

2023-2024

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

CASTOR GARDENS MIDDLE SCHOOL

1800 Cottman Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19111

Home of the Wildcats!



This Student Handbook belongs to:

Advisory Section: _____ Advisor: _____ Room Number: _____

School District of Philadelphia
Castor Gardens Middle School

1800 Cottman Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19111
Castorgardens.philasd.org

Phone # (215) 400-3190 FAX # (215) 400-3191
Principal – Dr. Shawn McGuigan

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Students,

Welcome back to an exciting new school year!

We hope this letter finds you well and that you were able to take time to enjoy the summer months. We are anxious to get the school year rolling and see all of you. We are looking forward to welcoming students on September 5, 2023. The school day will begin at 8:15 AM and end at 3:19 PM. Hopefully, you are just as excited to return to see your teachers and friends. We will have uniform/gym shirts and sweat shirts with our Castor Gardens logo that can be purchased beginning August 14, 2023 at the school. We are expecting many new students and new teachers this year. Please join me in welcoming all of our new additions to the Castor Gardens Family.

Just a reminder, the uniform is a solid navy blue polo shirt and khaki pants. Shirts/Sweatshirts can be purchased at school between the hours of 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM throughout the year. The gym uniform is the Castor Gardens T-shirt with gray shorts or sweatpants.

Bus information will be communicated by the transportation department. Please review all information in the handbook. Breakfast and lunch is provided for all students each day. If you would like your child to receive breakfast at school please report to the cafeteria door between 7:45 AM and 8:05 AM. Please pay special attention to the information regarding student attendance. Students need to come to school each and every day, unless they are not feeling well. If your child is sick please send an excuse note when he/she returns.

We are going to have an amazing school year!!! Go Wildcats!!!! I am looking forward to working with you and your children. Good luck and best wishes on a successful school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shawn McGuigan
Principal

CONTACT INFORMATION

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Principal McGuigan | 215-400-3190 | smcguigan@philasd.org |
| Assistant Principal Caplan | 215-400-3190 | dcaplan@philasd.org |
| Assistant Principal Conkle | 215-400-3190 | mconkle@philasd.org |
| Assistant Principal Griffis | 215-400-3190 | kgriffis@philassd.org |
| Assistant Principal Markbreiter | 215-400-3190 | mmarkbreiter@philasd.org |

Climate Manager

Mr. Ryan

Dean of Students

Ms. Gordon
Ms. Karaam
Ms. Ward

Nurse

Ms. Melloy
Ms. Proctor

Roster Chair

Ms. Saferstein

Special Education Liaison

Ms. Barbakoff

Counselors

Ms. Felici
Ms. Schafer
Mr. Smalls

EL Point Person

Ms. Brown

Office Staff

Ms. Tralie (Lead)

School Police

Officer Hopkins
Officer Bowman

School Year Calendar: 2023-2024

Since the calendar is subject to change during the course of the school year, the web version may contain updates not reflected in the printed version of this publication.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| August 29, 2023 | First Day for Staff |
| August 30-31, 2023 | Staff Only - Professional Development |
| September 1, 2023 | Staff Only – Professional Development |
| September 4, 2023 | Labor Day – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| September 5, 2023 | First Day of school for students |
| September 19, 2023 | Back to School Night @ 5:00 PM |
| September 25, 2023 | Yom Kippur – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| September 29, 2023 | Professional Development Half Day – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| September 29, 2023 | Interim Reports Due |
| October 27, 2023 | Staff Only - Professional Development; School Closed for Students |
| November 7, 2023 | Election Day – Schools Closed for Staff and Students |
| November 22, 2023 | 3 Hour Early Dismissal for Staff and Students |
| November 23-24, 2023 | Thanksgiving Holiday - Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| November 27, 2023 | Report Card Conference (Full Day); School Closed for Students |
| December 15, 2023 | Professional Development Half Day – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| December 15, 2023 | Interim Reports Due |
| December 25, 2023 | Christmas Day – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| December 26-29, 2023 | Winter Recess – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| January 1, 2024 | New Year’s Day - Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| January 2, 2024 | Staff Only - Professional Development; School Closed for Students |
| January 15, 2024 | Dr. Martin Luther King – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| February 1-2, 2024 | 2 nd Term Report Card Conferences (Half Day) – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| February 9, 2024 | Professional Development Half Day – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| February 19, 2024 | President’s Day – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| February 23, 2024 | Interim Reports Due |
| March 8, 2024 | Professional Development Half Day – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| March 25-28, 2024 | Spring Recess; Schools closed for Staff and Students |
| March 29, 2024 | Good Friday – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| April 4-5, 2024 | Report Card Conferences (Half Day) – 3 Hour Early |
| April 10, 2024 | Eid al Fitr - Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| April 23, 2024 | Election Day – Schools Closed for Staff and Students |
| May 3, 2024 | Interim Reports Due |
| May 10, 2024 | Professional Development Half Day – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| May 27, 2024 | Memorial Day – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| June 13, 2024 | Professional Development Half Day – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| June 14, 2024 | Last Day of School for Staff and Students – 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| June 17, 2024 | Eid al-Fitr – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |
| June 19, 2024 | Juneteenth – Administrative Offices and Schools Closed |

School District of Philadelphia Dress Code Policy

All students are expected to follow his or her school's dress code and dress in a manner of appearance that would not cause a disturbance, distract or interfere with the instructional program, or constitute a health or safety hazard. Student uniforms should fit appropriately to his/her body.

