2018-2019
Student/Parent Handbook
and Teacher Directory

Center School
Nurturing Confidence. Realizing Potential.

Center School
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www.centerschoolpa.org
# Table of Contents

Center School’s Mission Statement ................................................................. 1
Center School’s Promise .................................................................................. 1
Board of Trustees ............................................................................................ 2
Administration, Staff, and Faculty ................................................................. 3
Arrival and Dismissal....................................................................................... 4
  School Day .................................................................................................... 4
  Late Arrival .................................................................................................. 4
  Dismissal and Pick-Up ................................................................................. 4
  Bus Transportation ...................................................................................... 5
  Closings and Delays .................................................................................... 5
Health, Safety and Welfare of Students......................................................... 5
  Illness Policy ............................................................................................... 5
  Accidents and Injury ................................................................................... 6
  Allergies ...................................................................................................... 7
  Medication Policy ....................................................................................... 8
  Child Custody Issues in Cases of Separation and Divorce ......................... 10
  Child Abuse / Neglect .............................................................................. 11
Student Standards of Conduct..................................................................... 11
  Discipline Philosophy ................................................................................ 11
  Hostile Environment (Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination) ...................... 12
  Search and Seizure .................................................................................... 14
  Violence ..................................................................................................... 14
  Weapons and Dangerous Instruments ....................................................... 14
  Cell Phones and Personal Technology ....................................................... 15
  Internet and Technology .......................................................................... 15
  Dress Code ................................................................................................. 16
Additional Student Information .................................................................... 16
  Athletics ..................................................................................................... 16
  Field Trips ................................................................................................. 17
  Homework ................................................................................................. 17
  Student Learning Profiles ......................................................................... 18
  Lunch .......................................................................................................... 18
  Snacks ....................................................................................................... 18
Parent Information ......................................................................................... 18
  Parent Code of Conduct .......................................................................... 18
  Financial Obligations ............................................................................... 19
  Communication ........................................................................................ 19
  Conferences ............................................................................................. 19
  Week at a Glance Emails ......................................................................... 19
  Volunteers ................................................................................................. 19
  Transportation Policy .............................................................................. 20
  Birthdays/Parties/Lost and Found ............................................................ 20
Development and Gifts to Center School ..................................................... 21
  EITC and OSTC Tax Credit Programs ..................................................... 22
  New Student Referral Incentive for Current Parents ............................... 22
Center School's Mission Statement

Center School's mission is to provide children who learn differently with a personalized education to realize their potential and reshape the way they view themselves and their future.

Center School’s Promise

To provide a unique and personalized education in an inspirational environment, utilizing proven methods to realize each child's potential, ensuring their personal and academic success so they feel respected for who they are and confident in all they can achieve.

We are respectful.

We are responsible.

We are ready to learn.
Board of Trustees

Susan Floyd, Co-Founder of Center School

Jim Bickley, Chairman
Financial Advisor
Gibraltar Wealth Management

Ed Hayes, Esquire, Vice-Chairman
Partner
Fox Rothschild LLP

Steven FitzPatrick
George G. FitzPatrick Funeral Home

Kim Bavaria
School Psychologist
Community Partnership School

Tim Hilbert, CPA, Treasurer
Kreischer Miller

Marylee Mundell, D.O., F.A.A.P
Pediatric Care Group, P.C., The Pavilion

Terry Quinn
Quinn and Wilson Realtors

Wylie Thomas, Development Chair
Assistant Dean, Development and Alumni Relations
University of Penn School of Nursing

Mindy Wawrzyniak
Head of School

Carol White, Ed. D, Secretary
Former Director, Center School

Morris Zimmerman
BWA Architecture + Planning
Administration and Faculty
Administration and Staff

Name and Position
Getz, Tiffany – Administrative Assistant & Transportation Coordinator
Hunt, Quince – Technology Consultant/Purchasing
Forte, Donna – Director of Development
Stalker, Megan – Director of Admissions & Marketing
Steiert, Lisa – Director of Finance & Operations
Straub, Caitlin – Marketing & Development Associate
Wawrzyniak, Mindy – Head of School

Faculty

Name and Position
Benbow, Derri – 9th Grade Teacher, Middle School Language Arts
Berman, Adam – School Psychologist
Chapman, Colleen – 8th Grade Teacher, Middle School Language Arts
Copeland, Tom – Physical Education and Health Teacher
Cunnane, Barbara – Lower School Math, STEM Teacher
Cunningham, Sherri – 6th Grade Teacher, Middle School Language Arts
Hodkinson, Ann – Speech Therapist
Detweiler, Kelly – 1st/2nd Grade Teacher
Jarrett-Armiger, Linda – Guidance Counselor
Kowalchuk, Debbie – Art Teacher
Lux, Patricia – Lower School Math, STEM Teacher
McBride, Lora – 6th Grade Language Arts Teacher
McGeady, Diana – 3rd/4th Grade Teacher
Niewood, Shannon – 7th Grade Teacher, Middle School Language Arts
Park, Rebecca – Middle School Math, STEM Teacher
Perreault, Jennifer – 5th Grade Teacher

Email address

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scunningham@centerschoolpa.org
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plux@centerschoolpa.org
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dmcgeady@centerschoolpa.org
sniewood@centerschoolpa.org
rpark@centerschoolpa.org
jperreault@centerschoolpa.org
Arrival and Dismissal

School day: 8:15 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Classes begin promptly at 8:15 a.m. Students are expected to be at school and in their homeroom by that time. Parents should plan accordingly so students can arrive in their classroom by 8:15 a.m. for the start of the school day. **Students may NOT be dropped off at Center School earlier than 7:45 a.m.** This policy is in effect for the safety of the students. Adults are not present to monitor students in the lobby before that time.

