



# Columbus Elementary Handbook

Ms. Wendy Garr-Oleksy, Principal

## Vision

Columbus Elementary graduates global, creative, empathetic leaders

## Mission

Together we empower, inspire, and persevere

## 2022-2023 Important Dates

○ <b>August 22<sup>nd</sup> (Monday)</b> First Day of School for Students	○ <b>January 16<sup>th</sup> (Monday)</b> Martin Luther King Day – No School
○ <b>September 5<sup>th</sup> (Monday)</b> Labor Day – No School	○ <b>February 3<sup>rd</sup> (Friday)</b> School Improvement Day – No School for Students
○ <b>September 23<sup>rd</sup> (Friday)</b> Professional Development Day – No School for Students	○ <b>February 20<sup>th</sup> (Monday)</b> President’s Day – No School
○ <b>October 10<sup>th</sup> (Monday)</b> Indigenous Peoples’ Day – No School	○ <b>March 17<sup>th</sup></b> Professional Development Day – No School for Students
○ <b>October 21<sup>st</sup> (Friday)</b> School Improvement Day – No School for Students	○ <b>March 29<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday)</b> Report Card Pick-Up
○ <b>November 8<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)</b> No School – Election Day	○ <b>April 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup></b> Spring Break – No School
○ <b>November 21<sup>st</sup> (Monday)</b> Report Card Pick-Up	○ <b>May 29<sup>th</sup> (Monday)</b> Memorial Day – No School
○ <b>November 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday-Friday)</b> Thanksgiving Break – No School	○ 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation TBD
○ <b>December 23<sup>rd</sup> – January 9<sup>th</sup></b> Winter Break	○ <b>June 7<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday)</b> Last day of School for Students (unless there are snow days)



Follow us @CColumbusES

Visit our website: [columbus.cps.edu](http://columbus.cps.edu)

## **Respect Self, Respect Others and Respect the Environment**

Columbus Elementary School has been using a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) for the last 10 school years. The system was created on the expectations that all student and staff members will: Respect Self, Respect Others and Respect the Environment. PBIS allows for the understanding of common qualities, which are focused on throughout the school year. Throughout the school year these qualities will be presented in classroom activities and whole school activities.

## **Arrival and Dismissal Procedure**

Punctuality is important. Please help your child arrive at school on time each day. Parents are asked to make sure their children arrive for school by 7:45 a.m. each morning. There is no supervision for students until 7:30 a.m. All students must enter the building through the East Entrance, which is located on the playground off of Augusta. During inclement weather the students will not be able to enter the building until 7:30 a.m.

All students will be given the opportunity to take a bagged breakfast to their classroom in the morning as needed. Dismissal time is promptly at 2:45 p.m. At dismissal time, students will be dismissed through the east entrance onto the playground.

When dropping off and picking up students, **DO NOT double park on either side of Augusta Blvd.** We want to keep students safe at all times. You will be told to move your car to ensure the safety of the students. Please don't arrive before 2:35 to wait for your child to be dismissed. Make sure your child crosses at the crosswalk where there is a crossing guard stationed.

**Early Dismissal-** Students who must leave for early dismissal must be signed out in the main office by a parent/guardian or by a person designated on the emergency form to do so. Early Dismissal after 2:15 p.m. will only be granted if a doctor's or dentist's appointment card is shown.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is necessary for essential progress in school. Columbus Elementary School starts at 7:45 a.m. and is dismissed at 2:45 p.m. There are no excused tardies. ***Students must bring a note for any absence or it will be considered an unexcused absence.*** After 5 and 10 days of unexcused absence, the school will send a *Truancy Notice* to the family.

**Tardy Policy-** Students who arrive after 7:50 a.m. are considered tardy and must enter through the East Entrance (off of playground on Augusta) of the school building. Students must stop at the security desk to pick up a tardy slip from the security officer. The tardy slip must be presented to the teacher to enter the classroom.

**Reporting an absence** –Please call 773-534-4350 ext 19529 to report any absences. Whenever a student is absent, State Law 10SILCS 5/26-13 mandates that a parent/guardian send a **signed note** when a child returns to school stating the reason why the child was absent.

Only specific types of absences are considered excused (**with a note**). Excused absences are for:

1. death in the immediate family
2. other family emergency
3. illness
4. observance of religious holidays.

