DELAYED OPENING		
HR	Homeroom	8:35 - 8:45	HR	Homeroom	8:35 - 8:45	HR	Homeroom	10:35 - 10:40
P1	Language Arts	8:45 - 9:45	P1	Language Arts	8:45 - 9:15	P1	LAL	10:40 - 11:05
P2	P.E. & Elective 1	9:45 - 10:15	P2	P.E. & Elective 1	9:15 - 9:45	P2	P.E. & Elective 1	11:05 - 11:30
P3		10:15 - 10:45	P3		9:45 - 10:15	P3		11:30 - 11:55
P4	Math	10:45 - 11:50	P4	Math	10:15 - 10:45	L	Lunch/Recess	11:55 - 12:20
L	Lunch	11:50 - 12:15	P5	SCI/SS	10:45 - 11:15	P4	Study Skills	12:20 - 12:45
R	Recess	12:15 - 12:30	P6	Study Skills	11:15 - 11:45	P5	Math	12:45 - 1:10
P5	Study Skills	12:30 - 12:50	L	Lunch/Recess	11:45 - 12:10	P6	SCI/SS	1:10 - 1:35
P6	SCI/SS	12:50 - 1:30	P7	Elective 2	12:10 - 12:40	P7	Elective 2	1:35 - 2:00
P7	Elective 2	1:30 - 2:10	P8	Choice	12:40 - 1:00	P8	Choice	2:00 - 2:30
P8	Choice	2:10 - 2:30	HR	Homeroom	1:00 - 1:05	HR	Homeroom	2:30 - 2:35
HR	Homeroom	2:30 - 2:35	D	Dismissal	1:05	D	Dismissal	2:35
D	Dismissal	2:35						

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE											
FULL DAY				EARLY DISMISSAL				DELAYED OPENING			
HR		8:35 - 8:45		HR		8:35 - 8:45		HR		10:35 - 10:40	
P1		8:45 - 9:27		P1		8:46 - 9:15		P1		10:40 - 11:05	
P2		9:28 - 10:10		P2		9:15 - 9:45		P2		11:05 - 11:30	
P3		10:11 - 10:53		P3		9:45 - 10:15		P3		11:30 - 11:55	
P4		10:54 - 11:36		P4		10:15 - 10:45		P4		11:55 - 12:20	
P5		11:37 - 12:19		P5		10:45 - 11:15		L		12:20 - 12:45	
L		12:20 - 12:44		L		11:15 - 11:40		P5		12:45 - 1:10	
P6		12:45 - 1:27		P6		11:40 - 12:10		P6		1:10 - 1:35	
P7		1:28 - 2:10		P7		12:10 - 12:40		P7		1:35 - 2:00	
P8		2:10 - 2:30		P8		12:40 - 1:00		P8		2:00 - 2:30	
HR		2:31 - 2:35		HR		1:00 - 1:05		HR		2:30 - 2:35	
D		2:35		D		1:05		D		2:35	

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Several times during the year, the school sponsors family and student activities. We appreciate your support of these events and of the fund-raising efforts by The Center School. A calendar of events is sent home each September and flyers advertising the event with sign-ups will be sent home several weeks prior to the event.

ATTENDANCE

Academic progress requires regular attendance. If your child is being kept home, please call the school (908-253-3870) between 8:00 – 8:45am and follow the prompt to reach the attendance line. Leave a message with the reason your child will be absent.

Attendance records for each student are sent monthly to the local school district, and any (5) consecutive absences are reported to the Child Study Team as well as the student's home. Extended absences are reported to the district by letter.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

In the case of inclement weather or any other emergency school closing, parents will be notified via a central notification system at their home phone location. Parents will also be able to receive an email, check on NJ 101.5, and check on the school website for school closings. If there is a need to close during the school day, an early dismissal will be called and the phone system will be used to notify parents of the early drop-off time.

STUDENT DRIVING

The Center School High School students are permitted to drive after arrangements are made with parents/guardians and Child Study Team approval. A driving form must be completed by the student and the parent, prior to the student driving to school.

Students who have this permission are not permitted to transport other students to school and must park in designated parking areas. In addition, students must arrive at school on time to maintain their driving privilege.

Driving privileges may be revoked if a student abuses the privilege.

TCS is free from any responsibility associated with this transportation. In addition, the school is not liable for accidents or personal property damage.

HOMEROOM

Each student is assigned to a homeroom to which he/she will report each morning upon arrival. Homeroom is from 8:35-8:45 am. All students are expected to report to their homerooms immediately after exiting their buses (or rides) at 8:35 am each morning.

Homeroom is important for attendance records and each student must check in with their homeroom teacher to be marked as arrived. Homeroom teachers also need to share important daily information, collect any permission slips or documents signed by parents & guardians, as well as prepare for the day's activities.