If your child is ill, will be absent for any reason, or is expected to arrive late, please contact the front desk by email at tgetz@centerschoolpa.org by no later than 8:15 a.m. as it is imperative that we be able to account for all students at the start of the school day. Requests for homework should be made at that time so the teachers may collect the required materials throughout the school day. Every effort will be made to have the items available for pickup after 3:10 p.m.

Late Arrival

As you can imagine, late arrival impacts your child’s progress, disrupts their school day and also disrupts other members of the classroom. However, if, on occasion, you should find yourself running late, please call the office at 215-657-2200. Students arriving after 8:20 a.m. will be marked late.

Dismissal and Pick-Up

The school day ends at 3:10 p.m. at which time students will be promptly dismissed. Students traveling by car will exit through the gym doors closest to the faculty parking lot. Parents who pick up their child must proceed with caution around the perimeter of the faculty parking lot and follow the car pick-up line in front of the rear gym doors. Students will be walked to their cars by a member of the Center School staff. **No parking or idling is permitted in the bus zone in front of the building for any reason.** Remember that school buses have the right of way at all times.

If a student will be picked up by someone other than a parent or guardian, the office will need to be notified in advance by no later than 2:00 p.m. by telephone only at (215) 657-2200. We reserve the right to require that any person other than a parent or guardian be required to produce photo identification before the student will be released to that person, as the safety of our students is the number one goal.

If your child needs to be picked up early, you must notify the front desk and the student’s teachers by email no later than 2:00 p.m. so that other means of transportation, e.g. buses, can be appropriately notified. **Please note: If the school is not notified by 2:00 p.m., we cannot guarantee that your child will be released to you early,** and we reserve the right to require your child to remain in school until the end of the school day. Last minute notifications will not be accepted. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are to report to the Center School front desk to pick up your child, and we will make every effort to have your child ready for pick up by the designated time.
Bus Transportation

Most students travel to and from Center School in buses from more than a dozen school districts. It is important to stress that the rules and regulations determined by the bus driver must be followed for the safety and well-being of our students. A student who misbehaves will be reported to the Head of School for disciplinary action. If a third infraction occurs, it may result in removal of the student from the bus.

If a child is to be picked up after school instead of taking the bus home, the office must be notified by a written note or phone call from a parent or guardian. In addition, the bus company should be notified by the parent. Otherwise, the child will be sent home on the bus.

A student may take a different bus home or be dropped off at a different location only if Center School has been notified by the parent or guardian in writing. The parent must also notify the bus company in writing. Typically, this is done through the bus driver.

Closings and Delays

The safety of Center School students, families, faculty and staff is top priority. In the event we need to close or delay the start of school because of weather and/or road conditions, school cancellations will be announced on ABC, CBS, and NBC. Announcements will also be posted on Facebook and on the Center School website: www.centerschoolpa.org. In addition, a Crisis Manager message and Constant Contact email (Center School’s email communication system), will be sent.

Health, Safety and Welfare of Students

The health, safety and welfare of our students is of primary concern to the Center School Board, Administration and Staff. In order to insure the health, safety and welfare of all students who attend the school, the Board has adopted certain procedures with respect to the administration of medication, the medical condition of students at school and accidents and injuries. We urge all parents and guardians to familiarize yourself with these procedures, as they will be strictly enforced by the Administration and Staff at Center School.

Illness

Children who are seriously ill should not be in attendance at Center School. While the school can take care of emergencies that arise during the school day, facilities are not available to keep a sick child all day long. Center School understands that it may be difficult to make alternate arrangements when a child may be too ill to attend school. However, cooperation in keeping a child home when they are showing symptoms of illness will be greatly appreciated by the teachers, the staff, by parents of other students and by all the children who would otherwise be in contact with that sick child. By establishing and maintaining a healthy environment and reasonable health policies, all of our children and staff will benefit.

If a child does arrive in the morning showing signs of serious ill health, we will be unable to accept the student to the school. The exception to this requirement would be that a licensed physician has examined the child and indicated, in writing, that there would be no health risk to your child or others, and that the child is capable of participating in all activities, including outdoor play.

Examples of health symptoms that require exclusion from the school include, but are not limited to:

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Vomiting, diarrhea or fever or has had these symptoms in the last 24 hours

5
- Severe coughing or sore throat
- Red eyes with discharge
- Infected, untreated skin patches/lesions or severe itching of body/scalp or skin rashes of unknown origin lasting more than 24 hours
- Swollen joints or visibly enlarged lymph nodes
- Blood/pus from ears, skin, urine, stool
- Unusual behavior characterized by listlessness or confusion

**Symptoms of chickenpox, impetigo, lice, ringworm, scabies, whooping cough, strep throat or any other possible communicable disease as identified by the Center for Disease Control.**

If a child becomes seriously ill during the day, a parent/guardian will be advised immediately. The child will be given the opportunity to rest or have other activities in a separated, supervised area until a designated release person can pick up the child. If the child is not picked up within one hour from the time of notification, the emergency contact person will be called. Children who are sent home due to illness will not be re-admitted to the school until all signs of illness have been gone for 24 hours. Therefore, a student who is sent home as a result of being seriously ill cannot return to school the following day unless the student has been symptom free for 24 hours. The exception to this requirement would be that a licensed physician has examined the student and has indicated in writing that the student does not present a health threat to themselves or others and is able to participate in all school activities, including outdoor play.

Parents and guardians are reminded to notify Center School within 24 hours if a child or family member has developed a known or suspected communicable disease so as to protect the safety and well-being of the students, administration and staff at Center School. If a child has not been fully immunized for these diseases (due to the child’s age, medical condition, or religious belief) they will be excluded from the school during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease. Center School may require medical evidence certifying that the danger of communication of the disease has passed to allow a student to return to school. The school has the right to prohibit the attendance of any student if it deems exclusion necessary to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. In cases of certain communicable diseases, Center School may be required to file a report with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania advising of the communicable disease and Center School will take such action as directed by the Commonwealth and/or as Center School deems necessary to protect our staff and students from any outbreak of the disease.