The principal of each school shall make the final decision as to what is considered proper or improper attire.

Principals may declare spirit or club days and allow students to wear school spirit shirts, or dress-up days (i.e., when school pictures are scheduled) or allow students to wear other dress code attire such as uniforms or special dress for Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, athletes, cheerleaders,

band, or chorus. Nothing in this Code of Conduct shall restrict or ban a student's wearing of religious garb.

Parents with concerns regarding religious dress are encouraged to discuss them with the principal.

Castor Gardens Middle School's uniform:

Shirt: Solid navy collared golf shirt, the official Castor Gardens t-shirt or official Castor Gardens sweatshirt. (T-shirts and sweatshirts are sold in the morning at the main office.)

Pants: Uniform-style, Tan/khaki with belt loops. Pants or shorts must fit at the waist and must be free from frays and holes. **Shorts may be worn in warmer weather.**

Appropriate Length: Pants, shorts, and skirts that measure (front and back) no shorter than three inches above the knee. Skirts, jumpers, and dresses must measure no shorter than three inches above the knee.

Shoes: Students must wear closed toe shoes or sneakers to school. No sandals, slippers, or flip flops will be permitted to be worn by students (unless approved by administration for special events).

Coats: Heavy coats and jackets **MAY ONLY** be worn to and from school and/or outdoors and be kept in student lockers throughout the day.

- **ALTERNATIVE UNIFORM OPTION:** In addition to the solid navy blue polo shirt, there is now an official Castor Gardens Middle School polo shirt, Castor Gardens Middle School T-shirt, and Castor Gardens Middle School sweatshirt available for purchase in the main office all school year. These additional options and any other professionally made Castor Gardens shirts that have been provided by the school will be considered an official uniform. **Student made shirts or anything not mentioned above will NOT be considered uniform.**

HOODIES: Students will be able to purchase a Castor Gardens hoodie that can be worn in the school building beginning October 1st, 2022 until May 29, 2023. No other hoodie will be permitted to be worn in the building. Parents who wish for their child to wear the Castor Gardens hoodie will be required to sign a contract.

Jewelry MUST be limited and administration reserves the right to maintain the final decision as to what is considered proper or improper.

HATS are to be kept in a student's locker or book bag and **ARE NOT** to be worn or hung from belts throughout the day.

Physical Education - Preparation for Class Activities

All pupils are scheduled for and required to participate in Physical Education activities. Appropriate and functional attire is necessary. ***Students are expected to wear their PE uniform to school on their assigned PE day. Wearing the PE uniform will be considered the "designated" school uniform ONLY if the student is scheduled that day for gym.*** For this activity, we require the following clothing to meet the needs of personal cleanliness and maximum safety:

- a. All-purpose **gray athletic shorts or sweatpants** and a separate **navy blue T- shirt or the school T-shirt** may be worn only on P.E. class days. (Exceptions: 1. Students with medical conditions (Note from a doctor required.) 2. Religious beliefs that require Religious attire.)
- b. **Athletic shoes** that are designed for activity (sneakers).
- c. **No jewelry** is to be worn during class in order to provide safety for the student and the rest of the class.

Physical Education Medical Excuses

- a. If there is a chronic problem such as asthma, heart condition, etc., a medical form MEH23 must be filled out by a doctor.
- b. If there is a temporary illness such as a cold or sprain, then a note from the parent or guardian is sufficient for that day only.

Attendance Expectations

Under Pennsylvania law, all students between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) must attend school every day. Once a student is enrolled in school, this includes students in kindergarten, they are subject to compulsory school laws until the student reaches age 18. The student can only be withdrawn if they transfer out of the District. The student will remain on the District's roll and the student/family is subject to truancy court if they do not attend school. A parent/guardian who enrolls their child in kindergarten may formally withdraw their child from school prior to reaching compulsory school age (age six), at which point the child would no longer be subject to compulsory school laws until they turn six (6) years old.

A student shall be considered in attendance if present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board; if receiving approved tutorial instruction or health or therapeutic services; if engaged in an approved and properly supervised independent study, work-study, or career education program; if receiving approved homebound instruction; or if the student's placement is instruction in the home.

Pennsylvania Department of Education regulations state that students have a legal right to attend school until the age of 21. For further guidance, please visit the Office of Student Enrollment and Placement website.

During the time that a student is of school age, they are entitled to attend the public schools in The School District of Philadelphia. Students who turn 21 during the school term are entitled to finish out the school year.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Ensure that their student(s) between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) are enrolled in school and attend school regularly, on time, and for the entire school day.
- Emphasize the importance of on-time attendance in school, class, and supervised activities-and celebrate good attendance and success.
- Send their student(s) to school every day prepared to participate and learn. • Establish reasonable, age-appropriate curfews and bedtimes.
- Make appointments for their student(s) outside of the school day or days when schools are closed whenever possible
- Ensure that their student receives the periodic student health examinations and immunizations that are required by law.
- Schedule family vacations to coincide with school recesses.
- Call the school to report when their student is or will be absent.
- Provide a written excuse for every absence when their student returns to school, per attendance guidelines.
- Provide a written excuse for every late arrival and early departure, per attendance guidelines
- Provide the school with correct, current addresses, emergency contacts, home, cell, and work telephone numbers, e-mail addresses at the beginning of each school year and update information whenever there are changes.
- Participate in school attendance improvement conferences for their student, to improve daily student attendance when necessary.