Otherwise a child will be considered truant (unexcused absences). A student who has 9 or more unexcused absences (notes not on file) will be sent a letter home notifying families of the situation. In addition students with 9 or more unexcused absences may be retained in their current grade. Early dismissal before 11:15 a.m. is marked as a full day's absence

## **Cell Phone/Electronic Device Policy**

Columbus follows the Chicago Board of Education policy on cell phones and electronic devices found in the *Student Rights and Responsibilities*, in which possession without permission and use on school property during school hours, including extracurricular time, *is prohibited*. Please see page 18, 1-08 and page 23, 3-11 of the *Student Rights and Responsibilities*.

Any student who violates this policy will have the phone/electronic device confiscated and it will be held in a locked and secure place until a parent/guardian can arrange to pick up the phone or device. Columbus Elementary School and the Board of Education are not responsible for loss or damage if the phone is confiscated.

If you have a unique situation in which your child needs his/her cell phone, ***you must complete an electronic equipment contract and turn it in to your child's teacher.*** The child may not bring the phone to school until this contract is on file. The cell phone must be turned off and turned in to the classroom lock box each morning.

Columbus school does not allow the use of **ANY** personal electronic devices during the school day (i.e. laptops, electronic music devices, cameras, smart watches, etc.).

### **Cheating and/or Plagiarism**

**Cheating-** There are serious consequences for students at Columbus who make the decision to cheat. Every student is expected to complete his or her own homework, test, quizzes and classwork (when individual work). Parents/guardian and older siblings may help with homework, however it is expected the work handed in be the work of the student. If a student is caught cheating on any assignment or test, the Chicago Board of Education *Student Rights and Responsibilities* will be referred to and the appropriate discipline action will be taken.

**Plagiarism-** To plagiarize is "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). All of the work that the student submits in class must be an original product produced by them. If a student is caught plagiarizing on any assignment, they will be given an automatic failing grade on that assignment. In addition, the Chicago Board of Education *Student Rights and Responsibilities* will be referred to and the appropriate discipline action will be taken.

*Student Rights and Responsibilities:* "3-8 Plagiarizing, cheating and/or copying the work of another student or other source."

### **Communication**

We encourage parents and teachers to stay in contact with each other. To help keep parents informed, parents will be provided with up-dates on school procedures and events as needed throughout the school year. Visit our website frequently for classroom news: [columbus.cps.edu](http://columbus.cps.edu).

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for all parents at the end of the first and third marking quarters (refer to important school dates). Conferences outside of report card pick-up may be scheduled by sending a note or email to the teacher or calling the main office to schedule an appointment. Communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success and progress of each child and to provide for a safe school. School instruction is from 7:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. and any disruption during this time must be kept to a minimum. **All parents must report to the Main Office for a visitor's pass before proceeding through the building to talk or conference with teachers.**

We believe that most problems are solved by working collaboratively with your child's teacher. However, there are times that more intervention is needed. Depending upon the situation, either the teacher or the parent may request additional support from our principal, school counselor, social worker, etc. Whatever steps are taken, it is the welfare of your child (our student) that is utmost importance in the decision-making process.

**Parent Portal:** Please contact the main office to provide your up-to-date email address and request a Parent Portal account in Aspen. Once parent contact information has been verified by the student's school, parents will receive a signup email from Aspen. If you don't receive the signup email, we

recommend to check your Spam folder. If you are unable to locate the email, please contact your school for assistance.

**Friends of Columbus:** *The Friends of Columbus* is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the academic growth and success of the students of Columbus School. The parent managed organization, which is made up of parents, teachers, school staff and community members, provides support through fundraising and volunteerism. All are welcome to join Friends of Columbus. Contact [friendsofcolumbus@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofcolumbus@gmail.com) to be added to the email distribution list. To keep updated on their upcoming events and accomplishments please join their Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/friendsofcolumbus/>.

**Local School Council:** The Local School Councils (LSC) plays a role in decision-making at the local school level. The primary responsibilities of LSC includes approving how school funds and resources are allocated, approving and monitoring the implementation of the annual school improvement plan called the *Continuous Improvement Work Plan (CIWP)*, and hiring and evaluating the school's contract principal. The LSC hold meetings that are open to the public once a month. Meeting time and place will be posted at least 48 hours in advance in the main office.