Children will be granted permission to leave school for medical appointments. However, every attempt should be made to schedule appointments outside of the school day. Parents/guardians should notify the school in writing or by e-mail of medical appointments, giving the date and time of the child’s release. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are to report to the Center School front desk to pick up your child, and we will make every effort to have your child ready for pick up by the designated time.

**Accidents and Injury**

Should a child become injured at school and the injury is minor, the staff will administer such first aid as is deemed reasonably necessary. If the injury is of a serious nature, a parent/guardian will receive a phone call from the school at the time the accident occurs. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the staff will try to reach the emergency contact individual listed on the Emergency Contact Card. It is imperative that the information on the Emergency Contact Card be kept current so that the school can give appropriate notification of injuries. All serious injuries will be recorded on an Accident Report Form and kept on file.
In the event the injury appears to be serious and in need of immediate care, the school will contact 911 and the child may be transported via ambulance to the nearest hospital or emergency room facility. A parent/guardian will be contacted to accompany the child to the hospital or emergency room facility. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, or if the child needs to be transported immediately, a faculty or staff member will accompany the child to the facility and will remain with the child until the parent/guardian arrives. In no event shall Center School be liable for the cost to transport a student for medical attention, nor shall Center School be liable for the cost of any medical treatment. The parent/guardian assumes all responsibility, financial and otherwise, for all expenses for medical transport and treatment. The parent/guardian authorizes Center School to use its best judgment in determining whether medical transport and/or medical treatment are necessary.

**Allergies**

Anaphylaxis is a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. The most common allergens in school aged children are peanuts, eggs, tree nuts (e.g. cashews), cow's milk, fish and shellfish, wheat, soy, sesame and certain insect stings (particularly bee stings).

The key to prevention of anaphylaxis in schools is knowledge that a student who has been diagnosed is at risk, awareness of allergens, and prevention of exposure to those allergens. Partnerships between schools and parents/guardians are important in helping the student avoid exposure. Adrenaline given through an adrenaline auto-injector (such as an EpiPen® or Anapen®) into the muscle of the outer mid-thigh is the most effective first aid treatment for anaphylaxis.

It is the goal of Center School to provide, as far as practicable, a safe and supportive environment in which students at risk of anaphylaxis can participate equally in all aspects of the student’s schooling. In order for the school to be aware of any allergy risks for any of its students, it is imperative that you provide Center School appropriate information on the Health Form and/or Allergy Action Plan, with a specific description of the foods, medicines or insect bites to which your child is allergic, and that you provide a completed Allergy Action Plan signed by your physician and you outlining the directions to follow in case of an incident.

**Because of the seriousness of allergic reactions, Center School has adopted the following allergy policy to ensure the safety of our students:**

1. The faculty and staff will make every effort to exclude nut products from the classrooms. This includes the use of any nuts for eating, cooking, growing or smelling.

2. Parents who send in snacks for their child to share with the class should select snacks that do not contain nuts. Teachers will check food labels for safety; however, parents should not assume that products that typically are not considered as containing nuts or other nut products do not contain them. Some may include these allergens. As a result, any product sent to school to be shared with the class should have its label reviewed by the parent/guardian before being sent to the school. Please note that products are not safe when labeled as “This product was manufactured in a plant that also manufactures peanut and other nut products.” Parents who have any questions about the safety of a food product should inquire with their child’s homeroom teacher.
3. Parents may pack peanut butter sandwiches or snacks in their own child's lunch. Any student with a peanut or tree nut allergy will be seated in a safe location in the lunchroom. Lunches are not to be shared with other students.

4. In addition to physical ramifications for those who suffer from allergies, studies have shown that such children may also suffer emotional ramifications, particularly if those students are subjected to bullying or ridicule because of their allergies. Center School has a zero tolerance policy for bullying or ridicule of any type and that policy shall apply to those who are bullied or ridiculed because of their allergies.

5. Please remember that even though your child may not suffer from any allergy risks, there are students at Center School who do. As a result, please be mindful that during the school day, your child may come into contact with a student who does suffer from allergy risks and that certain food products that you send to school with your child may pose a risk to other students at Center School. We urge you to refrain from sending products to school that may pose a risk to our students, particularly those including peanuts and/or tree nuts.

**Medication**

*It is strongly recommended that medications be given at home.* Parents/guardians are encouraged to confer with the student's physician to arrange medication time intervals to avoid school hours whenever possible. For purpose of this policy, "medication" shall include all prescription, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, alternative medicines, or any other substance used for medicinal purposes.

Students are not allowed personal possession of a medicine while at school. Any medication, whether prescriptive or OTC, is considered a controlled substance (i.e. drug), and must be delivered by a parent/guardian to the front desk of Center School in its original container denoting dosage and frequency. Such medication will be registered and stored at the front desk in an appropriately identified container. Additionally, a parent/guardian must complete the Medication Administration Policy and Permission Form ("MAPP form") indicating the dosage and the time the medication is to be administered, which form must be signed by a physician. Any medication that is not registered or stored at the front desk will be treated as a controlled substance, and appropriate safety and disciplinary measures will be taken by the Administration.