When can a Student be Absent?

Sometimes students have to miss school. Absences which meet the conditions or situations indicated below under Excused/Lawful Absence shall be considered an excused absence.

Pursuant to the District's attendance policy, written excuse notes explaining the absence must be given to the school within three (3) days upon the student's return to school. If the note is not submitted to the school within the required time frame, the day(s) may not be excused.

- All absences resulting in a total of three (3) or more consecutive days due to illness will require a written excuse note by a licensed healthcare provider.
- For absences that do not total three (3) consecutive days, parents may submit a written excuse note stating the reason for the absence. Excuse notes from a healthcare provider may also be submitted in lieu of a parent note for any absence.
- When a student has been absent due to illness, excused with a parent note, totaling eight (8) days (cumulative),

all subsequent absences may require a written excuse note from a licensed healthcare provider.

Written excuse notes must include a valid telephone number or other means of contact for verification purposes.

Excused/Lawful Absence

The following conditions or situations constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

- Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner
 - o Upon written request by a parent/guardian, a student may be excused during school hours for the purpose of obtaining professional health care or therapy service only if the following requirements are met:
 - The health or therapeutic services are to be rendered by licensed practitioners. ▪ It is not practical or possible for the student to receive the services outside of school hours.
 - The time of necessary absence from school involves a minimum of interference with the student's regular program of studies.
- Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated District staff during school hours for health related reasons
- Quarantine
- Recovery from accident
- Required court appearance
- Death in family
- Educational trip/tour if the following conditions are met:
 - o The person in parental relation submits the documentation required for excusal prior to the absence, within the appropriate time frame.
 - o The student's participation has been approved by the Superintendent or principal.
 - o The adult directing and supervising the tour or trip is acceptable to the person in parental relation.
- College tours, trade school tours, career and technical training program tours, community college tours, or tours of other non-District schools, with prior approval.
 - o The District may limit the number and duration of non-school-sponsored educational tours or trips for which excused absences may be granted to a student during the school year.
- Observance of a religious holiday observed by a bona fide religious group, upon prior written request from the person in parental relation.
- Out-of-school suspension
- Family Emergency (An unexpected, serious event that is outside of the control of the student's family) o Requires parental note explaining the emergency received within 3 school days of the student's return. School staff will evaluate if the situation constitutes a family emergency.
- Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
- Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined in law, for an event or funeral. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location, and time of the event or funeral. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the school prior to being excused from school.
- Other urgent reasons that may reasonably cause a student's absence, as well as circumstances related to homelessness and foster care.

Unexcused/Unlawful Absences

Absences which do not meet the above conditions or situations shall be considered an unexcused/unlawful absence.

An "unexcused" or "illegal" absence occurs when a student is absent without a valid excuse in writing. That means that either no written note was submitted to the school upon the student's return or that the reason provided in the note was deemed invalid. Examples of invalid excuses include (but not limited to): babysitting, waking up late, illness of a family member, and vacation. Absences shall be treated as unexcused until the school receives a written excuse explaining the absence, to be submitted within three (3) days of the absence.

An out-of-school suspension may not be considered an unexcused absence.

Responses to Non-Attendance (Truancy)

When a student has been absent for three (3) days (consecutive/non-consecutive) during the current school year without a lawful excuse, District staff shall provide notice to the parent/guardian within ten (10) school days of the student's third unexcused absence.

If the student continues to accumulate additional unexcused absences after issuance of the notice, the parent/guardian and student will be invited to attend a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) where a School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) will be created in order to support the family in identifying and alleviating attendance barriers. A SAIP must be developed for any student by their sixth (6th) unexcused absence. The parent/guardian and student must be invited to this conference in advance. Neither the student nor the parent/guardian shall be required to participate, although it is highly recommended. The SAIC shall occur even if the parent/guardian declines to participate or fails to attend the scheduled conference.

If the student's attendance does not improve after implementation and progress monitoring of the SAIP, and has ten (10) or more illegal absences, the student may be referred to Truancy Court, in order to prevent, address, and reduce chronic truant behavior. At that time a truancy provider will contact the parent/guardian in order to assist further with alleviating barriers to attendance.

The student and parent/guardian will be required to attend truancy court and the parent/guardian must comply with the truancy court order. The court order may include a referral for services. If the student's attendance does not improve at the truancy court level, truancy court may refer the case to family court. In family court, a Judge may adjudicate the student as dependent, and assign the case to the Department of Human Services for more intensive services.

Suspension from school or transfer to an alternative education setting is not a permissible response to truancy.

The School Day at Castor Gardens Middle School

1. Our school day begins at 8:15 AM and ends at 3:19 PM. Students will be permitted to enter the building at 8:05 AM, go to their lockers and then to class. Students are expected to be in their advisory by 8:25 AM.
2. You will be considered late if you are not in your advisory by 8:25 AM. **Wandering the halls and not reporting to advisory on time will result in disciplinary measures.**
3. On days when the weather is inclement, the lunchroom doors will open at 7:45 AM.
4. Breakfast is available daily in the cafeteria from 7:45 AM till 8:05 AM. This may change and all will be notified when and if it does.

