



# CLARENCE MIDDLE SCHOOL

## STUDENT HANDBOOK

2020- 2021

### COVID CAVEAT

Some of the information below may not be true because of the current COVID - 19 pandemic. On the spot adjustments may need to be made to times mentioned and other aspects of this handbook. Parents will be informed of substantive changes as they occur. The following rules will be in place while students are in the school building. Failure to follow requests by administration, faculty, and staff in an attempt to make the school environment safer will be considered insubordinate:

- Students will be required to wear masks in school unless told otherwise by their teachers.
- Masks breaks will be provided.
- Instructions involving common spaces (i.e. halls, lunch rooms, bathrooms) must be followed.
- Students who feel ill while at school should alert their teacher and go to the nurse for evaluation. Students feeling ill at home should not attend school.
- The following Live Conferencing Sessions Guideline must be followed:
  - As with the use of social media, students are required to adhere to policies outlined in the Student Use of Technology section and observe the following expectations regarding virtual and/or online meetings.
  - Students should be on time to live conferencing sessions scheduled by the teacher. Teachers will be monitoring attendance at these sessions.
  - Ensure that your technology works properly and that you frame your camera correctly. You should be set squarely in the frame so that you can be easily seen and heard.
  - Good online etiquette is vital to a productive and supportive online learning environment. Students are to behave in online sessions or activities as is expected during an in-person class. The following applies to all online communications:
    - Dress appropriately for learning. Follow the dress code requirements.
    - Be mindful of inappropriate surroundings or potential interruptions to the session. Choose a location that is quiet and has a neutral background.
    - Sessions scheduled by teachers are intended for use by learners in that classroom, and *should not* include students who are not part of that group or class.

- Be polite, respectful, and tolerant of views expressed by others. Keep comments used in discussions and chats on topic, appropriate, and constructive to the learning of the class.

## **FOR THE PARENTS**

The education of children is the purpose of schools. It includes scholastic achievement, social, mental and emotional maturity, and physical fitness. If schools are to accomplish their purpose, cooperation between the school and home is necessary.

Parents may help by:

- Checking Parent Portal. Here you will find your child's grades and attendance. It is the parent's responsibility to check Parent Portal for their child's Report Cards and Progress Reports. Report cards are mailed home at the end of Quarter 4 only. This handbook contains specific dates when each marking period ends. Report cards/Progress Reports are posted about one week after the marking period ends.
- Arranging a meeting with a teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator if a problem arises.
- Attending school functions.

The school will, to the best of its ability:

- Provide for individual differences of students.
- Emphasize quality rather than quantity of work.
- Generate electronic report cards every 10 weeks for students/parents to review on Parent Portal. Progress Reports will be available on Parent Portal at the mid-marking point for each quarter.
- Require behavior that is in the best interest of the student and entire student body.

## **FOR THE STUDENTS**

The Clarence Middle School program offers many experiences for you to prepare for the years ahead. Now is the time to develop attitudes of good citizenship, sportsmanship, study habits, and work habits so that you will be able to make the most of the opportunities in your future. Please read this handbook carefully. You are expected to know its contents and are responsible for this information.

## **MI CASA, SU CASA**

CMS is based on a house system. Each grade level is grouped into a house area wherein the academic classes take place. Students can go to his/her respective house for help or to call home. Each house has its own administrator and guidance counselor.

Grade 6: 407-9210      Grade 7: 407-9214      Grade 8: 407-9205

The Attendance Office (407-9209) and the Health Office (407-9223) are in a central location and serve the entire building.

## **WHEN THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL**

If inclement weather or other conditions require that school be closed, a robo call from the Superintendent will go out to all families in the District. Additionally, closing information will be available on all local television channels.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early dismissals will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

***EXCUSED:*** An absence, tardy or early dismissal may be excused due to personal illness, death in the family, impassable roads, religious observance, quarantine, required court or legal obligation, appointment at a health clinic or suspension.