Students needing to use the bathroom, lockers, or contact other staff prior to the start of the days' classes will be able to do so with the permission of the homeroom teacher **only after** checking in with that teacher.

PROMPTNESS

All students are expected to report to their daily classes on time. Teachers will be taking attendance at the beginning of each class and tardiness will not be permitted. Students should report to their next class before taking bathroom breaks, seeking out other teachers or staff, or for other reasons (except for retrieving class items from their lockers).

Any repeated tardiness to class or consistent patterns of tardiness will necessitate disciplinary consequences and possible escort.

FOOD & DRINKS

Food shall be eaten only in the cafeteria, outdoor eating area, or nurse's office (due to special circumstances). Drinks containing caffeine, such as soda and energy drinks, are prohibited in school at all times. Students are not allowed to use microwave to heat food at school. All food from home must be prepared at home and brought to school.

LOCKERS

School lockers will be assigned to Middle School and High School students. Locks for those lockers can also be assigned if desired. Students supplying their own locks shall make a spare key and/or the combination available to the Principal. Lockers should be kept neat and clean. Students should use lockers for all their personal items such as backpacks and coats. Students shall keep lockers secure to protect personal property.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to abide by the classroom rules established by the teacher. Students are required to check in with the teacher before leaving the classroom for any reason (bathroom, counselor, nurse, break, etc.). This is important because teachers need to know where every student is at any given time in case of emergencies and for general safety purposes.

Students are expected to abide by all staff requests. Students must respect the directions given by teachers not specifically assigned to that student: paras, 1-on1s, and any other staff.

ACTIVITIES ROOM

The Activities Room provides students with the opportunity to relax and socialize in a fun environment under staff supervision. This room features varied types of seating, pool table, air hockey, foosball, and board games. This room is a privilege and students will need to meet certain criteria to utilize it. It will be the responsibility of each student to maintain its integrity so that all students will be able to enjoy this center throughout the year.

GRADING

The following chart represents the grading system for The Center School high school and middle school.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be issued four times a year and sent to the Parent/Guardians and the Child Study Team.

<u>Numerical</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Range for Final Grades</u>
99-100	A+	4.3	4.2-4.3
92-98	A	4.0	3.8-4.1
90-91	A-	3.6	3.5-3.7
88-89	B+	3.3	3.2-3.4
82-87	B	3.0	2.8-3.1
80-81	B-	2.6	2.5-2.7
78-79	C+	2.3	2.2-2.4
72-77	C	2.0	1.8-2.1
70-71	C-	1.6	1.5-1.7
68-69	D+	1.3	1.2-1.4
62-67	D	1.0	0.8-1.1
60-61	D-	0.6	0.5-0.7
59	F	0	0.0-0.4

DETERMINING FINAL GRADES

For the purpose of calculating a final grade for a course, letter grades are converted to number grades by adding up and dividing by 4.

For example: 1st MP C=1.6, 2nd MP A=3.6, 3rd MP B=2.6, 4th MP B=3.0

Final Grade= 2.7 which represents a B-.

HONOR ROLL

Honor Roll status will be determined after each marking period. To be eligible for the honor roll a student must earn:

- Principal Honor Roll (All A)
- Academic Honor Roll (A, B)
- Noteworthy Academic Improvement (* TBD by teacher)

HOMEWORK

Homework is a direct extension of a class period, providing practice and reinforcement of skills. It requires that students integrate thinking skills from a variety of disciplines. Homework serves to amplify and reinforce the concepts students are learning in class. Homework need not always be a written assignment. Finally, homework can be assigned at any time that it serves to enhance the student's learning and is not restricted to any particular days of the week (i.e. Monday through Thursday).

Homework can serve as a springboard into a lesson the following day or provides the foundation for the unit of study. The nature of homework as an individual exercise fosters debriefing and internalization of concepts. Homework promotes individual growth, self-discipline, time management skills, and an ever-increasing sense of responsibility.

Homework can and will be assigned by teachers at various times for various assignments and classes. Teachers will grade homework and require homework to be completed within a certain time schedule. Students are expected to use homework as a tool for learning and complete all homework according to their teachers' requirements. Students may use study skills classes to work on homework, but will also be expected to complete homework assignments at home when required.

SCHOOL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

All classes at The Center School have classroom expectations and rules to be learned and worked towards. The structure in the classroom, plus the individualized program for each child, helps to create an atmosphere of learning.

Classes use incentives provided by a "positive behavior reinforcement" program. Students receive the opportunity to earn rewards as incentives for class participation and academic performance. Students are expected to respect the learning environment for each other. If any student requires assistance at any time they may request to see a counselor and/or may be requested to seek assistance from appropriate staff members to regain the ability to focus, self-regulate, and function as a student within the classroom setting.

A monitored resolution room is available for any student who needs a setting other than the classroom for a period of time to refocus, de-escalate their behavior, and for reflection on how to address their concerns.

HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION/BULLYING

The Center School believes that all students are entitled to a safe and secure learning environment. The Center School expects that all students will refrain from becoming involved in any bullying, harassing, intimidating, or threatening behaviors. “Zero tolerance” is a learning process and each student is being taught that any of these actions (verbal or written) brings serious consequences, no matter how inconsequential the student may feel or say his/her intentions were. These behaviors will not be tolerated whether directed toward students or staff.

Bullying includes a wide variety of behaviors, but all involve a person or a group repeatedly trying to harm someone who is weaker or more vulnerable. It can involve direct attacks (such as hitting, cyber-bullying, threatening, or intimidating, maliciously teasing and taunting, name-calling, making sexual remarks, and stealing or damaging belongings) or subtler, indirect attacks (such as spreading rumors or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone). These behaviors can take the form of any gesture, written, verbal, or physical act that is motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic that will have an effect of harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or cause substantial disruption in the orderly operation of a school. Words or actions which demean another person because of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic status, or physical condition are unacceptable.

Students who use such harassing language or bullying behavior will be subject to the appropriate consequences ranging from behavioral interventions up to and including suspension. The school's Anti-Bullying Specialist will also be informed for additional legal information and counseling regarding this behavior. All incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be reported to law enforcement as required by New Jersey State law.

We address bullying through guidance modules, character education, and special disciplinary measures. The discipline code is a guideline to be used when determining a consequence for misconduct. The administration may alter those guidelines to address certain situations as necessary for the protection of all students and in concurrence with school law.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

State laws require at least two emergency drills per month (1 fire drill and 1 safety/security drill). Students must report to and stay with their assigned classroom teacher after exiting the building. Students are all given explanations and instructions at the beginning of the year, and periodically throughout the year, about these drills to familiarize them with safety procedures.

During safety/security drills, students must remain with their classrooms and cooperate completely with all teacher/staff instructions. These drills are conducted to train students and staff on what to do in the event of an emergency. All drills are to be taken seriously and students

MUST remain quiet and follow staff instructions. Any students in the hallways or lavatories must cooperate with all staff instructions. Safety/security drills are a serious matter and require everyone's full attention and compliance to ensure the safety of the whole school. Students who do not comply with any instructions during an emergency situation or drill will face serious disciplinary consequences.

Additional types of security drills, such as those that restrict movement outside the building, will also occur. Additional information will be provided to students and staff regarding all drill formats annually.

VALUABLES

Students sometimes bring to school or lend items of value to classmates. The school is not responsible for items that are not returned or are returned broken. Please keep all valuables locked in assigned locker.

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

The Center School Administration and faculty believes that all students are entitled to a positive learning environment, one in which they can maximize their academic and social development. On a daily basis we balance the special needs of our students and the need to provide a safe and positive learning environment. To this end, the administration follows a carefully developed discipline policy (code of conduct) to encourage responsible behavior, teach social skills, and discourage misconduct. Student involvement, participation, personal responsibility, and respect for others are all cornerstones of the code. Rules are necessary to ensure that the rights of each individual are protected and that the collective group is able to function and prosper while working in the same environment. To promote an environment that is safe and conducive to learning, for students and faculty alike, a shared understanding of the expectations for behavior is necessary.

Students whose behavior may violate the school code of conduct policy are subject to disciplinary measures which are determined by the staff and administration. While some of these disciplinary measures are standard school wide, for most of the school wide behavioral expectations, others are determined on a case by case basis taking into consideration the many individualized factors that often play a role in misbehaviors in unexpected or exigent circumstances.

As always, we strive to work with students in their learning and understanding of how to address inappropriate actions and behaviors, as well as to engage them in reflecting upon more positive responses to their choices in behaviors.

SMOKING POLICY

There is no smoking /vaping or chewing tobacco allowed on The Center School grounds, either inside the building or outside. The use of cigarettes (including imitation devices such as e-cigarettes or personal vaporizers), or using chewing tobacco is strictly prohibited. Smoking is defined as “the burning of, inhaling of, exhaling the smoke from, or the possession of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or any other matter or substance which contains tobacco or any other matter that can be smoked, or the inhaling or exhaling of smoke or vapor from an electronic smoking device” (N.J.S.A. 26:3D-57).

Any student seen with a cigarette, electronic/vaping device, cigar, cigarillo, pipe, chewing tobacco, snus, snuff, or cigarette lighter on his/her person whether lit or not, including inhaling or exhaling smoke from a device which contains tobacco or any other matter shall be in violation of the school code of conduct policy.

VAPING POLICY

The use of cigarettes (including imitation devices such as e-cigarettes or personal vaporizers), or using chewing tobacco on school property, is a violation of the school code of conduct. Students who are not actively using, but are in possession of an e-cigarette, personal vaporizer, or personal vaporizer liquid are in violation of the school code of conduct and will face disciplinary action as determined by the administration.