### **Counseling and Guidance Services**

The Counseling department at Columbus strives to provide a comprehensive, developmental counseling program addressing the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students in grades Pre-K - 8th. The counseling department acts as the support system each individual child needs in order to support their social and emotional well-being. The services provided by the counseling department for students are as follows:

- Individual counseling
- Group Counseling- based on student need
- College and Career exploration and planning (middle school)
- Referrals to community resources (i.e. community counseling, extra academic support, extra-curricular activities etc.)

\*Please contact the school counselor with any questions or concerns\*

### **Curriculum**

Over the last several years Columbus School has been implementing the Common Core Standards in Language Arts and Mathematics. These are nationwide standards that are replacing Illinois State Standards. The goal of these standards is not only to have more educational consistency between States but also better prepare students for college and the workforce. In addition to implementing the Common Core Standards, teachers have been using several different strategies and curricula to help assist in students academic success. In Language Arts, teachers use Guided Reading as a basis for instruction during the reading block. Guided Reading allows students to work at their individual reading levels, as well as in small groups for more targeted instruction. In Mathematics, teachers implement the curricular program called *Envision Math* that aligns with the Common Core Standards. In Science the teachers create units of study which are NGSS aligned. The Social Studies curriculum is from Skyline, developed by CPS and aligned to the Illinois Social Science Standards.

### **Dress Code Policy**

Any white, navy blue, or light blue polo shirts that fits appropriately, navy blue or khaki dress pants or skirt. Pants cannot have rivets. Skirts must be an appropriate length for school. White, navy, or beige hoodies allowed. **No skinny style** pants or jeggings are allowed. Leggings may not be worn as uniform pants unless under a skirt. Skirt must be appropriate length. Undergarments, tank tops, and t-shirts should not be visible through the shirt. Hair cannot be covering the eyes. Hoodies, sweaters, and sweatshirts may be worn **if they are uniform colors**. The hood may NOT be worn during classes.

Please Note: When weather is predicted to be 75 degrees or more, students may wear navy blue or khaki uniform shorts. After October 1<sup>st</sup>, shorts are not allowed until May 1<sup>st</sup>. Keep in mind that rooms are air conditioned.

### **Emergency/ Contact Information**

In case of an emergency, or if a child should become ill at school, the school will contact the parent or person indicated on the student's *Emergency Information Form*. Each student is required to have on file the most up-to-date information: parent/guardian name, address, home telephone, work telephone, and emergency telephone numbers of at least two friends or relatives who can reach the school in reasonable time. The main office will collect this information in the beginning of the year through a form handed out to students. Please make sure to complete this form in a timely manner. Please notify the school if your contact information changes. It is very important that it is correct and up-to-date.

### **English as a Second Language**

English as a second language support and instruction is provided to all qualifying students. Students who live in a household where two or more languages are spoken qualify unless parent/guardian does not wish for their child to participate. In order to remove a student from the English as a second language program they must make a request in writing and sign pertinent documents. Please contact our English Language Program Teacher with any questions. Tetiana Fernandez can be reached at 773-534-4350.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

We offer a variety of afterschool activities. Please watch for flyers coming home announcing where and when various sports and activities will take place. Some are fee based.

### **Field Trips**

Teachers may plan field trips that supplement or enrich the educational program. The cost of these trips will always be kept to a minimum. These are an important part of your child's education. A permission slip, containing information and costs of the trip, will be sent home. Students may only participate on field trips if they have a signed permission slip. Parents are encouraged to volunteer as chaperones; field trips may be canceled if there are not enough chaperones. *Please do not keep your child from attending field trips as they are linked to classroom instruction and enhance learning.*

### **Grading Policy**

<b>Grading Scale:</b>	The following categories are used to determined final grades per quarter:
A-100-90%	• Homework
B-89-80%	• Class participation
C-79-70%	• Classwork
D-69-60%	• Quizzes/Interim Assessments
F-59% and Below	• Tests/Summative Assessments

### **Health and Safety Protocols**

For all health and safety protocols regarding COVID-19 and what to expect during a typical school day, please refer to the information found at [cps.edu/back-to-school/preparing-for-school](https://cps.edu/back-to-school/preparing-for-school).

