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Dear Middle School Families:

If this is your first year with us, welcome to Capital City; if you are returning, welcome back! We are pleased to provide your Family Handbook for the 2017-2018 year. Please use this to find useful information about school policies and procedures and ways to contact school staff. Please read through this Handbook thoroughly to fully acclimate yourself to the new Middle School and utilize as a handy resource to refer to throughout the year.

Please carefully read the updated School Policies section. Our instructional program is student-centered and project-based, which requires students to be present and on time every day. You will receive written notification if your child is absent or tardy frequently. If his/her absences or tardiness begin to negatively impact his/her learning (which it often does), we will hold a Child Study meeting with the family and staff to make every effort to provide the needed support to improve attendance. Retention or denied enrollment for the following year could result if the attendance requirements are not met. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me anytime.

Middle School is a very critical time in a child's life, and we invite you to take an active role in your child's education. You are always welcome to come to the school, so feel free to visit as often as you can. Grade Level Community Meetings are held throughout the week, you can also observe in classrooms (please ask teachers and/or Administration in advance), chaperone fieldwork trips, share your expertise, or volunteer. If you are unable to visit, you can still play an active role by staying informed about what is happening in your child's classes and in school by maintaining contact with your child's Crew Leader. Feel free to share your ideas and suggestions with us anytime. We envision our school as a place where teachers, parents, and students work together to make Capital City a thriving learning community for all of our children.

We are confident this will be a successful year for your child. Thank you for your involvement in and support for our school.

### **Introduction**

#### **Mission**

Capital City enables a diverse group of students to meet high expectations; develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; achieve deep understanding of complex subjects; and acquire a love of learning along with a strong sense of community and character. We will graduate young adults who are self-directed, intellectually engaged, and possess a commitment to personal and civic responsibility.

#### **History**

Capital City Public Charter School was founded in 2000 by a group of parents and teachers from Phoebe Hearst Elementary School, a small, diverse, high-performing school in Northwest Washington that despite its well-documented success was repeatedly threatened with closure. In September of 1999, the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board approved the initial charter application, making Capital City the first parent-founded charter school in Washington, DC.

On September 5, 2000, Capital City Public Charter School opened with 135 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade in commercial space at the corner of 14th and Irving Streets. In 2004, the school renovated and relocated to the National Capital Presbyterian Church building at 15th and Irving Streets where we served 244 children in grades Pre-K through 8 until 2012.

Capital City successfully amended its charter in 2006 to expand our educational program through grade 12 by adding an Upper School. The Upper School opened in the fall of 2008 at the original Capital City site in Columbia Heights with 129 students in 6th through 9th grades. The Upper School added a grade each year until reaching 12<sup>th</sup> grade and graduated its first senior class in 2012.

In 2012 Capital City relocated all grades to a single site, the former Rabaut School Building at 100 Peabody Street, NW. Capital City completely renovated the building and designed the space to fulfill our mission and support our program. With this move, Capital City expanded from two campuses to three to have a separate middle school program designed to meet the unique needs of this age group.

Capital City has been an Expeditionary Learning school since its inception. Expeditionary Learning emphasizes project-based instruction to help students meet rigorous academic and character standards. Capital City has been recognized as a demonstration site and mentor school for Expeditionary Learning and hosts many visitors annually. Two local expeditionary learning schools, Two Rivers and E.L Haynes, were intentionally modeled after Capital City.

Capital City has compiled track record of obtaining excellent student outcomes with urban children. We have received many awards and acknowledgements for our work. A highlight was a visit from President and First Lady Obama in 2009 where the president stated, ““this kind of innovative school, the outstanding work that is being done here by the entire staff, and the parents who are so active and involved, is an example of how all our schools should be.”

### **Governance**

The DC Public Charter School Board granted the charter to operate Capital City and continues to monitor our activities. The school’s charter agreement and DC Charter Law set forth all of the legal obligations of the school.

Capital City is one of 52 charter schools in Washington, D.C. As a charter school, we have a great deal of autonomy. We develop our own curriculum, manage our own budget, secure and manage our own facility, and determine our own staffing model and personnel policies. We welcome the accountability that comes with our autonomy: we believe it is important that publicly funded schools demonstrate compliance and results. Capital City is not managed or governed by the District of Columbia Public School system and is not bound by most of its regulations.