*If medication must be given during school hours, please refer to the following procedures established by the Board of Directors of the Center School:*

1. Before any medication may be administered to any student during school hours, the Center School board policy requires a completed MAPP form which grants permission for the administration of the medication and which shall be considered to relieve the Board, Center School and its employees of liability for the administration of the medication. The MAPP form must include the student's name, the name of the medication, the dosage, the method of administration of the drug, the time of administration, the name of the condition for which the medication is being prescribed, and any special circumstances under which the medication shall be administered, possible side effects. In order to be acceptable, the MAPP form must include the signatures of the parent/guardian and the child's physician and the date.
2. All medication will be administered by the designee of the Head of School during the school day, on field trips, or school sponsored events.

3. Prescription medication must be brought to school in the labeled prescription container, which includes the instructions of the treating physician, the physician's name, address, and phone number, the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, and time to be given. Likewise, non-prescription medication shall be brought to school in a baggie which includes the original container with an attached label, which label shall include the child's name, name and purpose of the OTC medication, dosage, and time to be given.

4. At no time is medication to be carried by students unless authorized by the MAPP form or the Center School Health Form. This prohibition includes cough medicine, aspirin, and cough drops. No OTC medications will be administered to any student unless it is authorized by either the MAPP form or the Center School Health Form, which forms must include the signatures of the parent/guardian and the physician.

5. The parent/guardian or designated adult shall hand deliver the medication, along with medication forms, to the Head of School or the school administrative assistant. Medication is not to be delivered to school by the student. If it is impossible to hand deliver the medication to the Head of School or the school administrative assistant, special arrangements should be made with the Head of School. These special arrangements may include having another adult designate deliver the medication to the school or by sending the original prescription container or the original OTC medication container in a sealed envelope to the Head of School via federal express or other overnight delivery. The sealed area of the envelope should be signed by the parent. Note that delivery by the student will not under any circumstances be considered an acceptable alternative method of delivery.

6. The initial or first dose of any medication will not be administered in school. Controlled medication(s), such as but not limited to stimulants, antidepressants and tranquilizers will be counted by both a school representative and the parent/guardian or adult designee each time the prescription container is brought to school. The parent/guardian or adult designee will note on the container the number of pills being delivered to school.

7. Center School must be notified in writing of any changes in medication from both the parent/guardian and the physician. A new MAPP form or Center School Health Form must be completed at any time there is a change in medication, dosage or time of administration.

8. Medication delivered to Center School will be kept in a secure, locked place in the school and will be administered to the individual student by the Head of School or her designee at the appropriate time. The student will be expected to come to the front desk at the appropriate time.

9. A medication record, which will include the student name, date, dosage of medication, time of administration, and the initials and signature of the person administering the medication, will be kept for each student's medication. The medication record, the MAPP Form the Center School Health Form, any statements from the physician, and any other documents shall be kept on file at the school.
10. The student’s parent/guardian will be notified verbally and/or in writing when the student does not receive medication due to lack of physician and/or parent permission, medication brought to school not in original container and/or improperly labeled, failure or refusal of student to take the medication and/or failure to follow the procedures. The school reserves the right at any time to refuse to administer the medication if school personnel feel doing so would be unsafe to the student’s health.

11. Near the end of the school year, Center School will disseminate a communication notifying a parent/guardian to pick up medication. Any unclaimed medication not picked up at the end of the school year will be destroyed by appropriate school personnel. Furthermore, a parent/guardian or adult designee should pick up medication within seven days if medication changes in such a manner that the medication being stored at Center School will no longer be administered to the student. Any unclaimed medication remaining a Center School after seven days of the change of medication will be destroyed by appropriate school personnel.

12. When a student is given an OTC medication, a notification will be sent home via e-mail or with the student noting ailment, medication administered, dosage, and day and time of administration.

**Child Custody Issues in Cases of Separation and Divorce**

Many times there are changing family circumstances which could impact the child at Center School. School personnel will be able to deal with this situation in an appropriate way only if they are aware of the status at any given time. It is the responsibility of the parent(s), at the time of initial registration and/or at the time any custody change occurs, to notify the Head of School of the circumstances regarding custody of the child and provide a copy of the custodial agreement.

*Center School aims to remain neutral to issues concerning separation or divorce. To that end, parents should be aware of the following rules established for uniform application in the school district:*

1. When custody is established by a Court, the school-parent relationship will be maintained consistent with the decision of the Court.

2. When custody is not formally established, the school will presume that the parent with whom the child is living currently is the parent who will receive reports, who will provide excuse forms, and who will authorize any deviation from the routine transportation arrangements for the child.

3. When school personnel are informed, they will not knowingly allow visitation privileges with the parent not in custody or with whom the child is not currently residing. Furthermore, arrangements will be made for the transportation of the child to the home from which the child came to school on a given day.

4. Non-custodial parent may request progress reports and may review their child’s permanent record in the school office by making an appointment.
5. Unless it would be a violation of a Court Order or some other arrangement between the parties, parents are encouraged to attend parent/teacher conferences together and to work with each other for the betterment of the child, regardless of the difficulties which might exist in the relationship between parents.

**Child Abuse / Neglect**

Parents should be aware that all Center School personnel are trained in the recognition and reporting of child abuse and are classified as mandated reporters by Pennsylvania Act 126 of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. As a result, all school personnel must report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities. Our personnel will continue to obey the statutes of the Commonwealth by reporting all suspected abuse/neglect cases to the appropriate authorities.

**Student Standards of Conduct**

Maintaining a respectful environment in order to maximize learning is of utmost importance to the Faculty, Staff and Administration. Students are expected to exhibit appropriate behaviors that reflect the philosophy of Center School both in and out of school. We urge all parents and guardians to familiarize yourself with the following guidelines and review them with your child or children. Students will be held to these standards without exception by the Faculty, Staff and Administration at Center School.

**Discipline Philosophy**

The primary objective of all school personnel and parents should be to help students learn to be responsible to themselves, their peers, adults, school property, the law, and community. A united approach to discipline which utilizes planned, purposeful strategies is essential to the attainment of this objective. The mutual cooperation of teachers, students, and their parents/guardians will help students to develop these responsibilities.