**UNEXCUSED:** Absences not mentioned above include, but are not limited to, vacation, shopping, babysitting, oversleeping, cold weather or missing the bus. Any reason not listed as excused shall be deemed unexcused unless the Building Principal determines otherwise.

### **GOING TO BE ABSENT? LET US KNOW**

If your child is going to be absent, call the Attendance Office at 407-9209 before 8:45 am each day your student is absent. Please leave your child's first and last name and the reason for his/her absence on the voicemail. Students are required to submit a written excuse to the Attendance Office upon your return.

### **THE BELL HAS TOLLED**

Students reporting to school after the late bell must report to the Attendance Office. Students should have a written excuse for tardiness.

### **THE BUS WAS LATE!**

A student arriving on a late bus, regardless of how late, is not marked tardy. Students are expected to wait at their normal bus stop for at least 10 minutes past the time of their normal pick up.

### **FORGOT SOMETHING?**

Items brought in for students should be dropped off at the check-in desk. Students are expected to go to the desk to pick up their item.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

Any request to leave school early should be submitted to the Attendance office before 8:58 am. The student will be given a pass to leave class and should report to the Attendance Office. A parent must come in to the Attendance Office and sign their child out. If the child returns the same day, the parent does not need to come into the building. Parents should be prepared with identification to enter the building.

### **HOMEWORK REQUESTS**

After **two days** of absence, parents may call their student's house office by 10:00 am to request homework. Work will be available for pick up after 4:15 pm and can be found on the homework table in front of the Main Office. Students can keep up with missed work by checking Schoology.

### **THE GUIDING LIGHT**

Shortly after you enter middle school, you will meet your guidance counselor. The counselor's job is to help you get the most out of your years in the middle school. If at any time during the school year you have a problem or question, you are invited to see your counselor. You may see your counselor before or after school or during your study hall. In case of emergency, your teacher will give you a pass to see your counselor. You and your parent/guardian are invited to confer with your counselor at any time about any personal concerns, your school experiences, abilities, interests or your future plans. Parents should call their child's house office or email the counselor to schedule an appointment.

### **Guidance counselors:**

Grade 6: Mrs. Elvin (407-9210) Grade 7: Mr. Fox (407-9214) Grade 8: Mrs. Tudor (407-9205)

## **LIMO SERVICE**

Students are expected to behave in a responsible manner and follow the directions of the bus driver. Students who demonstrate inappropriate behavior may have their bus riding privileges suspended. Students are expected to adhere to the following bus rules:

1. Students should be at their bus stop 10 minutes before their scheduled pick-up time and should wait for 10 minutes after the scheduled pick-up time in the event the bus is late.
2. Students should watch for the approach of the bus and be at the bus stop ready to board the bus immediately when it stops.
3. Students are not allowed to move about or change seats, etc. while the bus is in motion.
4. Objects are never to be thrown. Nothing, including objects or body parts, is to go out of the bus window.
5. A student will be picked up and discharged only at their regularly scheduled point unless he/she has a written note approved by the Transportation Dept. or their house office. Bus notes should be submitted to their house office for approval by homeroom.
6. Students should pass 10 feet in front of the bus when crossing the road and wait for the bus driver to give them the signal that it is safe to cross.
7. Students who carry band instruments must place them in a safe and convenient manner, not blocking aisles or the driver's view.
8. Students may not eat or drink anything on the bus. Glass containers of any type are not allowed on the bus.
9. Students who walk or ride their bike to school must have a note signed by their parent/guardian on file in their house office.