Early Dismissals

Doctor's appointments are to be made after school dismissal, Saturdays and/or holidays.

Students will only be permitted to leave the building before the end of a school day if they are released directly to their parent/guardian.

Any student who leaves school **prior to 10:00 AM** may be charged with an entire day of absence. There will be no early dismissals given **prior to 10:00 AM or after 2:30 PM.**

A parent coming to the school to get an early dismissal must present **acceptable identification** before the child is released. In addition, the parent/guardian's name must match with the computer system.

Parents will be asked to record the reason for the early dismissal. Notes will be required for doctor's visits. They may be brought to the attendance secretary the next day.

For an unplanned early dismissal (child becoming ill during the school day), the parent/guardian must pick up the child. The child will not be sent home alone. (Many ill students are reporting to school and asking to see the nurse. Sending an ill child to school is unfair to both the child and his or her classmates. Please keep children who are ill home until they have recovered.)

Emergency Closing of School

An essential part of the school's closing plan is the listing of emergency contacts for every pupil on roll. Every parent must provide the school with the name and phone number of the person to be contacted in the case of an emergency school closing. If school is closed due to an emergency, parents will be directed to the first floor, marble hallway. An emergency dismissal sign-in table will be set up. Parents will be directed to enter the auditorium and take a seat in the front of the auditorium while waiting for their child to arrive. When your child arrives, you will sign him/her out and then you may leave.

Lateness

A pattern of truancy **and lateness** can lead to a number of interventions or penalties, depending upon the circumstances. On the school level, truancy can result in school-based interventions (home visits, truancy elimination plans, academic supports, social service referrals, etc.) or truancy court.

Students are considered late at 8:25. If a student arrives to school **after** 8:25 they are to do the following:

1. Enter through the **MAIN entrance** to receive a late card.
2. Provide the **STAFF MEMBER** with an excuse note from a parent/guardian as to why they are late. Students **MUST** bring an excuse note from a parent/guardian as they enter.
3. If the student **DOES NOT** bring a note from the parent/guardian the incident will be reported to the school's attendance office.

Student Code of Conduct & Behavioral Expectations

School Based Interventions (SB)
 Short-Term Suspension - Grades 3-12 - 1-3 days (ST)
 Long-Term Suspension – Grades 3-12 – 4 – 10 days (LT)
 Disciplinary Hearing Referral - Grades 6-12 (DH)
 Expulsion Grades - 6-12 (E)

| Disruptive Behaviors | Level | SB | ST | LT | DH | E |
|--|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | RULE | | | | | |
| Profane Language/Gestures and Name Calling | 1 | K-12 | X | X | X | X |
| Disruptive Classroom Behavior | 2 | K-12 | X | X | X | X |
| Forgery/Alteration of Grades/Excuse Notes or School Documents | 3 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Cheating | 4 | K-12 | X | X | X | X |
| Unauthorized entry into School Property | 5 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Destruction of Property (Less than \$500) | 6 | 3-12 | 3-12 | X | X | X |
| Destruction and/or theft of property (More than \$500) | 7 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Theft (Less than \$500) | 8 | K-12 | 3-12 | X | X | X |
| Theft (More than \$500) | 9 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Class Cutting | 10 | K-12 | X | X | X | X |
| Robbery | 11 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Mutual Fight | 12 | K-12 | 3-12 | X | X | X |
| Mutual Group Fight | 13 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Instigation and/or Participation in a Group Assault | 14 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Assault | 15 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Assault Causing Serious Bodily Injury | 16 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Inappropriate Touch/Exposure | 17 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Bullying/Cyberbullying | 18 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Harassment | 19 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Hazing | 20 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Sexual Misconduct | 21 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | X | X |
| Threatening Mass Violence | 22 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Threats/Intimidation | 23 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Possession and/or Use of Tobacco or Electronic Smoking Devices | 24 | K-12 | 3-12 | X | X | X |
| Possession and/or Use of Alcohol and/or Drugs | 25 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Distribution of Alcohol and/or Drugs | 26 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Possession of Incendiary Devices and/or Explosives | 27 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Use of Incendiary Devices and/or Explosives | 28 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Gang Affiliation | 29 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Possession/Use of a Weapon | 30 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | 6-12 |
| Reckless Endangerment | 31 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |
| Inappropriate Use of Electronic Device | 32 | K-12 | 3-12 | 3-12 | 6-12 | X |

All students shall be treated fairly and honestly in resolving grievances and complaints, and in the consideration of any suspension or expulsion. All students have the right to fair and reasonable treatment of their student grievances and discipline by school officials.

Suspension Procedures

According to Pennsylvania State Law, suspension is defined as: The denial to a student of the right to attend school and to take part in any school function for any period of time of up to 10 days. For the purposes of this Code of Student Conduct, suspension will be classified in three categories: *In-school*, *Short-term* and *Long term*.

1. RETURN TO SCHOOL w/PARENT occurs when the student violates the Student Code of Conduct and serves as a means to obtain an **IMMEDIATE conference with parent/guardian** in order to avoid further disciplinary measures and suspension.