Capital City is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is comprised of no more than 13 people, two of whom are current parents. Our volunteer Board provides oversight, support and expertise for the successful operation of the school. The Board of Trustees meets bi-monthly. While meetings are public, the Board reserves the right to hold closed executive sessions when dealing with confidential matters like personnel issues. A list of current board members and approved minutes are available on our website.

### **School Organization**

As defined by our charter agreement, Capital City is one school with three campuses: a Lower School, a Middle School and a High School. Each campus is led by a principal who supervises the majority of the campus instructional staff and is the point of contact for parents for most issues. Additional campus administrators include a Director of Student Services, an Instructional Coach and an Office Manager.

Capital City (and most charter schools) functions as our own Local Educational Agency (LEA), which means that we have most of the responsibilities of a school district. We have a Head of School who serves as the leader of the LEA and a central office staff that handles most of the LEA operations and duties. Our organizational chart can be found in the Appendix.

As a school we believe in shared leadership and in modeling democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school, most importantly the students. There are many opportunities for parents, staff and students to participate on leadership and planning teams.

### **School Philosophy and Approach**

At Capital City we believe that school should prepare students to participate in society by offering a challenging academic program based on active learning through real-world experience. We also believe that schools should foster healthy social development, character building, and the acquisition of life skills. At Capital City, the core elements of the instructional approach are consistent across the grades of our Pre-K – 12 program. These core elements include:

***Deeper Learning:*** Much research and evidence show that there is a critical set of skills that students will need to succeed in a changing world. These deeper learning skills of critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication and learning how to learn are the core focus of instruction at Capital City. Through these deeper learning skills, we build a foundation in traditional academic subjects and foster an understanding of grade level content and skills.

***Authentic Experiences:*** At Capital City we believe that learning should be compelling for students and connected to the real world while fostering the deeper learning skills described above. Students in all grades engage in-depth studies called learning expeditions. Through expeditions students participate in fieldwork, meet with experts, engage in research and in turn become experts themselves. Students share their expertise with others through projects and by presenting their work to a real audience.

***Personalized Instruction:*** At Capital City every student is well known by their teachers and peers and challenged and supported in their learning. Intentional structures support our approach to personalization including low student: teacher ratios, daily advisory or class meetings, on-going assessment of progress and strong parent-school collaboration. Instead of traditional instruction centered on teacher lectures and a passive role for students, Capital City classes use the workshop model to tailor instruction for individual students. A class typically begins with a whole-class mini-lesson in which new material is introduced. The bulk of the period is devoted to working on assignments and projects where students work independently or in small groups while teachers circulate to provide targeted assistance and assess student progress. At the end of the period, the entire class reconvenes to debrief the day's work, communicate about the new learning, and raise questions or topics for further investigation.

***A Whole Child Approach:*** We believe in educating the whole child at Capital City. We focus on a strong social curriculum where students develop social skills within the context of a nurturing community. We also believe the arts are vital to our whole child approach and support creative expression in all grades. Beginning in Pre-K, all students are provided instruction in visual arts,

music and drama and arts are integrated in the core curriculum. We also support the health and wellness of students through a comprehensive sports/fitness program, health education and building a healthy environment.

***Family Engagement:*** We believe that parents are our partners and are our students first and best teachers. We actively engage families through parent-teacher conferences, school events and volunteering. We have an open door policy and invite parents to visit at any time. We want all parents to feel welcome and connected to the school. We know that parent engagement is a big contributor to student success.

### **General Campus Information**

**School Hours (Before & Afterschool):** For students participating in Breakfast Club, the main entrance of the building will open at 7:45 am each morning. Students must arrive between 7:45-8:00 in order to be allowed into the building for Breakfast Club. The front doors will open for all students at 8:15. Breakfast will be served on a Grab and Go basis for any students who would like breakfast, but who did not participate in Breakfast Club that day. A variety of Afterschool activities are offered throughout the year (sports, clubs, tutoring, etc.). All after school activities will end by 5:30 pm, with the exception of certain sports activities.