## **FAREWELL, ADIEU, AUF WIEDERSEHEN**

If you are moving and will transfer to another school, please notify your guidance counselor as soon as possible. You will receive a sign-out sheet which you will need to have signed by all your teachers and return to your house office before you leave.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Report cards are posted to Parent Portal approximately one week after the end of each quarter. They are not mailed home, except for Quarter 4. Students with an average of 95-100 qualify for High Honor Roll; students with an average between 90-94.9 qualify for Honor Roll; and students with an average between 85-89.9 qualify for Merit Roll. Passing is 65 and above. Retention meetings are held at the end of the year and are comprised of the house principal and guidance counselor. Marking periods end on November 13, January 29, April 16, and June 25.

## **WHAT IS PARENT PORTAL?**

Parent Portal is a web-based program that shows your child's current grade in each class, their attendance, report cards and many other things. All parents should have a Parent Portal account. Please contact your child's house office if you do not have an account. All students are also provided their own accounts through Homeroom. Please encourage students to regularly check their own grades.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

If you feel it is necessary to see the school nurse, you must get a pass from your teacher. It is not appropriate to come to the Health Office between classes without permission from your next period teacher. If your condition warrants, the nurse will call your parent/guardian to say that you may be taken home. **Students are not to call or text home because of illness. This is the responsibility of the nurse.**

## **ASSEMBLIES**

Assembly programs are scheduled at various times throughout the year. You are expected to be attentive and orderly at all times. You and your school are judged by your behavior. Talking, booing, whistling, whispering and stomping of feet are not permitted. Do not take bookbags to the assembly unless you are instructed to do so.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

You are required to provide proper physical education attire, including a swimsuit, swim cap and goggles. Individual lockers will be issued to each student. You are expected to keep your locker clean and neat. Personal items should remain locked up at all times. Your gym clothes should be clearly marked with your full name. There will be no excuses from PE class except by written permission from your parent/guardian. Excuses from parents/guardians are for up to two classes. A doctor's note is necessary for a longer time out of PE. Excuses should be given to the nurse. Students unable to participate in PE class for a medical reason are also ineligible to participate in any school sport for the same period of time.

## **FIRE DRILLS, LOCK-DOWN DRILLS, ETC.**

Fire drills and lock-down drills are an important safety measure and are required by law. They are held to prepare you to keep safe in the event of an actual emergency. Your full cooperation is needed in making the drills as effective as possible. This can be accomplished only when everyone follows proper procedures.

*When the fire alarm rings:*

1. At all times, pay attention to adult directions.
2. Await the signal from your teacher to proceed.
3. Walk orderly and quietly toward your designated exit.
4. Student use of cell phones during an emergency evacuation is prohibited, unless otherwise directed by a faculty or staff member.

*When a lock-down is announced:*

1. At all times, pay attention to adult directions.
2. Move to the designated location in the room and be silent.
3. Stay in lock-down until an officer or district representative announces a hold-in-place.
4. Student use of cell phones is strictly prohibited.

## **A PLACE TO PUT YOUR STUFF**

Each student is assigned a hall locker for the storage of personal belongings, and a gym locker for the storage of gym clothes. Students are responsible for keeping their lockers and locker doors clean and free of decals. The inside of the locker should be kept in good order. Students are not allowed to take jackets to their 8<sup>th</sup> period class. They must be left in lockers until after the final bell at 3:35 pm. Under no circumstances are lockers to be shared. It is strongly recommended that your lockers be kept locked at all times. Do not reveal your combination to another student.

If you have difficulty closing or locking your locker, please report it to your house office so the problem can be corrected. Under no circumstance should you kick the locker or force it closed. Students must provide their own lock. The school sells locks for \$4.75. We strongly urge all students to purchase a school lock.

There is a lost and found in the Attendance Office and in each House Office. Students are encouraged to label their belongings and check the lost and found for misplaced items.