A. Process

1. Students are notified of the infraction and that they are required to return to school the next day with a parent or guardian.
2. Parents/guardians are notified by writing hand delivered by student.
3. Parents/guardians are contacted by telephone in reference to the incident and request for conference.
4. Parent/guardian, student, administrator, counselor, and staff meet to discuss behavior and establish intervention measures to correct behavior.

2. In-School Suspension is an exclusion from a classroom for disciplinary purposes but allows a student to remain under the direct supervision of school personnel. Direct supervision means school personnel are physically in the same location as students under their supervision.

The Castor Gardens In-School Alternative Learning Center serves as an **alternative disciplinary intervention to out-of-school suspension**. Students are assigned to a classroom for a specific period of time and work on curriculum directly related to the reason that they were assigned to the room. Parents are notified when a student is assigned to the ALC. Only Administrators OR designee can assign students to the program. **Students who do not follow the rules in the In-School Suspension will be assigned an Out-of-School Suspension.**

A. Record Keeping

1. Daily Attendance Log - name, section, length of assignment, who referred student, and time entered the room.
2. Work folder - Each student has a folder for the work they have completed and notes on behavior included if necessary.

B. Rules

1. No talking
2. Stay in your assigned seat.
3. If you need to ask the teacher a question, need more paper, sharpen your pencil or use the trashcan, raise your hand and wait quietly.

All work must be complete and neat. If the teacher has to talk to a student about their behavior while in ALC: *

1st time warning - phone call home

2nd time warning - additional time in ALC

3rd time warning – suspension out of school

*Serious behavior problems may result in immediate out of school suspension.

3. Short-Term Suspension is an exclusion from school and/or any school activity or function for a period of **3 school days or less**. Students who are suspended shall meet with the principal or designee prior to the suspension. During the conference, the student has the right to the procedures described under *Student Conference Procedures* outlined in this Code of Student Conduct.

4. Long-Term Suspension is an exclusion from school and/or any school activity or function for a period of **4 to 10 school days**. Students who are given a long-term suspension shall have a student conference and a parent conference. During the parent conference, the student and parent have the right to the procedures described under *Parent Conference Procedures* outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. In addition, prior approval by the Regional Superintendent is required for Long-Term Suspension. **In addition, prior approval by the Deputy Chief for the Office of Student Discipline, Hearings and Expulsions is required for all Long-Term Suspensions consisting of 10 school days.**

What takes place at a Student Conference

1. Inform student of the reason for conference.
2. Give student opportunity to respond to allegation/s and write a statement.
3. Discuss student's behavior and ways to correct student behavior.
4. Inform student of corrective action and/or next steps.
5. Document behavior and intervention.

What takes place at a Parent Conference

1. Notice of conference must be provided to the parent/guardian in writing and delivered by student, sent certified mail, faxed, emailed or sent by other reasonable means to reach the parent/guardian.
2. When a student is suspended, parent conference must be held **within three (3) days of the suspension**.
3. At the conference, parent may request to review student records and any witness statements.
4. Discuss student's behavior and ways to correct student behavior.
5. Inform parent of further disciplinary action (if applicable).

We have read and understand the required Student Code of Conduct policy/procedure.

Parent's Signature: _____

Student's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Castor Gardens Middle School Policies and Expectation

Locker Policy

Each student will be required to purchase a combination lock for his/her locker and will receive a locker ONLY AFTER their parent location card is returned to school. Wilson will make a copy of the lock combination for school record and security.

Transportation

Student Fare Cards

Currently the School District of Philadelphia issues Student Fare Cards to students who live within the neighborhood boundaries of the school, live 1.5 or more miles away from the school and who attend 7th or 8th grade. Student Fare Cards are distributed on the first day of school. Students will be able to use their Student Fare Card for the entire school year. Students are responsible for the proper care of the card.

YELLOW-BUS TRANSPORTATION

Currently the School District of Philadelphia will provide Yellow Bus service to students who live within the neighborhood boundaries of the school and reside 1.5 or more miles away from school and who attend 6th grade.

Special Education students are entitled to transportation. Please see Ms. Brace, SEL or your child's special education teacher for further information.

Breakfast and Lunch Program

Children will receive a free breakfast and/or lunch, or they may bring their own breakfast/lunch to school.

Report Card Distribution and Conferences

Research shows that student achievement increases when parents, students, and teachers work as a team. A parent-teacher conference is an opportunity for you and your child's teachers to engage in conversation about student learning at home and at school.

Textbook Policy

RESOLVED that Board of Education Policy #224 be revised and amended to read as follows:

2.1 The Board charges each student with responsibility for the proper care of school property and the school textbooks, supplies and equipment entrusted to his/her use.

Students are responsible for the care, maintenance and timely return of all textbooks. Schools shall require students and/or parents to sign a contract acknowledging their responsibility for the care and prompt return of textbooks lent to them by the school.

Students and/or their parents will be assessed penalties for lost or damaged textbooks. Imposition of one or more of the following penalties is permitted: a charge for replacement of the textbook; requiring the student to perform a prescribed number of hours of school service; withholding of a report card; and or loss of privileges such as participation in sports or other extra-curricular activities, move-up day and other special events.