**Arrival & Dismissal:** Students who do not plan to attend Breakfast Club will be provided access to the building at 8:15 am. All students will be directed to grab a breakfast, use their lockers, and head to “Home Place” for attendance and preparation for the day. All students are expected to be in their 1<sup>st</sup> period class by 8:30, ready to begin class. All students will be dismissed at 3:30 (except for Wednesdays, when dismissal is at 1:30 pm) for lockers and then released from the building. During the first couple of weeks of school, students in grade 5 will be escorted out of the building by teachers. Parents are to check in with teachers once classes are outside to sign their child out. Students in grades 6-8 will be dismissed directly from their last block.

**Late Pick Up:** We understand that unforeseen situations may occur throughout the year that may cause you to be late in picking up your child. We ask you to please be in communication with the school to make us aware should an emergency arise. However, in non-emergency situations, children who are not under the direct supervision of an adult in an after-school program will be asked to leave the building. The following steps will be taken if you are chronically late in picking up your child;

1. School Personnel will contact you via email and/or by phone
2. Written Warning and/or request for a meeting with the Principal
3. Referral to Child and Family Services



**Breakfast & Lunch:** Students who arrive between 7:45-8:00 may eat breakfast in the cafeteria. Students who arrive after 8:00 must wait until the doors open at 8:15; they will be able to pick up a “grab and go” breakfast.. Grade 5/6 Grade students eat lunch from 11:37-12:02 each day, and Grade 7/8 students eat lunch from 12:05-12:30. At the start of the year, lunch seating will be by CREW.

**Visitors:** All visitors are asked to enter the building through the front entrance and sign in with the Main Desk Receptionist. Upon signing in, visitors will be given a visitor pass to the Middle School Office or their respective destination.

### **School Closings**

In the event of snow, Capital City will usually (but not always, see below) follow what DCPS does. We will always try to announce Capital City’s status through major news outlets even when the decision is the same as the District’s. Currently Capital City closing announcements can be heard on WTOP (107.7 FM, 1500 AM, 820 AM, and WTOPnews.com) You can also check TV channels 4,5, or 9. School closing information will also be posted on our school’s web-site [www.ccpes.org](http://www.ccpes.org). You can call the main school number for a recorded update. Situations where Capital City might *differ* from DCPS include times when DCPS closes because of conditions affecting only certain buildings, rather than citywide weather conditions—for example, power outages, heat emergencies, or unshoveled sidewalks. In cases like this, Capital City will make a decision based on conditions affecting our location. There is also the possibility that Capital City would close even if DCPS announces it is open (if our power is out, or if we are uncomfortable with their decision). Capital City will not second-guess a DCPS decision to close during an active storm. If snow is actively falling and DCPS is closed, Capital City will be closed, even if the conditions seem mild. If there is any doubt, call the school, check the website, or look for confirmation on the news.

### **Emergencies**

In the event of a fire drill or an emergency, students and staff will use the following procedures:

1. All classes will quickly exit the building according to the routing sheet posted in the classroom.
2. Teachers will check to verify that all students are present and accounted for.
3. Students must remain silent so that staff can determine the nature of the emergency and communicate the information necessary to ensure everyone’s safety.
4. Once the “all clear” is given, classes will reenter the building one at a time and proceed in an orderly, quiet manner back to classrooms.

In the event that the building is experiencing an emergency situation in which evacuation is neither possible nor practical, the following procedures will apply:

1. All classrooms will be locked by teachers.
2. Students and staff are to remain in classrooms until further notice is given.
3. Any student not in a classroom should immediately join the nearest supervised classroom.
4. There is absolutely no movement of students or staff back to classrooms until an “all clear” message is received.

## Health

The Capital City PCS campus has a full time nurse on staff. The nurse’s suite is located on the first floor. It is essential that the school have up-to-date contact information at all times for each parent/guardian. In the event of a medical emergency, the school will call an ambulance before calling the parents. Emergency medical forms for each student are on file in the office to guide school officials in the event of an emergency. Students’ medical needs, including those that may arise on school grounds, must be covered by parents’ insurance. Parents should notify the office if they do not have insurance for their child or if they have questions about their child’s insurance coverage while at school. Capital City may be able to provide information to parents interested in obtaining sufficient health insurance.