In recent years the use of electronic smoking devices has become a popular trend among our youth. Vaping or “Juuling”, as it is often called, is the act of smoking/using an e-cigarette. An e-cigarette device has a battery, a heating element, and a place to hold liquid. The most popular device that has been seen on school campuses is called a JUUL and it can be charged simply by using a USB port. The liquid used in these devices can contain a high concentration of nicotine and can also be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs. Since the contents of an electronic smoking device cannot be determined through casual observation or easily tested to determine if the contents are tobacco or controlled dangerous substances, students in possession of electronic smoking devices/components will also be considered under suspicion of being under the influence of drugs while at school, as would any student in possession of anything that would constitute drug paraphernalia. Therefore, for the safety of that student the school will contact a parent/guardian, who must immediately take the student for a drug screen and physician’s clearance.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

The Center School recognizes that the misuse of drugs by any student seriously impedes that student’s health and education and threatens the welfare of the entire school community. The school is committed to the prevention of drug abuse and will take necessary and appropriate steps to protect the school community from harm and from exposure to drugs.

Students are prohibited from possessing, consuming, using, or distributing prohibited substances in any form. The school prohibits the use, possession, sale and/or distribution of any drug on school premises, at any event away from school premises that is sponsored by the school, and on any transportation vehicle provided by the school. This prohibition applies to the possession of a drug and/or substance whether carried on the person or stored in a locker, in a car, or elsewhere. Any student violating this prohibition will be reported to law enforcement.

“Substances” are defined as alcoholic beverages, controlled dangerous substances as defined at N.J.S.A. 24:21-2, anabolic steroids, counterfeit controlled substances, any chemical or chemical compound that releases vapors or fumes causing a condition of intoxication, inebriation, excitement, stupefaction, or dulling of the brain or nervous system, including, but not limited to, glue containing a solvent having the property of releasing toxic vapors or fumes.

Students suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be referred to the nurse. The parent or guardian will be contacted by an administrator and a plan of action will be determined. The Child Study Team will also be notified.

REPORTING STUDENTS SUSPECTED OF BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

It is the primary goal of Center School staff and administration to provide for the safety and well-being of the students in the school’s charge. Therefore, whenever it appears to any staff member that a student is under the influence of a substance, the matter shall be reported immediately to the principal, director, and the nurse.

Medical Examination and Screening:

- The student will be taken to the nurse’s office for assessment and care by the nurse and principal. The principal may also conduct a search of the student’s person and/or belongings if there is reasonable suspicion that the student is concealing any substances or paraphernalia.
- The student’s parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange for an immediate medical examination of the student by a physician licensed to practice medicine or osteopathy for the purpose of providing appropriate health care and determining whether or not the student is under the influence of a substance. The medical examination shall include a blood or urine screening for the presence of substances by a licensed testing facility.
- The parent/guardian may choose to have the screening and examination conducted by a physician of his/her own choice or at an approved site. When a physician of choice is selected, the cost of the examination and screening becomes the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- If the parent/guardian cannot be reached immediately, or if the physician selected by the parent/guardian is not immediately available, the student will be transported by local emergency services to the nearest hospital for examination.

- If the student is medically compromised, the local emergency staff will be contacted to transport the student to the emergency room for appropriate treatment in the company of two staff members (at least one will be of the same sex as the student). The staff members will be sent only if the parent/guardian is unavailable to accompany the student, and the student will be remanded to the care of the parent/guardian as soon as possible.
- The examination and the blood or urine screening are to take place within two (2) hours of initial parent/guardian contact or within two (2) hours of the referral if a parent/guardian is unavailable. Failure to adhere to this specified time frame will be considered a violation of the substance abuse policy.

WEAPONS

The possession, use, or exchange of any weapon in any school building, on school grounds, at any school sponsored event, or on school sanctioned transportation is prohibited. "Weapon" includes, but is not limited to, all firearms, knives, instruments intended to inflict harm, components that can be readily assembled into a weapon, explosive devices, and imitation weapons.

Anyone suspecting the presence of a weapon, as defined above, is required to report the matter to the Principal or Executive Director. If the investigation establishes the presence of a weapon, it will be confiscated immediately and the police will be notified.

Any student who possesses, uses, or exchanges a weapon on school property or school sponsored transportation, or at a school event is subject to stringent discipline. Anyone who brings an imitation firearm on school property without the written permission of the principal commits a disorderly person's offense. The law (P.L. 1995, Chapter 389, N.J.S. 2c:39-1) applies to the buildings and grounds of public schools. An imitation firearm is "an object or device reasonably capable of being mistaken for a firearm."