Safety

Parking Near the School - Parents who drive their children to school are asked to discharge pupils on the Englewood Street or Loretto Avenue sides of the building. Cottman Avenue is **hazardous** because of heavy traffic and is reserved for parking by our yellow school buses and Septa Transportation. Cars left unattended may be ticketed.

Student Admission – Students are admitted into the boy's and girl's lunchroom at 7:45 for breakfast. Admission into the school building for advisory begins at **8:05am** through the schoolyard entrances. Students have **fifteen minutes** to get to their lockers and to class before the start of advisory at **8:15**. **STUDENTS ARE MARKED LATE after 8:25 AM. Failure to arrive to school on time will lead to parent or guardian being contacted, a disciplinary referral, and a referral to the Office of Attendance and Truancy.**

Student Dismissal – Students are dismissed to the schoolyard and are encouraged to go home immediately. We do not want students lingering in the schoolyard or standing on the corner waiting for a ride. This is unsafe. Please provide your child with an expected time of arrival and review the route you want your child to take on the way home from school. These procedures will help keep your child safe and out of trouble.

Health Room Hours



Health Room Hours for the 2023-2024 school year will be from 10:30 – 1:00 p.m. All students must have a hall pass to go to the nurse. To help improve instructional time and decrease classroom interruptions, the following schedule will be in effect for non-emergency visits to the nurse:

- 8:15 – 8:45 – Students can drop off necessary paperwork
- 8:45 – 10:30 – Health Screenings (Emergencies Only)
- 10:30 – 1:00 – Open Hours
- 1:00 – 1:30 - Lunch
- 1:30 – 2:00 – Open Hours
- 2:00 – 3:19 – Health Screenings (Emergencies Only)

Any student taking medication must have a request for medication completed and on file in the nurse's office. Parents must supply all medications.

Any student with health problems must have a pupil health status form completed by their parents and on file in the Nurse's Office

If your child cannot participate in gym/recess, the doctor must complete a Physical Education Medical Exemption Form (MEH-23) by the first day of school

Medical Problems & Medication

Any student who will require medication or medical services during the school day must have a MED1 completed by a private physician. Any student who may require medical attention for special health needs must have a S865 completed and be on file in the nurse's office. These forms may be obtained from the nurse.

Health Insurance Information

The School District requires the school nurse to have health insurance information on all students. Please advise the school nurse if there are any changes to your health insurance. If your child needs health insurance, the school nurse can help you obtain either free or low cost health insurance.

Every student must have an updated certificate of immunization on file. This includes a minimum of 4 DTaPs, 4 Polio, 2 Measles, Mumps & Rubella, 3 Hepatitis B shots, 2 Varicella,

All sixth graders must have their immunization records up to date by the first day of school. This includes a second varicella (chicken pox), a meningitis, and a current dtap. (within 2 years). Parents must contact the nurse whenever their child receives additional shots. Students who have not received the necessary immunizations will be excluded from school.

Sixth graders must have a physical on file in the nurse's office per the Pennsylvania State mandate. Failure to provide a physical may result in the child's inability to participate in special activities.

Seventh graders must have their TDaP and meningitis vaccines before returning to school.

Other General Policies

Fire Towers-are not to be used by students except during emergencies.

Smoking-is not permitted on school property.

Dogs-are not permitted on school property.

NO GUM CHEWING (anywhere) in Castor Gardens!

Water is permitted in classrooms. All other beverages are ONLY permitted in the cafeteria. (No glass.)

Cell Phones are permitted in the cafeteria.

Cell phones are not permitted in classrooms unless they are being utilized for instructional purposes.

Academic and Behavioral Eligibility for Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities

All students are eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities until the end of the first report period. At that time, students must be passing Math, English, Social Studies and Science to participate in sports activities. Students with serious behavioral infractions may be declared ineligible for participation.

Honor Roll Criteria

Distinguished

All A's in all subjects

Meritorious

All A's and B's in all subjects

IB/MG Program

The International Baccalaureate Program is a philosophy in education directed toward having students learn the value of inter-cultural education; become effective communicators and lifelong learners. It is an organized way of giving students an awareness of their place in the world and empowering them to make a difference. It is a program that encourages students to be lifelong learners and become productive, tolerant citizens in a global society. All students are encouraged to enroll in this program.

Family and Parent Portal

The School District of Philadelphia is proud to offer a tool that parents and family members may use to stay connected to their child and their school. The School District of Philadelphia's Parent & Family Portal gives you access to valuable information about your child's education and school.



Please register on the school district website.

www.philasd.org

This site will instruct you on how to navigate through your children's profiles.

Castor Gardens Middle School

Castorgardens.philasd.org

**School District of
Philadelphia
Student AUP Authorization
Agreement**

Student Agreement:

You and your parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign this Account agreement to be granted access to District computing resources.

Student Name _____ Grade _____

School _____

I have read the District's Student Acceptable Use Policy. I agree to follow the rules contained in this Policy. I understand that if I violate the rules my account can be terminated and I may face other disciplinary measures or appropriate legal action.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Guardian Authorization:

I have read the District's Student Acceptable Use Policy. I hereby release the School District, its personnel, and any institutions with which it is affiliated, from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use the ***District's private network***, including, but not limited to claims that may arise from the unauthorized use of the system to purchase products or services. I will instruct my child regarding any restrictions against accessing material that are in addition to the restrictions set forth in the District Acceptable Use Policy. I will emphasize to my child the importance of following the rules for personal safety.