The standard of conduct for students at Center School is one of mutual respect. Students are expected to honor the Center School community, to act with civility and to treat one another with consideration. The school environment is one of safety and respect for all.

Appropriate conduct and the positive participation of the students are necessary to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning. Positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior includes verbal praise, extra privileges, stickers, points, and/or tangible rewards. Consequences for inappropriate behavior include verbal and written reminders and loss of rewards and privileges. Repeated acts of inappropriate behavior may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

Each student is held responsible for following the Center School rules for personal conduct. Parents should review and reinforce these rules at home with their children. We offer the following school-wide behavioral guidelines for acceptable behavior.

- We are respectful
- We are responsible
- We are ready to learn
These principles are incorporated into all areas of the school and repeatedly addressed and implemented in daily learning.

Violation of the following school rules may result in various levels of school discipline, including but not limited to detention, probation, suspension or expulsion from school and all school related activities. The following violations may also, when appropriate, involve reporting the incident to the local police department.

- Disrespectful or insubordinate behavior
- Cheating, stealing, and lying
- Plagiarism
- Bringing a weapon onto Center School property. This includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives and blades of any kind, and martial arts paraphernalia
- Possession, use, or distribution of drugs, paraphernalia for drug use, narcotics, controlled substances or alcoholic beverages
- Putting your hands on or assaulting another student or staff member or the threat of assault directed at another student or staff member
- Involvement or implication in any act that threatens the safety or physical well being of students or staff
- Involvement in any act that vandalizes or defaces Center School property
- Repeated involvement in incidents that show disregard for school rules and regulations or the use of poor judgment
- Tampering with another student's personal belongings
- Involvement or implication in a theft; or
- Physical/verbal intimidation or harassment or bullying of other students. A single student who bullies can have a wide-ranging impact on the students they bully, students who observe bullying, and the overall climate of the school and community. All students have the responsibility to report incidents of bullying and should feel comfortable reporting those incidents without fear of consequences

The preceding list is intended to be illustrative of the type of conduct which Center School finds inappropriate and subject to discipline. It is not intended to be an all-inclusive list and Center School reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action for other acts which Center School, in its absolute discretion, believes to be detrimental to the Center School community and mission.

Hostile Environment (Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination)

The daily interaction of our students with each other, with teachers and with staff necessitates good manners, mature judgment, and the use of reasonable guidelines. Always show respect and courtesy toward others. Students may find themselves in situations where they may not be in agreement with others, but are expected to conduct themselves in a positive and mature manner. Center School believes in respect being shown to all students and will not tolerate any type of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination by any student.

As with other forms of discrimination prohibited by the Civil Rights Laws, Center School strongly condemns harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination of any sort and has no tolerance for such activity. If, after an investigation, a student is found to be in violation of this policy, the student shall be disciplined by appropriate measures, which may include immediate dismissal.
from the school. If the student believes that they have been a victim of such an act, they are asked to report the incident immediately to a teacher or the Head of School. If as a parent you believe your child has been a victim of such an act, we ask you to report the act to the Head of School immediately. Prompt and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken upon confirmation that an act or acts of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination has occurred.

As used herein, "harassment" shall mean verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age or disability when the unwelcome conduct is so severe, pervasive or persistent that it substantially affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise denies a student access to the school's educational resources, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

As used herein, "bullying" shall mean both an intentional, electronic, verbal, written, or physical act or a series of acts that, individually or cumulatively, are severe, persistent or pervasive, that are directed at a student by another student in a school or other setting and that has the intent and effect of either (a) physically harming a student; or (b) damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property; or (c) placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm; or (d) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or (e) creating an intimidating or hostile environment (shunning, spreading rumors, cyber bullying); or (f) substantially interfering with a student's educational opportunities; or (g) substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school. Sexualized bullying is when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

As used herein "cyber bullying" is the use of electronic technology to torment, tease, and or humiliate others and includes any negative act towards another student carried out electronically, i.e., E-mails, Facebook, instant messaging, text messaging, sexting, etc. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets, as well as communication tools including social media, whether such electronic technology is used at school or at home.

It is important to understand that acts of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination can involve actions in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school, and may also involve any conduct which occurs at some other location, but has an effect upon the student at Center School.

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behavior in your child, which might be evidence of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination.
- Advising your child to report any harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination to a teacher or the Head of School and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue.
- Advising your child not to retaliate violently or in any way to harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination. Being sympathetic and supportive toward your child, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.

We also are mindful that false accusations of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination can be damaging to those accused. Center School prohibits any person from falsely accusing another of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or discrimination as a means of retaliation, or as its own means of harassment, bullying, cyber bullying or
discrimination. When this occurs, and if such conduct is confirmed, disciplinary measures will be taken against the student making the false accusations.

Search and Seizure

All desks and areas of the school are, and shall remain, the property of Center School. As such, students shall have no expectations of privacy in the school or on its grounds. A student and/or a student’s personal effects may be searched whenever a school official has reasonable suspicion to believe that the student is in possession of illegal, unauthorized, or contraband materials or that the student may be in possession of evidence of a violation of the law or school rules. The search will be conducted by an Administrator, and there will always be one school witness present at all times. If a search discovers illegal or contraband materials, such objects shall be turned over to proper legal authorities for ultimate disposition. Center School will fully cooperate with police and other government authorities.

Violence

Center School maintains zero tolerance for violence and threats of violence. Fighting, foul language, causing physical harm to another, threatened violence, threatening to cause physical harm to another, emotional or verbal abuse, other intangible injuries and any violent behavior between students is in flagrant violation of the philosophy of Center School. Any student involved in such behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion. At its discretion, the school may contact the police to report the incident.

Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

Center School recognizes the importance of providing safe and secure schools for students, teachers and staff members. The school will endeavor to provide a safe and secure environment within school buildings, on school property, on school buses, and at any school activity, event, or function, for the benefit of all.

A weapon is defined as an instrument of any type which can be used to cause harm to an individual. While not all inclusive, weapons include handguns, rifles, shotguns, spring-guns, air guns, slingshots, bludgeons or clubs, metal knuckles, knives, pocket knives, swords, machetes, pellet guns, nightsticks, ax handles, scissors, any explosive device including ammunition, dangerous chemicals, razors, or any instrument which, in the judgment of the administration, could be used as a weapon or be mistaken for one. Thus, imitation or replica objects shall also be considered a weapon. Any instrument, tool, or implement, while being used in an educational or a vocational process as defined by a principal, teacher, or other Board-authorized adult supervisor, will not be defined as a weapon as long as that instrument, tool, or implement is being used for its educationally or a vocationally-defined purpose.

Students shall not possess, handle, transport, distribute, maintain or use any weapon or look-alike weapon on school property or at any school activity, event, or function, regardless of whether said activity, event, or function is held on or off the school property. School property includes, but is not limited to, buildings, land, and any school bus, van or other vehicle owned by or under the control of the school.
**Cell Phones and Personal Technology**

Cell phones, but not other electronic devices, may be brought to school. However, students are not permitted to use cell phones during the school day, including recess or lunch. **Cell phones must be kept in the student's backpack and either turned off or placed in silent mode as soon as the student enters the building. Phones will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day if students do not obey the rules. If a phone is confiscated more than two times, the phone will not be returned to the student and a parent/guardian will be required to come to Center School to retrieve the phone directly from the Head of School.**

While students may have your permission to use cell phones on their way to school and once they leave school for the day, e.g. on the bus, cell phones are temptations for children, and at times, children may be using cell phones to view and transmit materials which may be considered by others to be inappropriate, pornographic, graphic and/or disturbing. Even when materials are not transmitted to third parties, other students may inadvertently see such inappropriate, pornographic, graphic and/or disturbing materials on a student’s cell phone, depending on the other student’s proximity to the student viewing their cell phone. This type of behavior can occur when the student’s use of the cell phone is not being appropriately monitored and particularly when increased time is spent on a cell phone, such as on long rides to and from the school. Please note that this type of activity can be interpreted as hostile and, even though this activity is not occurring on Center School grounds, it is subject to the Hostile Environment (Harassment/Bullying/Discrimination) section (page 12) and will subject the offending student to appropriate consequences for violation of the policy. We urge you to review appropriate cell phone usage with your child when on the bus and at all times, and review your child’s cell phone periodically for the safety of your child and other students.

To further minimize distractions to the learning environment, personal technology items, other than cell phones, are not permitted in school unless separately permitted as part of a school trip (e.g. camera) or school project. These items include but are not limited to portable sound systems, electronic devices, cameras, iPods, and electronic games. Center School reserves the right to confiscate any such electronic items which are brought by a student to school in violation of this policy. If an item is confiscated, a parent/guardian will be required to claim the device from the Head of School.

**Please note that Center School is not responsible for lost or stolen phones or electronic devices.**

**Internet and Technology**

We are pleased to offer Center School students individual laptop computers or iPads (which remain the property of Center School) and network access to the Internet. In order to access the Internet, all students must return a signed Technology Acceptable Use Policy. This must be returned before a student is issued a device.

Our intent is to make Internet access available to further educational goals and objectives. We take precautions to restrict access to inappropriate materials. In addition, we teach students to make responsible choices when using the Internet. Students should exhibit the same good behavior on the Internet that is expected of them during classroom studies and on and off school grounds. Students are responsible for their behavior and communications over those networks. **Please refer to the Technology Acceptable Use Policy for further explanation.**
Dress Code

Center School students should maintain a neat and clean appearance. Hair should be clean and well-groomed. The faculty, staff, and administration will make the determination of appropriate and inappropriate attire. Students who do not comply with the dress code will be asked to change into appropriate clothing.

Appropriate Attire Examples:

- Sneakers, dress shoes and sandals
- Collared, crew, turtleneck and golf shirts
- Solid color t-shirts with small logos
- Dresses, skirts, skorts, and shorts that are an appropriate length and not revealing
- Plain sweaters, sweatshirts and hoodies
- Center School t-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies

Inappropriate Attire Examples:

- Clothing with suggestive or offensive writing
- Shirts that reveal cleavage
- Shirts that reveal the midriff
- Dresses, skirts, skorts, or shorts that reveal the backside
- Slippers
- Spaghetti strap dresses and tops
- Oversized or skateboard-style clothing
- Visible bra straps
- Visible body piercings, except pierced ears

Additional Student Information

In addition to student safety and conduct, the following important information should be reviewed and shared with your child or children.

Athletics

Athletic experiences and competition are an important part of the physical development and education of Center School students. Students are expected to demonstrate outstanding sportsmanship at all times regardless of the outcome of the games. Students interested in the sports program must be committed to the team and will be expected to attend at all practices during the week and all games and be ready to play. Practice is held after school two times weekly during each season (soccer, basketball, and softball). A student must attend at least two of the weekly practices in order to play in the next scheduled game unless there are extenuating circumstances. If a game is scheduled on a practice day, the game takes the place of the practice. If a scheduled game is cancelled, practice will be held instead. All team members who would have attended the cancelled game are expected to stay for that practice. Any student who does not stay for the impromptu practice will not be permitted to play in the next scheduled game.