Families must submit to the school:

1. **Universal Health Certificate** - The UHC is valid for one year from the date it is signed by a doctor. A new UHC must be submitted any time it expires. This form shows whether a student has received all required vaccinations. The doctor must check the box allowing the student to participate in athletics in order for a student to participate in either games or practices of school teams.
2. **Medical Exam** - Every student must submit record of a medical exam, signed by a doctor, each year. The medical exam is good for one year. A new medical exam report, signed by a doctor, must be submitted any time the previous exam expires.
3. **Dental Exam** - Every student must submit record of a dental exam, signed by a dentist, each year. The dental exam is good for one year. A new dental exam report, signed by a dentist, must be submitted any time the previous exam expires.
4. **Medication and Medical Orders** - Any family whose student requires regular or emergency medication (including an asthma inhaler or epi-pen), must submit the medication directly to the nurse (face-to-face, submitted by the parent or guardian). Any medication submitted must be accompanied by up-to-date Medical Orders from the prescribing physician.

Students must remain at home or be dismissed if:

- They do not have the required immunizations mandated by the Department of Health.
- They have vomited within the last 24 hours or have diarrhea.

- They have a fever of 100 degrees or higher. Students need to be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.
- They have lice or nits. They must be free of lice before returning to school.
- They have a rash of unknown origin. They may return to school when written authorization from their health care provider is submitted to the office.
- They have conjunctivitis (pink eye). They may return to school when there is no drainage or redness and/or have been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- They have an uncontrollable cough.
- They have some other contagious disease or condition, such as the flu, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, ringworm, or scabies. Parents may be requested to provide a doctor's note showing that a student is no longer contagious before he/she may return to school. Please notify the office if you discover that your child may have inadvertently exposed other students to any contagious disease.
- They are acutely ill or injured. Students receiving antibiotics for an illness should not return to school until 24-36 hours after beginning the course of antibiotics.

Students cannot take any medication in school without parent and doctor permission. No medications, including over-the-counter medications, can be administered without a completed authorization form (Medical Orders). Please pick up this form before you visit the doctor; a copy is included in the Appendix of this handbook. Parents or guardians (not the student) must bring the medication and the completed form directly to the nurse; the medication will be checked in and counted by certified personnel. If it is an ongoing prescription, each new bottle must be checked in. All authorized student medications will be administered by the school nurse or a staff member certified in medication administration.

In the event of severe asthma or allergies, students may either submit the medication to the nurse or self-administer medications with parent permission via a "medication action plan." As of October 2007, an act of the District of Columbia allows students with severe allergies or asthma to have their medication accessible to them at all times for their use. If your child has severe allergies or asthma, you should contact the Nurse to develop a medication action plan. This plan will allow students to self-administer epi-pens and inhalers in the case of emergencies.

### **Student Records**

Parents can review their child's school records and request a copy if desired. Parents should request in writing to view records and/or receive a copy, and list the desired time they would like to view the records. In consideration of our busy office staff, we ask that such requests be made at least 24 hours in advance. Parents must view records under the supervision of school office personnel and may not remove records from the school office. Special education records are filed separately from the cumulative student files. Requests to view special education records should be made to the

Director of Student Services. To respect student privacy, records are not shared with entities or individuals outside of Capital City without the written consent of a parent or guardian. When a student transfers from Capital City, his or her cumulative file is kept by the school for an indefinite period of time. Records are only released to receiving schools with written parental consent.

### **Our Program**

#### ***EL Education***

Capital City has implemented a comprehensive school reform model known as EL Education since the school's founding in 2000. EL Education, which is used by more than 150 schools nationwide, emphasizes project-based instruction to help students meet rigorous academic and character standards. Across all content areas, learning expeditions make challenging material relevant and engaging for students and heavily emphasize community service and fieldwork, in order to expand the walls of the classroom and take advantage of students' growing interest in social and political issues.