Please circle applicable response:

• ***I give permission for my child to use District's private network and District private network (peer-to-peer accessibility) Email and certify that the information contained in this form is correct.***

• ***I do not give my permission for my child to use District private network or District private network (peer-to-peer accessibility) Email (not Internet) Email.***

Parent / Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Parent / Guardian Name _____

Home Address _____

Phone _____

HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework fosters independence and responsibility. Homework reinforces work performed in school and serves as an intellectual discipline to establish good study habits outside of the classroom

All teachers at Castor Gardens assign homework. The amount of homework may vary by subject area and teacher. All students should anticipate approximately sixty (60) minutes each day. Homework time increases when students are preparing for tests or are researching and writing major reports.

Teachers will check, grade, and return homework promptly, within a period of time not to exceed two weeks. Teachers will communicate directly with parents if homework assignments are missed.

Parents are expected to provide a quiet area for their child(ren) to study and complete all homework assignments. It is also expected that parents provide assistance when needed and sign off on completed homework assignments if requested by the teacher.

Students will complete all homework and return assignments to the teacher in the designated timeframe. Students are encouraged to ask questions and communicate with teachers and their parents any need for explanation or further assistance with assigned homework.

Homework will count for no less than 10% of the report card grade in each major subject area. While students in alternative learning environments may receive fewer written homework assignments, they may be provided with interactive learning activities that require the assistance of a parent or another responsible adult.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____



**Castor Gardens Middle School
Parent and Family Engagement Policy
School Year 2023-2024
Tentative**

In support of strengthening student academic achievement, Castor Gardens Middle School receives Title I, Part A funds and therefore must jointly develop with, agree on with, and distribute to parents and family members of participating children a written parent and family engagement policy that contains information required by section 1116(b) and (c) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The policy establishes the school's expectations for parent and family engagement and describes how the school will implement a number of specific parent and family engagement activities, and it is incorporated into the school's plan submitted to the local educational agency (LEA).

The Castor Gardens Middle School agrees to implement the following requirements as outlined by Section 1116:

- Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, Part A, including the planning, review, and improvement of the school parent and family engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Update the school parent and family engagement policy periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, distribute it to the parents of participating children, and make the parent and family engagement policy available to the local community.
- Provide full opportunities, to the extent practicable, for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESSA in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand.
- If the schoolwide program plan under Section 1114(b) of the ESSA is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.
- Be governed by the following statutory definition of parent and family engagement and will carry out programs, activities, and procedures in accordance with this definition:

Parent and Family Engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- (A) Parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning
- (B) Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school
- (C) Parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child
- (D) Other activities are carried out, such as those described in Section 1116 of the ESSA

**DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE SCHOOL WILL IMPLEMENT
REQUIRED SCHOOL PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY COMPONENTS**

Section A: JOINTLY DEVELOPED

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to involve parents in an organized, ongoing, and timely manner in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including opportunities for regular meetings, if requested by parents, to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their child and respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.

- In order to involve parents/guardians, Wilson always invites parents to be our partners. During our Title I meeting, parents are given the opportunity to make suggestions, share ideas and voice concerns. Home & School officers meet to determine the calendar of meetings. To inform parents, we use the electronic board located on the lawn as well as School Messenger and our school's website.

Section B: ANNUAL TITLE I MEETING

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to conduct an annual meeting, at a convenient time, and encourage and invite all parents of participating children to attend to inform them about the school's Title I program, the nature of the Title I program, the parents' requirements, the school parent and family engagement policy, the schoolwide plan, and the school-parent compact.

- We hold our annual Title I meeting during Back-to-School open house in October.

Section C: COMMUNICATIONS

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to provide parents of participating children with (1) Timely information about the Title I programs, (2) Flexible number of meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, (3) transportation, child care or home visits, as such services relate to parent and family engagement and may use Title I funds and (4) Information related to the school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of participating children in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.

- 1) **School Messenger and our school website will inform parents of dates & times**
- 2) **Meetings will be scheduled at various times to accommodate parent availability**
- 3) **Parents are welcome to bring younger children to any meeting**
- 4) **District translators – offer translation services for students and parents; materials and letters written in multiple languages; school-based bi-lingual support counselors**

Section D: SCHOOL-PARENT COMPACT

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to jointly develop with parents of participating children a school-parent compact that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state's high standards.