Students and staff must wear a cloth mask while they are in the building. Hand sanitizer is available throughout the school. Students will be socially distanced at least 3ft from others. If your child is over the age of 12, getting vaccinated is highly encouraged.

## **Health and Immunization Requirements**

State law requires that families present proof of immunizations and physical exam upon enrollment in any public school. Student information is confidential and kept in a medical file. Proof is an official document signed by a state licensed health care provider (M.D., certified nurse practitioner, or D.O.). Students entering sixth grade and ninth grade must present proof they have passed a physical examination at the time of enrollment. State Law also requires a current dental exam for 6th grade students. All new CPS students regardless of their grade are to submit completed medical and dental forms.

Students will be medically excluded from school if they do not meet the above requirements. A student who does not comply with this mandated state requirement by October 15<sup>th</sup> will be **EXCLUDED** from school until the parent/guardian presents proof of the required health examination and immunizations to the school nurse.

## **Health and Wellness School**

We are a *US Healthy Certified* school. By following the healthy school policy, we agree to have healthy celebrations and encourage students to eat right and embrace a healthy, active life. Due to this policy Columbus Elementary no longer allows pizza, cupcakes, or cakes brought in for birthday celebrations. We encourage you to find another way to celebrate your child's special day. Feel free to bring in pencils, stickers, small toys, and other little trinkets to share. We will still be happy to let the classmates sing a resounding "Happy Birthday" to acknowledge this wonderful occasion.

## **Homework Policy**

Expect your child to have homework each night across all subject areas. Each teacher will assign due dates for homework. It is the expectation that all students complete their homework and turn it in on time. Reading 30 minutes each night, in addition to other subject homework, is the expectation for all students. Late work will only be accepted up to two weeks after the due date and only given partial credit. After that the assignment will be recorded as missing.

## **Inclement Weather**

In the event of severe weather, the building will NOT open until 7:30 a.m. Please plan appropriately. When weather is extremely bad, especially during the winter, snow or other conditions may cause schools to close. Please check local media (radio, TV, newspapers) to learn if the Chicago Public Schools are closed. Radio stations will make regular announcements about the status of schools. Recommended radio stations are AM670, AM720, AM780, and FM105.3 (Spanish); TV stations are CLTV, WGN, WBBM, WLS, and WMAQ. Also, [www.emergencyclosingcenter.com](http://www.emergencyclosingcenter.com) has up to date closing information. **Early Closing**- Parent/guardian will be notified by a school staff member with further dismissal instruction.

## **The Leader in Me**

Columbus Elementary is a Leader in Me school. This means that we see the genius in each child and do our best to develop the whole child while recognizing their leadership talents in various aspects of life. For more information, please go to [www.theleaderinme.org](http://www.theleaderinme.org).

## **Locker Policy**

**Lockers Rules**- Students in grades Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> have open wooden lockers. Students in grades 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> have metal lockers. Having a locker is a PRIVILEGE and is something that can be taken away, if necessary.

1. In the morning, students must get ready quickly and quietly.
2. Student lockers are school property. Students need to be respectful of them. Student lockers may be taken away if they are misused or damaged in any way. No excuses.
3. Student lockers are school property and may be searched by school personnel at any time.

## **Lunch and Recess Procedures**

Lunch and recess will be held for students 11:00-1:15. All students will receive 20 minutes for lunch followed by 25 minutes for recess. In the beginning of the school year all parents/guardians will receive forms regarding student lunch. Columbus asks that every family please complete the lunch form even if you do not want the school lunch. Columbus strives to be a healthy school and is requesting that all students bring a **full healthy** lunch if they do not take the school's lunch (a bag of chips and a large sugary drink is not a healthy lunch).

In addition, school will provide equipment such as hoola hoops, balls, and jump ropes for recess. *Students are to leave their personal equipment at home.* Students will only be able to use the equipment provided by the school.

## **Promotion Policy**

Columbus has a rigorous promotion policy in order to ensure that all students are on track to graduate High School and be College and Career ready. Columbus students must meet the following criteria in order to be promoted:

- Meets minimum scores on standardized tests as determined by CPS policy
- Report card grades- A final grade of "D" or above in Reading, Writing, Science, Social Studies and Math
- By the end of 8th grade students must pass the IL State and US Constitution tests.