## **READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?**

The Library Media Center is a pleasant place in which to do independent reading or research. Students may use the LMC during a study hall with a pass from their teacher. Due to space limitations, homework that does not require the use of library resources should be done in study hall. While in the LMC, students are expected to be productive, respectful of others and to use the library materials appropriately. The LMC has a variety of materials that can be loaned for a period of two weeks. Mrs. Bork, Librarian, is available to assist students and staff with the use of library resources.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Any use of telecommunication device anywhere in the building during school hours without administrative or teacher consent is prohibited. Telecommunication devices shall include, but are not limited to, cellular telephones, PDA's, iPods, earbuds, and tablets. Any electronic device that is permitted on school property is encouraged to be kept on the person and in a concealed manner. The use of electronic devices to promote or engage in any form of academic misconduct is strictly prohibited. Additional restrictions and procedures regarding telecommunication devices may be developed and implemented by the building principal.

The sale, use or possession of obscene material including, but not limited to, digital images and video is prohibited. While students are permitted to possess electronic devices during the school day, they are prohibited from using them in any manner which invades the privacy of students, employees, volunteers or visitors. This includes, but is not limited to, taking unauthorized photos of others and/or social media postings. The use of electronics for cyberbullying, regardless of where the offense occurs, is prohibited. Cyberbullying is the use of electronic information or communication devices including, but not limited to, cellular telephone communications, digital images, social networks, email, texts, blogs, internet postings and websites that deliberately or recklessly threaten, harass or intimidate an individual or group of individuals, or that places an individual in reasonable fear of harm or damage to property, or that causes or threatens to cause a disruption to the orderly operation of the school and the educational process. Violations of the District Acceptable Use Policy for Technology include the inappropriate use of devices with photographic or messaging capability for the purposes of all of the above.

Students who have their electronic device taken during the day will receive the following progress discipline: First offense-device sent to office where student may retrieve at dismissal; second offense-student conference with house principal; third and subsequent offense-parent/guardian must pick up from house office after dismissal.

## **LOOKING SHARP**

The district's dress code applies to all students and will be enforced during the school day and all school functions. The purpose of the CCSD dress code is to ensure a productive learning environment in which all students feel comfortable. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for acceptable dress and appearance. We are making a concerted effort to instill good grooming habits and personal character traits so that our students will be adequately prepared to enter mainstream society. Individual taste in student dress is acceptable. However, it cannot be disruptive to the educational process. The Board of Education believes that appropriate dress and grooming contribute to a confident and productive learning environment. School staff will use the following guidelines to define inappropriateness:

- Brief garments, see-through garments or extremely tight-fitting garments are prohibited including, but not limited to, tube tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, racer backs, plunging necklines and net tops.
- Torn or altered clothing must not be revealing or suggestive.
- Cleavage and torsos must not be showing.
- Footwear that is a safety hazard will not be allowed.
- Very brief shorts, skirts and dresses are inappropriate.
- Leggings are not to be worn as pants. If leggings are worn, the front and back must be covered by shorts, skirts or dresses that follow the above guidelines.
- Visible undergarments are prohibited.
- Pajama pants and slippers are not appropriate school attire.
- Hats, bandanas, hoods and other headwear in the building, except for medical or religious purposes, is unacceptable.
- Apparel or accessories that display any of the following are prohibited: obscene words, threatening pictures or designs, sexually explicit or suggestive remarks, alcohol, tobacco, drugs or weapons, and any related material that may be identifiable or associated symbols of a gang or street clubs.
- Items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous or denigrate others based on race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, weight, national origin, political affiliation, age, marital status, military status or disability are prohibited.

Students who violate the dress code will be required to modify their appearance by covering the offending clothing item or replacing it. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subjected to discipline, up to and including school suspension. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code shall be subjected to further disciplinary action.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our objective is to make discipline as fair and impartial as possible. Generally, the levels of disciplinary action will be progressive and may include oral warnings, written/phone notifications to parents/guardians, lunch detention, after-school detention, restriction of privileges (i.e.: suspension from athletic participation, transportation or social/extracurricular activities), FOCUS (in-school suspension) or out-of-school suspension. We will do our utmost to maintain clear and concise communication with parents should any of these steps become necessary. If a student's conduct is related to a disability, the procedures in Section X of the Code of Conduct must be followed.