Schoolwork is the first priority for the athletes. Students must be in good standing with their teachers, maintain a positive attitude towards class work and their classmates, complete assignments in a timely manner and be active classroom participants.
If students fall behind on homework assignments, it is their responsibility to make up all missed work. If a teacher reports any missing homework or class work for a participating student, that student will not be permitted to practice, but must use that time to complete any missed assignments. If assignments are not completed by the scheduled game date or the student misses more than two practices, the student will not be permitted to play.

If a team member is unable to participate in a game (except for disciplinary action), Coach Copeland should be notified well in advance of the game. Schedules will be available at the start of each game season. Permission forms must be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to Coach Copeland at least 24 hours prior to each game.

Games and practices are scheduled after school. If you are a volunteer driver to an away game, please arrive at Center School 10 minutes prior to the scheduled departure time. Refer to the Parent Information section of the handbook (page 18) regarding requirements for driving as a volunteer. Parents must make arrangements to pick-up their child at Center School at a specified time after the game.

Uniforms are worn for all games and practices. Parents should purchase their child’s uniform through Center School at a cost of approximately $45.00.

If a team member is absent from school on a scheduled game day, that student may not return to school for the game. If the student is absent on game day, he/she forfeits play. No absent student may appear at the game locale if they are absent from school on game day.

All players must sign a Code of Conduct form before participating in any sport and abide by its guidelines or be subject to dismissal from the team.

Field Trips

Parent permission is required for all school field trips. A permission slip for each field trip will be sent home for parent or guardian approval and must be returned by the date indicated on the form.

Class trips are an extension of the classroom. Students with glasses or hearing devices should be sure to have them on field trips. If a student takes medication on school days, the medication will be administered on a field trip in accordance with the Medication section (page 8) of this handbook.

Homework

Homework is assigned to provide students with an opportunity to review concepts that have been taught during the school day and to help them develop the independent study skills necessary to succeed in school and in life. Students are responsible for completing and returning homework. The amount and content of homework is tailored to each student’s abilities. Please refer to the Athletics section (page 16) of this handbook for guidelines regarding homework completion and sports participation.

Please set aside a regular time and place for your child to complete homework. The area should be quiet and free from visual distractions. If parents see their child is experiencing difficulty with homework, please contact your child’s teacher.

We understand that parents may choose to hire an outside tutor to work with their child at home. In order to provide the best educational experience between home and school, please notify your child’s teacher if this is the case. It is optimal that we connect with the child’s tutor to keep the lines of communication open.
**Student Learning Profiles**

Center School's mission is to provide every student with the support necessary to develop to his or her fullest potential. In order to do that, we consider the child's language, motor, academic and social skills, along with the results of a psycho-educational evaluation, standardized testing and diagnostic observations. This data is used to create an individualized Student Learning Profile (SLP). Every Center School student will receive an SLP.

Each student's strengths and challenges determine the strategies for teaching, and instruction is differentiated according to the student's needs. Using a team approach, the faculty, counselor and parents determine the student's goals and objectives. These goals are formalized during the first Parent/Teacher Conference in September and will be regularly assessed throughout the school year, and shared with parents by phone or email and at parent/teacher conference.

**Lunch**

Lunch is provided to Center School students for an additional charge. Hot and cold lunches are available on a daily basis. Students will have the option to change lunch order when a new cycle begins which is typically every 6-7 weeks. You will be notified as soon as the lunch program is set up for the current school year with information regarding food and beverage selections and prices.

Students are welcome to bring a bagged lunch, however, please be advised that soda is not permitted. Please also review the Allergies section (page 7) of this handbook when deciding what lunch your child will bring into school.

**Snacks**

Students are encouraged to bring a healthy snack and beverage for the daily morning break. Please review the Allergies section (page 7) of this handbook when deciding what snacks your child will bring into school. On Wednesdays, soft pretzels will be made available during morning snack time to students who have pre-paid for pretzel purchases. Order forms will be provided for pre-paid pretzel purchases.

**Parent Information**

Parents play an integral role in the success of their child, and we believe that the most successful child is one whose parents work collaboratively with the Faculty, Staff, and Administration. To that end, Center School is committed to keeping parents abreast of information and events that are an important part of the growth and development of our students.

**Parental Code of Conduct**

Center School expects parents to observe a certain standard of conduct at the school and on its grounds. A mutual respect is expected between parents and all Center School employees and students. The following items are not acceptable in the school, on the grounds or via telephone or electronic communication:

- Physical or verbal punishment of their children
- Physical or verbal punishment of other children
- Threatening staff, other parents, or other children
- Swearing/cursing or threatening/obscene gestures
- Disrespect towards other parents or Center School employees
- Not following the policies designated to protect the safety and security of everyone in the school
- The use of cell phones inside the school or classrooms to the extent it disrupts the classrooms or other work of the staff of the school

**Financial Obligations**

We have the right and discretion to restrict a student from activities if financial obligations, including tuition and any other fees, are not met. Various school privileges/activities include but are not limited to: athletics, field trips, and Step-Up Day. In addition, no transcript, recommendation, or report card will be issued to any other school or institution until all obligations are paid in full. All fees and financial obligations, whether large or small, are treated equally in this context and will result in the same actions by the school.

**Communication**

Communication is an integral part of a student’s success at Center School. Teachers regularly communicate via phone calls, emails, and a class newsletter. In return, teachers appreciate updates regarding changes in your child’s schedule or routine. Additionally, if your child receives the support of outside resources, such as tutoring or therapy, please notify your child’s teacher so that we may best support your child. In the event that a concern arises regarding your child’s progress, please contact your child’s teacher.