- **In collaboration with the Grants Compliance Monitor, School-Based School Improvement Support Liaison, Family Engagement Liaison, and other parent groups, provide workshops to schools on parent engagement.**
- **Provide for participation professional development for new and existing principals and other administrators on how to develop partnerships with parents.**
- **Train new and existing staff with parental engagement duties (School Improvement Support Liaison, Bilingual Counselor Assistants) to assist in engaging parents.**

Section E: RESERVATION OF FUNDS

Castor Gardens Middle School will take the following actions to involve the parents of children served in Title I, Part A schools in decisions about how the 1 percent of Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent and family engagement is spent by:

- **We share budget allotments for the upcoming school year at our annual Winter Title 1 Parental Input Meeting. During this meeting, parents provide input for spending.**

Section F: COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Castor Gardens Middle School will, to the extent feasible and appropriate, coordinate and integrate parent and family engagement programs and activities with other Federal, State, and local programs, including public preschool programs, and conduct other activities, such as parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children by:

- **Castor Gardens Middle School's Parent Resource Center is located on the first floor. Materials, publications and brochures are housed in the center. Informational workshops are planned for parents, including the Family and Parent Portal and the high school application process. We add to the list as needs are expressed to the school.**

Section G: BUILDING CAPACITY OF PARENTS

Castor Gardens Middle School will build the parents' capacity for strong parent and family engagement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school and the community to improve student academic achievement through the following:

1. Providing parents with a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessments used to measure student progress, and the achievement levels of the challenging State academic standards; and
2. Materials and training to help parents to work with their child to improve their child's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), as appropriate, to foster parent and family engagement
3. Providing assistance to parents of participating children, as appropriate, in understanding topics such as the following:
 - a) The challenging State's academic standards
 - b) The State and local academic assessments including alternate assessments

- c) The requirements of Title I, Part A
- d) How to monitor their child's progress
- e) How to work with educators to improve the achievement of their child

To assist parents, Castor Gardens Middle School will:

- *Email information including events, names, time, location, topic*
- *MTSS meetings held as needed*
- *Monthly calendar will be posted on our school's website*
- *Automated phone calls to alert parents of events*
- *Parent Workshops*
- *Technology available for use in our Parent Resource Center*

Section H: BUILDING CAPACITY OF SCHOOL STAFF

Castor Gardens Middle School will provide training to educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school by:

- **Weekly teacher meetings to discuss ways to work with parents as partners**
- **Monthly MTSS meetings scheduled with parents as needed**
- **Train staff on available translation resources**
- **Encourage and support parent and teacher involvement and membership in the Castor Gardens Home & School Association and the School Advisory Council (SAC) and in attending those scheduled meetings**
- **Utilize School Messenger as another means of communication**

Castor Gardens Middle School will provide other reasonable support for parent and family engagement activities under Section 1116 as parents may request by:

- **Engage the school community and develop community partnerships**
- **Establish new partners and invite our existing partners to visit our school with ideas to support one another**

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY DISCRETIONARY COMPONENTS

N/A

School-Parent Compact
2023-2024 School Year
(TENTATIVE)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

JOINTLY DEVELOPED

The parents, students and staff of Castor Gardens Middle School partnered together to develop this school-parent compact for achievement. Teachers suggested home learning strategies, parents added input about the types of support they need, and students told us what would help them learn. Parents are encouraged to attend annual revision meetings held in the spring of each year to review the compact and make suggestions based on student needs and school improvement goals. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the School Family Engagement survey that is also used as a tool to collect parent feedback regarding the current Title 1 programs, policies and family engagement.

To understand how working together can benefit your child, it is first important to understand the district's and school's goals for student academic achievement.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA ANCHOR GOALS:

1. 100% of students will graduate, ready for college and career.
2. 100% of 8-year-olds will read on grade level.
3. 100% of schools will have great principals and teachers.
4. SDP will have 100% of the funding we need for great schools, and zero deficit.

Castor Gardens Middle School GOALS:

Comprehensive plan goals – increase percentage of students achieving proficient on PSSA

Grade-level skill:

At least 38.1% of grades 6-8 students will score proficient/advanced on the ELA PSSA.

At least 22.3% of grade 6-8 students will score proficient/advanced on the Math PSSA.

At least 78% of all students will attend school 90% of days or more.

At least 78% of Hispanic/Latinx students will attend school 90% of days or more

At least 78% of African American/Black students will attend school 90% of days or more.

At least 91% of students will have zero out-of-school suspensions.

To help your child meet the district and school goals, the school, you, and your child will work together:

SCHOOL/TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Castor Gardens Middle School will:

- Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the participating children to meet the state's student academic achievement standards.
- Hold parent-teacher conferences quarterly to discuss individual student progress
- Provide parents with frequent reports on their child's progress
- Provide parents reasonable access to staff
- Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's trips

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

We, as parents, will:

- Monitor attendance
- Ensure that homework is completed
- Incorporate strategies suggested in my child's agenda book
- Monitor amount of television and video game time
- Participate, as appropriate, in decisions related to my child's education
- Promote positive use of my child's extracurricular time
- Stay informed about my child's education and communicating with the school by promptly reading and responding to all notices from the school or the school district
- Serve, to the extent possible, as part of the Home & School Association

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Complete homework every day and ask for help when needed
- Read at least 30 minutes every day outside of school time
- Give parent or guardian all notices and information received at school
- Students are responsible to charge their chromebook each evening and have it in their possession each day along with their charger.

COMMUNICATION ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING:

Castor Gardens Middle School is committed to frequent two-way communication with families about children's learning. Some of the ways you can expect us to reach you are:

- ClassDojo
- Student agenda book communication log
- Phone call
- Email
- School Messenger

- **Website posting**
- **Progress reports**
- **Conferences**
- **Monthly newsletter**

ACTIVITIES TO BUILD PARTNERSHIPS:

Castor Gardens Middle School offers ongoing events and programs to build partnerships with families.

School Advisory Council
Parent-Teacher conferences
Parent Resource Center
Open House