The Board of Education expects all students to conduct themselves in an appropriate and civil manner, and to show proper regard and respect for the rights and welfare of others including students, district personnel and members of the school community. The BOE also expects proper care of school facilities and equipment.

The best discipline is self-imposed. Students must learn to assume and accept responsibility for their own behavior, as well as the consequences of their misbehavior. District personnel who interact with students are expected to use disciplinary action when necessary and to place emphasis on the student's ability to grow in self-discipline.

The BOE recognizes the need to make its expectations for student conduct specific and clear. These rules of conduct are intended to do that; they focus on safety and respect for the rights and property of others. Students who do not accept responsibility for their own behavior and violate these school rules will be required to accept the penalties for their conduct.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, when they:

1. **Engage in conduct that is disorderly.** Running in hallways, making unreasonable noises, using language or gestures that are profane, lewd, vulgar or abusive, obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic, engaging in any willful act that disrupts the normal operation of the school, trespassing (students are not permitted in any school building, other than the one they regularly attend, without permission from the administrator in charge of that building), misusing computer/electronic communications, including any unauthorized use of computers, software or internet/intranet accounts, accessing inappropriate websites, or any other violation of the district's acceptable use policy.
2. **Engage in conduct that is insubordinate.** Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students or otherwise demonstrating disrespect, being excessively tardy or absent, leaving school without permission, skipping detention.
3. **Engage in conduct that is disruptive.** Failing to comply with the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of students.
4. **Engage in conduct that is violent.** Committing or attempting to commit an act of violence, such as hitting, kicking, punching or scratching any person lawfully on school property, possessing a weapon (authorized law enforcement officials are the only persons permitted to have a weapon in their possession while on school property or at a school function), displaying what appears to be a weapon, threatening to use a weapon, intentionally damaging or destroying the personal property of other students, teachers, administrators, other district employees or any person lawfully on school property, intentionally damaging or destroying school property.
5. **Engage in any conduct that endangers the safety, morals, health or welfare of others.** Lying to school personnel, stealing the property of other students, school personnel or any other person lawfully on school property or attending a school function, defaming others (this includes making false or unprivileged statements or representations about an individual or identifiable group of individuals that harm the reputation of the person or

the identifiable group by demeaning them), discrimination (this includes the use of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability as a basis for treating another in a negative manner), harassment (this includes a sufficiently severe action or persistent, pervasive pattern of actions or statements directed at an identifiable individual or group which a reasonable person would perceive as ridiculing or demeaning), intimidation (this includes engaging in actions or statements that put an individual in fear of bodily harm), hazing (this includes any intention or reckless act directed against another for the purpose of initiation into, affiliating with or maintaining membership in any school sponsored activity, organization, club or team), selling, using or possession of obscene material, using vulgar or abusive language, swearing, smoking or using tobacco products or electronic cigarettes, possessing, consuming, selling, distributing or exchanging alcoholic beverages or illegal substances, or being under the influence of either. "Illegal substances" include, but are not limited to, inhalants, marijuana, synthetic marijuana, cocaine, LSD, PCP, amphetamines, heroin, steroids, look-alike drugs and any substance commonly referred to as "designer drugs", inappropriately using or sharing prescription or over-the-counter drugs or medications, gambling, exposing parts of the body that are considered private in a manner that could be interpreted as lewd or indecent, inappropriate displays of affection, initiating a report warning of fire or other catastrophe without valid cause, misuse of 911 or discharging a fire extinguisher.

6. **Engage in misconduct while on the school bus.** Students are required to conduct themselves on a bus in a manner consistent with established standards. Excessive noise, or actions like pushing, shoving or fighting will not be tolerated.
7. **Engage in any form of academic misconduct.** Plagiarism, cheating, copying, altering records, violating copyright laws, violating intellectual property rights or assisting another student in any of the above actions. The use of electronic devices to promote or engage in any form of academic misconduct is strictly prohibited.