For example, a past 7th/8th grade expedition on HIV/AIDS took Capital City students to Food and Friends, a nonprofit that delivers meals to AIDS patients throughout Washington, once a week for an entire semester. Students helped prepare and deliver meals, listened to presentations by Food and Friends clients on their experiences with the disease, and received classroom instruction from staff members on HIV transmission and nutrition for AIDS patients. These same students also undertook a semester-long project for MetroTeenAIDS, another nonprofit organization working to educate DC teenagers about the risks associated with HIV/AIDS. Our students completely redesigned the organization's website to more effectively present information about the biology of HIV and AIDS, counseling and testing options within DC, and the treatments available for infected teenagers.

EL Education has a set of "Core Practices" in five key areas: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, Culture & Character, and Leadership. The Middle School uses these benchmarks to guide instructional and administrative planning, frame our professional development for staff, and evaluate the effectiveness of our instruction. For more about this model and the benchmarks, please see the EL Education website at [www.elschools.org](http://www.elschools.org).

#### ***EL Education Core Practices***

**Curriculum:** Our approach to curriculum makes standards come alive for students by connecting learning to real-world issues and needs. Academically rigorous learning expeditions, case studies,

projects, fieldwork, and service learning inspire students to think and work as professionals do, contributing high- quality work to authentic audiences beyond the classroom. Our schools ensure that all students have access to a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, and regularly analyze the curriculum to check alignment to standards and opportunities for all students to meet those standards.

Instruction: Our classrooms are alive with discovery, inquiry, critical thinking, problem- solving, and collaboration. Teachers talk less. Students talk and think more. Lessons have explicit purpose, guided by learning targets for which students take ownership and responsibility. In all subject areas, teachers differentiate instruction and maintain high expectations in order to bring out the best in all students and cultivate a culture of high achievement.

Assessment: Our leaders, teachers, and students embrace the power of student-engaged assessment practices to build student ownership of learning, focus students on reaching standards-based learning targets, and drive achievement. This approach to assessment is key to ensuring that schools achieve educational equity. Students continually assess and improve the quality of their work through the use of models, reflection, critique, rubrics, and work with experts. Staff members engage in ongoing data inquiry and analysis, examining everything from patterns in student work to results from formal assessments, disaggregating data by groups of students to recognize and address gaps in achievement.

Culture & Character: Our schools build cultures of respect, responsibility, courage, and kindness, where students and adults are committed to quality work and citizenship. School structures and traditions such as crew, community meetings, exhibitions of student work, and service learning ensure that every student is known and cared for, that student leadership is nurtured, and that contributions to the school and world are celebrated. Students and staff are supported to do better work and be better people than they thought possible.

Leadership: Our school leaders build a cohesive school vision focused on student achievement and continuous improvement, and they align all activities in the school to that vision. Leaders use data wisely, boldly shape school structures to best meet student needs, celebrate joy in learning, and build a school-wide culture of trust and collaboration. Leadership in our schools goes beyond a single person or team-it is a role and expectation for all.

## **CREW**

The CREW Program at the Middle School is one of the strongest aspects of building school culture. Similar to an Advisory Program, Crew divides students into groups of ten to twelve. Each CREW meets daily with their Crew Leader for team initiatives, group sharing, and academic check-ins. The goal of CREW is to build a community of respectful learners who collaborate successfully and resolve conflicts in a healthy way. **The Crew Leader serves as the main point of contact for a family throughout the year.** During the first six (6) weeks of school, CREWs build community and set norms for the year. Some topics of discussion include conflict resolution and social and emotional development which emphasize our community values. CREWs also plan community

service projects throughout the year. **Through the CREW structure, students are empowered to advocate for themselves and their community.**

### **Community & All School Meetings**

The Middle School values sense of community and school spirit. Each grade level will hold a weekly Community Meeting hosted by each CREW. Community Meetings give each grade a chance to give shout outs to members of the community, present awards, make announcements, and continue building relationships within the grade level. Quarterly, the entire Middle School community gathers for an All School Meeting. These Meetings are hosted by a grade level. Similar to Community Meetings, All School Meetings encourage community building and maintaining school spirit through a structured venue.

