



CARL SANDBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL

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September 22, 2023

Dear Sandburg Parents/Guardians,

The 2023/2024 school year is off to a great start! Our first day of school was met with some unexpected plumbing challenges; however, I am proud to say our students and staff persevered and navigated every adjustment without hesitation. The positive energy from students and staff has been contagious, and it helps to set the foundation for social, emotional, character and educational growth throughout the year ahead. We know children learn best in safe and secure environments and Sandburg wants every student to thrive.

Carl Sandburg Middle School is both a NJ and National School of Character. We continue to reinforce our core 6 Pillars of Character: Respect, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Caring, Citizenship and Fairness. Each month, lessons, activities, and common language will center around one pillar as it relates to developing good character, being a contributing member to the Sandburg community and our society. Attached is a chart of common language that we highly suggest you use at home. We believe it builds consistency between school and home, fosters a positive climate and culture, and cultivates healthy and resilient adolescents.

On Friday, September 8th Sandburg held our annual "Welcome Back Celebration." Thank you to the PTA for their assistance in making the kickoff to the 23/24 school year a memorable one. The focus of this day was to promote positive meaningful relationships with one another, engage in team building activities, establish expectations, and to have fun. The PTA donated inflatable obstacle courses and live DJ entertainment for our students to enjoy during the celebration. The Sandburg pride was palpable.

The first few weeks of school have also been spent establishing rules, expectations, and acceptable behavior in and around our school community. We need your support in ensuring we can provide a safe, healthy and orderly school environment for our students and staff to teach and learn. Our administrative team, teachers and staff have reviewed school rules and the student code of conduct, as outlined in the student handbook. We are urging you to review and enforce the following expectations with your child at home:

- a) No cell phones are permitted in school. Students are prohibited from taking photos and/or videos while inside CSMS. If the cell phone must be brought to school, they should be held in your child's locker for the duration of the day. Students always have access to the main office phone should they need to contact home in the event of an emergency.
 - a. 1st offense: warning
 - b. 2nd offense: teacher takes the phone for the length of the class
 - c. 3rd offense: phone sent to main office for administrative intervention
 - d. Cell phone in a bathroom: grounds for immediate suspension
 - e. Posting videos from school onto social media: grounds for immediate suspension
- *While we recognize students may need headphones for online lessons, air pods are NOT permitted to be worn around the building. The same disciplinary interventions above apply to air pods/headphones beyond an instructional purpose.
- b) Students must sit at the cafeteria tables assigned to their teaching block. As the year goes on, it our goal for students to earn the ability to self-select their seating during lunch. To establish consistency, students must SIT at their teaching team assigned cafeteria tables for the time being.
 - a. 1st offense: warning
 - b. 2nd offense: lunch detention
 - c. 3rd offense: administrative intervention
- c) There are NO backpacks permitted in school throughout the day. Students are able to carry belongings into and out of the building each day in a backpack. To maintain a safe school environment, students cannot carry backpacks throughout the school building.
 - a. 1st offense: warning
 - b. 2nd offense: parent contact
 - c. 3rd offense: administrative intervention
- d) CSMS has been outfitted with water refilling stations. Students are permitted to bring reusable water bottles to stay hydrated. Only water is permissible.

Students are expected to do the right thing and demonstrate good character in all that they do. Sandburg prides itself on its diversity, and we anticipate all students will respect others, our teachers, and staff. Please take time to talk with your child about the expectations and consequences outlined above. We encourage you to be mindful of your child's social media activities, as they may not fully understand how their actions impact themselves, those around them, and the safe and orderly running of our building. Our goal is to provide a safe learning environment for our students, and our team has worked very hard to ensure the most effective transition back to school. Thank you for your active involvement in our school. Together, we can make this academic year a truly enriching and successful one for your child. We hope to see you at next week's Open House.

Sincerely,

Timothy Dolan
Mr. Timothy Dolan
Principal

Trustworthiness	Respect	Responsibility	Fairness	Caring	Citizenship
Self-awareness	Social Awareness	Responsible Decision Making	Self-awareness	Relationship Skills	Self-management
Ask for help	Do nice things for others	Do the right thing	Ask for help	Take turns when you talk	Listen to others
Identify how you are feeling	Stand up for others	Own your actions	Identify how you are feeling	Get along with others	Follow the rules
Demonstrate honesty and integrity	Make others feel better	Respect other people's things	Demonstrate honesty and integrity	Ask others to do things with you	Pay attention to your work
Have a growth mindset	Shows concern for others	Do your part in a group	Have a growth mindset	Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving	Stay calm with others
Develop interests and a sense of purpose	Forgives others	Listen to different ideas	Develop interests and a sense of purpose	Make compromises	Express your feelings
Experiencing self-efficacy	Shows kindness to others when they are upset	Says when there is a problem	Experiencing self-efficacy	Resolves disagreements calmly	Uses appropriate language when upset
Tell others about your skills	Taking others' perspectives	Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness	Tell others about your skills	Say please and thank you	Takes criticism without getting upset
Be positive about the future	Recognizing strengths in others	Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data and facts	Be positive about the future	Communicating effectively	Stay calm when pushed or hit
Integrate personal and social identities	Demonstrating empathy and compassion	Identifying solutions for personal and social problems	Integrate personal and social identities	Develop positive relationships	Managing one's emotions
Identifying personal, cultural and linguistic assets	Understanding and expressing gratitude	Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions	Identifying personal, cultural and linguistic assets	Demonstrating cultural competence	Identifying and using stress management strategies
Linking feelings, values and thoughts	Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones		Linking feelings, values and thoughts	Resolving conflicts constructively	Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation
Examining prejudices and biases	Recognizing situational demands and opportunities		Examining prejudices and biases	Resisting negative social pressure	Setting personal and collective goals
				Showing leadership in groups	Using planning and organizational skills
				Seeking or offering support and help when needed	Showing the courage to take initiative
				Standing up for the rights of others	
				Introduce yourself to others	