**Conferences**

Parent conferences are held five times throughout the year. The first conference is a goal setting conference and includes teachers, parents, and student if appropriate. Subsequent conferences are a time when teachers discuss the progress of your child, and you can discuss any concerns that you may have. Parents will be notified by their child’s teacher via email of their scheduled conference date and time. Your presence at conferences is very important as you are a part of the team that supports your child’s success. We expect that parents will come to every conference at the assigned time.

**Week at a Glance emails**

Week at a Glance is a weekly means of communicating general school information via email by the Head of School. Dates and times of Center School events, news, sports, and other activities or items of interest are included. Ensure that these emails are read as important information is included.

**Volunteers**

Parent volunteers are encouraged and appreciated at Center School, and as a school, we rely upon volunteers for enriching events and activities. Opportunities to volunteer are presented throughout the year, and signups are available at Back to School Night.
If you will be interacting directly with children, such as but not limited to transporting students to and from games and/or trips, assisting in the classroom, or monitoring students for an event, clearances that are required for volunteers by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must be submitted. These include:

- PA Background Check: [https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp](https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp)
- PA Child Abuse Clearance: [https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home](https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home)
- PA Disclosure Statement OR Federal Criminal History Check: The PA Disclosure Statement is completed if the individual has been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years. The Federal Criminal History Check is completed if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years. The PA Disclosure Statement is available from the front desk.

All volunteers are required to obtain clearances every 60 months. If you have clearances that are over 60 months old, new ones need to be completed.

Clearances for volunteers are free of charge and only take a few minutes to complete. Please follow the directions on the website provided.

**Transportation Policy**

Center School appreciates when a parent is willing to serve as a driver for our students to field trips and sporting events. As a driver, you are considered a volunteer of Center School and clearances must be secured before driving any Center School student as noted above in the Volunteers section.

In order to ensure the safety of our students, Center School also requires that all drivers submit a copy of their license, current registration, valid insurance card, and follow the Pennsylvania Law which requires:

- Children ages four (4) and older, but under the age of eight (8) must be buckled into a federally approved child booster seat, which must be secured to the vehicle by the seat belt system, no matter where they ride in a vehicle (front or back seat)*. Booster seats must be used in conjunction with lap and shoulder belts.
- Children ages eight (8) and older, but under age 18 must be buckled in a seat belt, no matter where they ride in the vehicle (front or back seat)*.
- Drivers are responsible for securing children into an approved child passenger restraint system and ensuring children under age 18 are buckled up.

To become an “Approved Driver,” you will need to submit the Transportation Policy Form along with a Waiver of Liability which are available at the front office.

*Center School requires that all children under the age of thirteen (13) ride in the back seat of the vehicle. No children under the age of thirteen (13) may ride in the front seat.

**Birthdays and Parties**

Celebrating birthdays and other special occasions with classmates is a well-loved tradition at Center School. Center School will not distribute invitations. Refer to the Student Directory for contact information. Students are welcome to bring in treats to share if they would like. Please
review the Allergy section (page 7) of this handbook and also check with your child’s teacher regarding any food allergies.

**Lost and Found**

Students are encouraged to use their cubbies for the storage of all their books and personal items when not in use. We recommend that all items be clearly labeled with the student’s name so stray items may be returned to the owner. Lost items will be placed in a box in the main lobby. These items will be displayed on tables during conferences. Any unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity.

**Development**

As Center School is a 501c3 tax exempt organization and tuition does not cover the actual cost of educating each child, the Center School Administration, Staff and Board of Trustees work throughout the year to raise funds in order to close this gap. Center School takes a thoughtful approach to fundraising, fundraising programs, parent education and community outreach. Ideas and suggestions for internal fundraising initiatives are gladly accepted and can be addressed to our Head of School (mwawrzyniak@centerschoolpa.org) at any time.

**Gifts to Center School**

Donations or gifts to Center School are ways to honor, pay tribute to, and celebrate special occasions while supporting our school. Every gift is vital to the strength of Center School and allows us to initiate new programs and enhance existing ones. Acknowledgments of every gift are sent to both the donor and the recipients.

- **The Annual Fund is the most important gift you can give.** Annual Fund contributions cover costs not included in tuition fees. They provide services that help us meet the needs of each child. These include artistic residencies, music programs and sports equipment. *Annual Fund donations are not used for scholarships.*

  If you would like to designate Center School’s Annual Fund for your **United Way** donation, our **United Way Donor Option Number is 009850**.

- **The Center School Scholarship Fund** offers aid to students whose parents could not consider a specialized education program without financial assistance. This fund also provides tuition relief for current students in times of financial crisis.

- **Bequests and Planned Giving programs** help ensure the long-term stability of Center School while you receive tax credits and other benefits.

*If you are interested in making a gift to Center School so that we can continue our mission of helping children who learn differently, please contact our Head of School or Director of Finance and Operations, and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have to guide you in the gift giving process.*
Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) & Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) Programs

Businesses can turn taxes into scholarships through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program and the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Programs.

If you pay corporate taxes to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the EITC and OSTC programs will allow you to direct those funds to Center School’s scholarship fund instead. If your business, a friend’s business, or your employer would be interested in learning about the Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program or Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program, please contact our Head of School or visit the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) website at http://dced.pa.gov/.

New Student Referral Incentive for Current Parents

Center School appreciates the referrals you make to Center School. To thank you for each new student that enrolls at Center School as a result of your initial referral, you will receive a $500 credit toward tuition in the year the new student attends. For more information, see our Director of Finance and Operations.

Help spread the word about our school!

Thank you for making Center School your philanthropic priority.
Sign this page, detach, and return to school by the first day of school.

I have received a copy of Center School's handbook, have read it, and understand its contents. I hereby acknowledge that my student and I are bound by the terms and conditions set forth in the Center School handbook.

Student name: ________________________________

Name of parent/guardian: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________

Name of parent/guardian: ________________________________

Signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________