DRESS CODE POLICY

The dress of all students must conform to the concepts of decency, neatness, and suitability for classroom and learning situations, and proper clothing should be worn to prevent safety hazards. Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop and other activities where unique hazards exist. The student dress code below applies to all students at all school functions. The basic responsibility for the appearance of the students at The Center School rests with the parents and students themselves. Parents have the obligation and, within certain prescribed bounds, the right to determine their children's dress; however, a student's appearance must not disrupt the teaching-learning process, and therefore, the guidelines must be adhered to. The following indecent and inappropriate apparel is prohibited:

Apparel deemed embarrassing to others because it promotes indecent exposure. Clothing that is revealing, see through, or sexually suggestive and consequently a distraction to the teaching and learning process will not be allowed.

Shorts- the length of shorts must be mid-thigh length or lower. Biking (spandex) shorts must be worn underneath a garment that conforms to the mid-thigh length stipulation.

Skirts- the length of skirts and dresses must meet the Dress-Up Guideline that requires the garment to be no more than 3 inches above the knee.

Tank tops- tank tops, halter tops, tube tops, and sleeveless t-shirts/jerseys are prohibited. Dresses must have shoulder straps thick enough to cover the straps of any camisoles or undergarments. Halter tops and spaghetti straps are prohibited.

Leggings- leggings are permissible when worn underneath shorts or skirts that meet the aforementioned requirements.

Mid-drift shirts/blouses- length of shirts and blouses must extend to the waistline so that no skin is exposed.

Low cut shirts/blouses- any shirt or blouse should not promote indecent exposure.

Hats- the wearing of hats inside the school building is prohibited (except on special occasions).

Shoes- for safety reasons, student footwear must be closed toe, closed back shoes or sneakers. Unless for specific, documented medical reasons, "Slide" style sandals or "Crocs" style clogs are not deemed as appropriate footwear. Sturdy, closed toe sneakers or appropriate shoes are required for participation in Physical Education, science lab and wood shop classes.

Garments such as see-through blouses, tank tops, spaghetti straps, halter tops, low-cut blouses or tops, tight fitting tops or pants, pants not meeting the waist, or upper garments not meeting the top of one's pants/skirt are not permitted. Apparel infringing upon the rights of others, including any garment with pictures, emblems, writing, or that advertises drugs or alcohol, prohibited substances, violence, is sexually obscene, or contains derogatory language or references, and slogans is not permitted. Appropriate (non-distracting) dress is required at all times. When a student wears clothing and or accessories that are deemed inappropriate, a covering will be provided by administration and the parent/guardian may be notified. Students will be permitted to return to class only after the infraction has been corrected. No hats, hoods, bandanas, or sunglasses are permitted in the building (except on special "dress" days which will be announced). Refusal to comply with the dress code will result in a consequence. The administration will determine the appropriateness of any clothing items if there is a question. Students in violation of the dress code policy are not permitted to attend class until the clothing is changed or covered up.

ELECTRONICS POLICY (pgs. 18-22)**Updated Student Cell Phone/Personal Electronics Policy – NEW FOR 2026-2027**

In light of the State of New Jersey's recently passed ["Bell to Bell" prohibition of Student Cell Phone use in Schools to be enacted in the 2026-2027 School Year](#), The Center School's Electronics Policy is being materially refined. The explanation of the policy below will provide updated definitions, outline new on-campus procedures, and detail the revised schedule of disciplinary intervention and consequences for student noncompliance with these established expectations.

Definition: A "personal electronic device", for the purposes of this Student Handbook Policy is defined as any electronic device, such as cell phones, radios, iPads, iPods, Smart Watches, gaming devices or other devices not issued to a student by The Center School for academic use. They are further defined as electronic devices which may support internet connectivity, that may have the ability, through the device's base functionality, or via installed software applications, to engage in two-way communication, (i.e. voice and video calling, text messaging, email), or provide a user access to Social Media or other digital platforms that are not educational in nature. It is appreciated that personal electronic devices come in many forms. Further below into this section, there are guidelines which detail device-specific rules. While the list is not exhaustive and new technologies are continuously entering the market, the overarching spirit of this policy is simple: **If an electronic device in a student's possession is not a device that was issued by The Center School, it is not to be accessed by a student during the school day.**

General Procedure: All student personal electronic devices must be TURNED OFF and not accessed by students during the school day. Students are not permitted to access any personal, non-school issued electronic devices for any reason while the student is present on campus, or during a supervised off-campus activity, like a field trip or sporting event. All personal devices will be required to be stowed away in a backpack, a locked teacher cabinet in a classroom, or in a student's assigned locker with a lock. Students will not be permitted to carry their cell phones or any other personal devices on their person, like in a pocket.