### **Community Values**

The Middle School focuses on both high academic standards and student attributes that foster the development of young adults. We envision promoting students to our High School who are academically and intellectually proficient, prepared for high school, active democratic citizens, life long learners, and able to build successful and fulfilling young adult lives. These attributes are manifested in our Community Values, which are skills and habits that are integrated into all areas of instruction in a developmentally appropriate way.

The social curriculum begins in Crew, where we utilize a shared leadership model with the entire staff and student body. We encourage parents to support the Community Values described below by using the same language at home as is used in school. The five Community Values are: Compassion, Contribution, Courage, Integrity, and Self-Discipline.

### **Compassion**

I value Compassion.

I will treat others and myself with care and kindness.

I will work to understand, learn about and welcome people that might seem different from me.

I will be open-minded and work to learn about new ideas.

I will take time to think about how I can help others or my community.

I will think about how my words and actions will affect others and my community before I speak or act.

### **Contribution**

I value contribution/contributing.

I work with other people, including my classmates and adults, to solve problems.

I help other people when they face difficult situations.

I take actions to improve the school and my community.

When I see something wrong, I do something about it without needing someone to tell me to do so.

### **Courage**

I value courage.

I stand up for my beliefs in a positive way.

I ask for help when it is needed.

I readily face new situations because they provide opportunities for success.

I do the right thing regardless of what others think.

### **Integrity**

I value integrity.

I am always truthful.

I take responsibility for my actions, which includes treating everyone with dignity.

I give credit to others when I share their words or ideas.

I will follow through on my commitments to the Capital City community.

### **Self-Discipline**

I value self-discipline.

I come to school everyday on time.

I can explain the choices I make.

I am not afraid to try new things and learn from failure or success.

I stand behind the quality of my work and commit to the goals I set.

### **Student Leadership**

There are many opportunities for students to express interest in leadership. The Middle School has a Principal's Cabinet, which is comprised of a representative from all Home place classrooms. In addition to Student Government, the Middle School Ambassadors (MSA) act as tour guides for external visitors and groups. Any student who wishes to be apart of the Principal's Cabinet, a committee, or MSA, must maintain passing grades.

## **School Policies**

### **Food and Drink**

Students may only have and drink non-carbonated, non-flavored water in class. Snacks (including candy), drinks (including sodas and energy drinks), and gum should never be brought to class or consumed there. We are a nut-free school; any food brought into the building must be nut-free.

### **Gum and Candy**

Gum and candy are not permitted on campus or during school-sponsored fieldwork or activities. This includes Crew time. If a staff member or teacher notices a student chewing gum, the student will be asked to throw it away. If the student is repeatedly chews gum, they will incur additional consequences such as being asked to perform school service.

### **Personal Electronics**

Communication technology, specifically cellular telephones, has become an integral part of the daily lives of students, parents and teachers alike. While we understand the necessity families face with students traveling on their own and/or change of pick up plans, this new cell phone policy is designed to protect both the integrity of our educational program as well as the cyber safety of all students and staff without limiting home/school communication. **Cellular phones and other communication technology are not allowed in classrooms or to be used during the day, and will be collected during arrival and returned during dismissal.** Students participating in afterschool activities should not use their phones during these activities except in emergencies. In most cases, a student may be given permission to use an administrative office telephone to contact a parent/guardian, and in the case of an emergency, a student may be called out of class to receive a telephone call from parents/guardians and/or a staff member will ensure a message is given to a student.

### **Collection Process**

All cellular phones and other communication technology are to be turned off prior to entering the school building and remain off during instructional day. As students enter the building, cellular phones and other electronic devices will be collected by staff, labeled, and locked in a secure place. Students will only be able to retrieve their phones at the end of the school day or early dismissal. All phones are collected in the hallway prior to entering Home place (or by Ms. Ramirez if a student arrives tardy)

### **Violations**

Unauthorized possession and/or use of cellular phones and other communication technology are an infraction of School Policies. Repeated violations of this code and/or failure to relinquish the cellular phone or other communication device can result in further disciplinary consequences.