Discipline is most effective when it deals directly with the problem at the time and place it occurs, and in a way that students view as fair and impartial. Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following: student age, the nature of the offense and circumstances that led to the offense, the student's prior disciplinary record, the effectiveness of other forms of discipline, information from parents, teachers and/or others, as appropriate.

Students who are found to have violated the District's Code of Conduct may be subjected to the following penalties, either alone or in combination. The school personnel identified after each penalty are authorized to impose that penalty, consistent with the student's right to due process: **oral warning** (any member of district staff, coaches), **written warning**

(any member of district staff, coaches), **written notification to parent** (any member of district staff, coaches), **detention** (administrators, superintendent), **suspension from transportation** (director of transportation, administrators, superintendent), **suspension from athletic participation** (coaches, administrators, superintendent), **suspension from social or extracurricular activities** (activity advisor, administrators, superintendent), **suspension of other privileges** (administrators, superintendent), in-school-suspension (administrators, superintendent), **removal from classroom** (teachers, administrators), **short-term (5 days or less) suspension from school** (principal, superintendent, BOE), **long-term (more than 5 days) suspension** (superintendent, BOE), **permanent suspension** (superintendent, BOE).

### **DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS**

In reference to the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), Clarence Middle School/Clarence High School will require and maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students regardless of actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.



The DASA coordinators (Ms. Dreibelbis and Mr. Fox) shall be accessible to students and staff for consultation and guidance as needed to implement this law. Students are encouraged to report any incidents to their guidance counselor or a trusted adult. Reports will be investigated and violations will be addressed as appropriate.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism, intentional or unintentional, is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work” (Michael Harvey, *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing*). This includes images and any portion of someone else’s published or unpublished work product or intellectual property. Any instance of plagiarism will result in disciplinary action. This may include, but is not limited to, earning a zero on an assignment.

### **HOMEWORK/LATE TO CLASS POLICY**

- House principals will assign lunch detention for students who have missed three assignments in one class in a marking period. Teachers will contact parents after a second missed assignment.
- Lunch detention is served during the student’s regular lunch period. Students are expected to complete missing assignments while they eat their lunch.
- Students who are regularly referred to administration for missing assignments will be subject to additional consequences and/or supports.
- Students who are late to class three times in a five-week period without a signed pass from a staff member will receive lunch detention.

### **THERE’S ALWAYS SOMETHING GOING ON AT CMS**

The Middle School Student Council helps to make your school a better place. The officers, representatives and alternates are elected at the beginning of each school year. These students assist with the planning of dances, social events and fundraising campaigns. They are often called upon to serve as guides for guests and visitors and to represent the student body in after-school functions. During Student Council meetings, grade level problems are discussed, and improvements are suggested for the welfare of you and your school.

### **THE SUN ALSO RISES**

First period begins at 8:58 am. Students can enter the building beginning at 7:30 am and must go to the North Cafeteria. At 8:35 am, students are released from the cafeteria. The school day ends at 3:35 pm.

### **THE TRAFFIC REPORT**

Parents who choose to drop off or pick up their child from school are asked to abide by New York State traffic laws with respect to stop signs, crosswalks and school buses. Please comply with the requests of school employees assigned to traffic control in the parking lots. Use patience and care at drop-off and pick-up times to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Cars are restricted from the back bus loop.

### **THE FINE PRINT**

The Clarence School District has an established grievance procedure for the prompt and equitable resolution of all complaints alleging discrimination based on gender (Title IX) or disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act). For information regarding the District’s grievance procedure or questions about the District’s policy on equal access to educational programs, please contact Dr. Geoffrey Hicks, Superintendent of Schools, at 716-407-9102.

**The entire Clarence Central School District Code of Conduct can be found on the district’s website.**