The purpose of these guidelines is to prevent disruption to the learning environment for that student or other students. These procedures are designed to ensure that personal electronics are not readily or easily accessible by students throughout the course of the school day, which will encourage compliance with the State mandate. The procedures described apply to classrooms, computer labs, therapists' offices, hallways, restrooms, the cafeteria, and any other area inside the school or outside on school grounds, including supervised off-campus activities like field trips or sporting events, throughout the designated hours that the school is open and in session. Students should not leave items unattended or loan them to classmates, to prevent possible loss or theft of all valuables. The Center School will not be held responsible for student electronic devices.

Electronics Policy – Continued

Device-Specific Information

Cell Phones: Cell phones will not be a source of distraction for any reason on campus. Cell phones are not to be accessed during the school day. Cell phones will be required to be turned off, and stowed in a locker or backpack upon arrival to campus, as detailed in the procedures above. **Students will not be permitted to carry their cell phones or any other personal devices on their person, like in a pocket.**

Smart Watches: Due to the broad communication capabilities of modern wristwear technologies, Smart Watches of any description are not to be worn while a student is present on campus.

Headphones/Earphones: Personal Headphones or Earphones are not to be worn around one's neck or be in one's ears during times of transition in hallways, during periods of classroom instruction or other areas around campus for safety purposes. School-issued audio headsets can be made available to students on an as-needed basis. Students may be allowed with staff permission to connect their personal headsets to a school-issued device to listen to audio for academic purposes. Personal Headphones or Earphones will be required to be turned off, and stowed in a locker or backpack upon arrival to campus, as detailed in the procedures above.

Gaming Devices: Gaming devices will not be permitted to be accessed during the school day. A significant portion of the student population own portable gaming devices (i.e. Nintendo Switch), which are accessed for leisure during their bus transportation to and from campus. The appropriate usage of the devices inside these explicit transportation parameters is still acceptable, but the devices must be immediately stowed as defined in the above procedures upon arrival to campus.

Electronics Policy – Continued**Student/Parent Communication**

Under no circumstance should a student use a cell phone or other personal electronic device with messaging capability to contact a parent/guardian during the school day. If there is an emergency or other valid reason, a student may request to make contact with their families, but only after obtaining staff permission. This contact will be conducted through the supervision and facilitation of a staff member, like a counselor or Administrator. Students will not use their personal cell phone to contact a parent/guardian during the school day. Any students found to be out of compliance with this procedure will be subject to disciplinary action as defined in the following “Consequences” section below.

The same above communication measures apply to parents or guardians. Under no circumstance should a parent make contact to, or accept contact from, their child via phone call or text message during the school day. All communication by a parent or guardian with their child must be conducted and facilitated through The Center School’s Main Office.

Instances of a child engaging in communication with parents in a manner not supervised by TCS staff may create a scenario where inaccurate information about events at home or on campus could inadvertently cause undue panic for both parents or the child. **If for any reason it is necessary for a parent or guardian to contact their child during the school day, they are instructed to place a call to the Main Office (908-253-3870) and our team will be glad to make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate the requested communication.**

Electronics Policy – Continued

Schedule of Consequences

If a student disregards the above procedures and is observed to be engaging in behavior counter to this established policy, the following steps of graduated disciplinary action will be taken:

1st offense: Student will be required to turn over the device to Administration, which will be kept for the remainder of the school day and returned to the student at dismissal. Communication by Administration will be made to parents to inform them of the infraction, and a comprehensive intervention plan will be put into place to ensure future student compliance with this mandated policy. An example of an intervention plan is a student being required to turn over the device to a counselor or Administrator upon their arrival to campus each school day.

2nd offense: Student will be again required to turn over the device to Administration, and communication will be made to parents about the second incidence of this infraction. The escalation in intervention will require that the student will be prohibited to bring any type of personal electronic device (as outlined in “Definition” section above) to campus for the remainder of the school year. A written report of the infraction will be issued, and will be required to be signed by Parents/Guardians in acknowledgement that the student is prohibited from bringing personal electronics to campus. The student’s District Case Management will also be notified.

If a student refuses to turn over a requested device in any instance of an offense, or is found to be in possession of a previously prohibited device on campus, it will result in a minimum of a one-day Out-of-School Suspension. Further, a comprehensive in-person planning and re-entry meeting will be required to be conducted between the student, the student’s parents/guardians, counselor and Administration prior to the student returning to regular school programming.

Students who engage with continued disregard of this policy and procedures will be referred to Administration for further adjudication within the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including expulsion from the program.

Electronics Policy – Continued**Examples of Electronics Violations**

- text messaging
- cell phones out and not stowed away in a locker or backpack
- making phone calls in school without permission
- accessing social media
- taking cell phone pictures and/or videos of other students, staff, or self
- unapproved usage of headphones in class or hallways between classes
- recording audio/video conversations

MUSIC AND HEADPHONES

In the case of students utilizing music, all music must be played from the student's assigned laptop and headphones are to be used. Listening to music is at the discretion of the classroom teacher for specific purposes and specific times. Headphones are prohibited in the classroom setting unless authorized by the classroom teacher. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

The use of electronic devices by students for the purpose of taking photos or videos is strictly prohibited at all times. This includes self-photos or photos/videos taken of other students or staff with or without their consent. Violations will result in disciplinary action.