In all grades, students who do not meet report card, testing or attendance requirements will be required to attend summer school (if available) and/or repeat the grade. In case of a change to the promotion criteria, families will be notified. This promotion policy is subject to change per Chicago Board of Education policy.

## **Report Cards/ Progress Reports**

**Reports Cards:** Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year (at the end of the first and third quarters). On these days there will be an afternoon session and an evening session. Look for an invitation to schedule a time in which to meet with your child's teacher on these days. At this time the parent/guardian and teacher will review the student's academic progress, as well as discuss any other important information concerning the student. If the parent/guardian is unable to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences, the parent/guardian must call to set up a meeting with the teacher in order to receive the report card. The appointment may be scheduled by contacting the teacher (email/note) or calling the main office (773-534-4350). Refer to Important Dates for Parent-Teacher Conferences days.

The second quarter and fourth quarter report cards will be sent home with the students at the end of each quarter. The parent/guardian is asked to please carefully review all grades and comments.

**Progress Reports:** Progress reports will be sent home four times a year, half way through each quarter. The parent/guardian is asked to please carefully review all grades and comments before signing the Progress Report and returning the bottom portion of the report to the classroom teacher. A parent/guardian must sign all progress reports that are sent home with the student and the *bottom portion returned to the classroom teacher* as soon as possible.

## **Safety**

All parents and visitors are to use the west door on Leavitt Street (Door 1), which has a doorbell and camera. All school doors are locked during the school day. Anyone entering Columbus must sign in and out at the Main Office. All visitors must wear a visitor's pass while inside the school building. If parents attempt to enter through the playground entrance, they will be instructed to walk around to the main entrance.

Per City of Chicago laws and ordinances, **no double parking is allowed** at arrival and dismissal time on any of the surrounding streets, especially Augusta Blvd. and Leavitt St. All students must cross at the marked cross walk. Do not encourage your child to cross in the middle of the road.

### **Special Education**

Columbus Elementary School provides individualized special education to all students who qualify through a special education evaluation. Please contact our counselor/case manager with any questions. The school counselor can be reached at 773-534-4385.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Columbus Elementary School follows the *Student Rights and Responsibilities (formerly Student Code of Conduct)* of the Chicago Board of Education. The *Student Rights and Responsibilities* describes various rights and responsibilities that students, staff, and parents can and should respect. It also lays out the various kinds of misconduct and the disciplinary actions (minimum to maximum) which may be used in response to each kind of misconduct. Each family (Students and Parents/Guardians) is expected to review and understand the CPS *Student Rights and Responsibilities* at the beginning of the school year (please let the main office know if you do not have access to the internet and need a paper based booklet). It is the responsibility of the students and parents to read and follow the expectations described therein. The *Student Rights and Responsibilities* is enforced through the end of the school year so that all feel safe, welcome and productive.

Sexual, verbal and physical harassment (bullying) will be addressed swiftly and to the highest degree of consequence listed in the *Student Rights and Responsibilities*. You can also report an incident by calling 773-534-4400. Office of Student Protections (OSP) will work with you to hear your report, investigate, and create safety measures at school. OSP can also provide guidance on reporting to the police, or getting other supports such as counseling

**The following items are not to be brought to school** (even for school parties/events) and will be confiscated: toys, electronic hand-held games, shoes with wheels, and any items that could be perceived as a distraction or a weapon such as pocket knives, chains, swords, water or play guns and laser pointers, etc. Note: See also *Student Safety*.

### **Volunteers/Chaperones**

**Volunteers-** All parents/guardians must apply to volunteer at Columbus school. Volunteer applications are available at <https://chicagopublicschools.civicore.com/index.php?action=userLogin>. Choose "Level II" volunteer. Once an application is submitted, the volunteer may come in to help throughout the building, as long as the visit has been previously approved teacher or principal. All volunteers must sign-in at the main office before beginning their volunteer time at the school. Please contact Maribel Barajas with any further questions.

**Chaperones-** As a chaperone your responsibilities are as follows:

- Being on time for the field trip
- Supervision of students
- Upholding Columbus and CPS rules