SCHOOL ISSUED LAPTOPS**School Student Computer Use Program Agreement and Responsible Use Policy**

Students in every grade are issued school computers for academics. These computers are signed out to the student at the beginning of the year and an Acceptable Use Policy signed by Parents/Guardians. Computers are intended to be used for learning, academic work, and projects only. Any violations regarding the proper use of the laptop can and will result in loss of computer privileges, access to a school-issued computer, and other disciplinary measures imposed by the administration. Students are expected to follow school policies for the computer. Students are expected to follow classroom rules for use of computers in each classroom (such as when to use), and students are expected to properly care for their computers.

Students will keep their computer charged and will accept any remote connection initiated for the purpose of performing maintenance, troubleshooting performance issues, or installing

software. Students are not permitted to install applications or download programs unless receiving specific consent from the Tech Support Staff at The Center School.

Privacy

Students have no expectation of confidentiality or privacy with respect to any usage of a computer, regardless of whether that use is for school-related or personal purposes, other than as specifically provided by law. TCS may, without prior notice or consent, log, supervise, access, view, monitor, and record use of student laptops at any time for any reason related to the operation of TCS. By using a computer, students agree to such access, monitoring, and recording of their use.

Responsible Use

A. Student use of the computer and other electronic resources conforms to standards expected in the use of other school resources. Students shall not access or transmit inappropriate or illegal material in any form or manner. Inappropriate material includes, but is not limited to, offensive or sexually explicit material (whether text, image, or lyric based), or material accessed in violation of Copyright laws. Harassment of any kind is unacceptable and prohibited.

B. Students shall not use the computer or any electronic devices for dissemination or publication of any material that jeopardizes the good reputation of the school, which is detrimental to the common good, or which is harmful or offensive to members of the school community. This includes, but is not limited to, the posting of inappropriate material on any blog, chat room, social site, or website, and may result in disciplinary action.

C. Student use of the computer or other electronic devices to photograph, video, or make audio recordings is strictly prohibited in the classroom and around the school unless expressed permission is granted by a teacher. Students may not photograph, video, or record any person without that person's expressed consent to the recording. Any use of cameras in restrooms or locker rooms, regardless of intent, is strictly prohibited and will be regarded as a serious violation. Whether on or off-school grounds, the student agrees that no TCS-owned computer will be used to take inappropriate, illicit, or sexually explicit photographs or videos, nor will any device be used to cause harm or misrepresent the school. The student is responsible for all content on the computer or other electronic devices. If a student receives content on any electronic device that they find in conflict with any school policy, it is the student's responsibility to report that content to campus administrator immediately.

D. Online Communication: Students should not provide personal information to people they do not know over the Internet. Students should never share their passwords or passcodes.

E. Students may not purchase and install apps for personal use unless approved by the IT Department in advance. Purchased apps and the associated data must not interfere with the function of the device or with the necessary storage space required for academic purposes.

F. Students may store their personal media on the computer. Students are responsible for backing up that media. TCS is not responsible for the loss of student's media or data. Media stored on the computer should not be offensive, profane, bullying/threatening, pornographic, obscene, rumors/gossip, sexually explicit, or other content not aligned with the school's mission and philosophy.

G. The following items qualify as prohibited use of technology at TCS School, including, but not limited to, the TCS-issued computer, the TCS Network, any other TCS- owned computers, or personal electronic devices:

- i. Any action that violates existing school rules or law.
- ii. Any action that does not align with the school's mission and philosophy
- iii. Any form of jail breaking or tampering with the software or hardware on the computer. Students are not permitted to circumvent the firewall, via proxy usage, tunneling, or chrome extension.
- iv. The illegal installation, use of, or transmission of copyrighted materials
- v. The sending of unwanted or solicitous email, commonly known as spamming.
- vi. The use of or possession of hacking software
- vii. The use of the school's internet or email accounts for financial or commercial gain.
- viii. The use of the school's internet or email accounts for any illegal activity. Students are not permitted to use the internet without specific consent from a staff member.
- ix. Bypassing the TCS School Internet content filtering service through a web proxy or other method.
- x. Gaining access to another student's or faculty member's account, files, or data.
- xi. The creation, sending, accessing, uploading, downloading, or distribution of offensive, profane, bullying, rumors or gossip-related, threatening, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit materials,

xii. Performing unethical actions including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, or unauthorized collaboration (e.g., texting answers or taking pictures of exams).

xiii. Students are not permitted to use chat or messaging services, such as Reddit, Discord, and 4chan, without specific consent from a staff member.

Care and Maintenance

A. Students must keep the computer in a safe place at all times. Students should maintain a passcode on the computer. Students shall not share this passcode with anyone. If a student has forgotten his passcode, and cannot access his computer, he should contact the IT Support immediately.

B. Students are required to charge their computers each evening for use during the next school day. Students are required to backup all app data, notes, course content, and data being used for academic purposes.

C. Students will maintain their storage such that they are backing up school-related content and academic materials first.

D. If a student exceeds the storage available for backups the student may purchase more storage. TCS School is not responsible for any lost data.

E. Students will immediately report any issues they are having with their computer to TCS IT Support including, but not limited to, software problems, damage, loss, or theft.

F. Students are required to have the computer on their person or in a secure location at all times. Students must not leave the computer unattended for any reason.

G. Students are not to lend the computer to other students, friends, or family.

H. Students should perform updates on their computers after school hours.

I. Students may not physically alter the computer in any way, including, but not limited to, applying stickers, labels, markers, or other markings or writing. Students may not remove the TCS asset tags.

J. Students should clean the screen with a soft, dry, microfiber cloth or with a screen cleaner designed for glass/LCD type screens. Do not use things like paper towels or dishcloths.

Financial Responsibilities and Information

TCS-issued computers are the property of TCS. Students must report any lost, stolen, or damaged computer to TCS IT Support or the School Executive Director immediately. In the case of theft, students may be required to file a police report. Students will be provided specific information for reporting damage or lost computers. Students must report a damaged or lost computer immediately. If a computer is lost or stolen more than once, the family may be responsible for the cost of a replacement computer of the same brand and model.

TCS-owned computers must be immediately returned to the school when a student is no longer enrolled at TCS School. TCS is not responsible in any way for the content or for any charges resulting from purchases made by students or families for the TCS-owned computer not provided by TCS.

Precautions

A. In consideration for receiving the computer from TCS, each student and his or her parent or legal guardian agrees not to sue and hereby releases, waives, discharges, holds harmless, indemnifies, and defends TCS, as well as their respective employees, personnel, staff, volunteers, agents, directors, affiliates, and representatives, from any and all liability, losses, damages, claims, actions, and causes of action of every nature for any and all known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, bodily or personal injuries, property damage, or other loss, whether claimed by the student, parent, legal representative, or any third party, relating in any way to the use of the computer furnished by TCS to the student.

B. No warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the service TCS is providing and is not responsible for any damages the student may suffer. This includes loss of data, non-deliveries, inadvertent deliveries, or service interruptions. The student is responsible for evaluating any information obtained from the Internet. TCS specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services. Additionally, TCS will not be responsible for unauthorized financial obligations resulting from provided access to the Internet. Students using TCS devices and services (including with personal devices) agree that they waive any right to privacy that they may have for any information or file created, maintained, transmitted, or stored in or on TCS's property, through its technical resources, or on personal devices at school. TCS may monitor students' use of technology and may also examine all system activities in which the student participates. Students should know that content including, but not limited to: sexual comments or images, racial slurs or other offensive comments, defamatory, discriminatory, or harassing materials distributed, accessed, or downloaded through IT resources could expose them to legal liability as well as to disciplinary action.

C. This Agreement and Policy applies to TCS students at all times, whether or not the students are on school grounds, as TCS School students are school representatives at all times.

TRANSPORTATION-BUSES

All students riding district school buses must adhere to the rules of the bus drivers and bus aides while on the bus. Bus rules are for the safety of all students on that bus as well as the driver and aide.

Any student violating the safety rules dictated by the bus driver and/or aide must obey the requests of the bus driver and/or aide. If any student refuses to follow the directives of the bus driver and/or aide they will be written up by the bus driver and reported to the school administration, school bus company, and case manager. Students who receive repeated violation reports will meet with the school administration. If a student receives three bus violation reports a bus suspension can and will be imposed.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USE POLICY

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and the unapproved synthesis of student work, through the usage of generative Artificial Intelligence tools.

All alleged instances of academic dishonesty will be investigated by a team of the administration and reporting staff members. All disciplinary action following the investigation is at the discretion of Administration, in light of the severity and frequency of the alleged offense.

Artificial Intelligence Usage

To ensure development and mastery of the foundational concepts and skills throughout one's matriculation at The Center School, **the use of unauthorized generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to create student work product is prohibited.** If a student is unsure of any policy or any assignment-specific directions—including whether or not a tool is considered generative AI—please consult the instructor prior to using the technology or completing an assignment.

In acknowledgement that AI is impacting the field of education, please know that the appropriate and ethical use of generative AI is starting to become a component of a student's academic activities at The Center School in the future, under the parameters of **explicit instructor approval and supervision.** All other instances of the usage of AI in a student's academic programming is not permitted.