- First Offense- If a student is found to have possessed or used a cellular phone or other communication technology without authorization, the phone or device will be confiscated by the staff member and given to an administrator. The electronic device must be picked up by a parent/guardian after dismissal.
- Second offense - If a student is found to have possessed or used a cellular phone or other communication technology without authorization, the phone or device will be confiscated, and the electronic device can be picked up by a parent/guardian on **Wednesdays between 1:45-4:15.**
- Third offense - If a student is found to have possessed or used a cellular phone or other communication technology without authorization, the phone or device will be confiscated and the student will serve an in school consequence. Prior to picking up the phone, the parent and student will be required to attend a conference with an administrator.

#### **Please Note:**

Students bringing cellular phones or other communication technology to school do so at their own risk. Capital City PCS and its staff will not assume any liability for any lost, stolen or damaged cellular phones and other communication technology either in school or in their possession.

Other electronics, iPods, iPads, MP3 players, and all similar devices must be turned off and stored in lockers. Headphones may be used only when provided by, and under the supervision of, a staff member. If a staff member observes a student using a personal electronic device, it will be confiscated and will not be returned except to a parent or guardian. Capital City is not responsible for the loss of or damage to any electronic devices brought by the student to school.

#### **Book Bags/Personal Bags**

All students are required to use their assigned locker. Due to the space in the classroom as well as the hands on and physical activities/tasks that occur during instructional time, students are required to leave their book bags and personal bags in their locker. These bags will not be allowed in classrooms. Students have opportunities to go to their lockers throughout the day and do not need their bags in the classroom. Students will be allowed small purses if necessary.

#### **Lockers**

All students will be issued a locker and a lock at the start of the year. **Personal locks are not permitted.** The lock is the responsibility of the student. Any lock that is missing at the end of the year must be paid for by the student. Both the locker and the lock are property of the school; therefore, Capital City reserves the right to restrict the use of or inspect, without notice any students' locker if deemed necessary by the Principal or Director of Student Services.

#### **Dress Code**

Capital City implements a dress code to ensure that students dress appropriately for the active nature of our program and in ways that do not distract others. Students should dress in a manner that promotes professional behavior toward learning. Students who come to school dressed

inappropriately will be sent home to change. Students need to fix their hair and clothing before school not in the school bathroom. Personal grooming will not be allowed during class time.

- Shirts must cover the chest, stomach, and back and not contain any negative images or writing.
- Spaghetti straps, tank tops, and undergarment t-shirts (aka: muscle shirts) are not permitted. Undergarments should not be visible at *any* time.
- Skirts and shorts must extend to at least the top of one's fingertips and be loose enough to allow free movement; this includes pants that may have "holes" or "cut-outs"
- Pants should allow for comfortable movement and cover undergarments (**Belts are required when needed**).
- Hats, hoods, and headgear (except for religious purposes) cannot be worn in classrooms or anywhere in the school building. Hats should be stored in lockers upon entering the school building.
- Footwear should be comfortable and safe for long walks and active physical exertion in fitness classes. Slippers and high heels greater than 3" are not appropriate.
- Because students frequently go outdoors for fitness and fieldwork, they should arrive on days of cooler weather with a warm coat, hat and gloves. Umbrellas are also recommended.

### **Attendance (Unexcused and Excused Absences)**

Because daily attendance is vital to success in school, it is critical that students are present and on time every day of school for the entire school day. Capital City requests that families make every effort to schedule vacations, medical appointments, or special programs so as not to conflict with school. The Middle School instructional day begins at 8:30 AM (sitting in class ready to learn) and ends at 3:30 PM. Students must allow for time to get ready for the school day once they enter the building: going to their locker, grabbing breakfast, getting the right books and materials, and using the restroom if necessary. To accomplish these tasks and be ready for class, students must enter the building before 8:25. Students will not be allowed into a class after 8:30 without a tardy pass. Classes begin academic work at 8:30 AM, and students who are repeatedly late miss a significant amount of instructional time. Examples of valid reasons for an absence are set forth in the official School Policies included in the Appendices. Parents should notify the school in writing of the reason for each absence and are requested to call the school by 9:00 AM if their child will be absent for the day. If the school does not hear from a family, school staff will call home to alert parents that a child is not in school. Please consult the official School Policies for attendance requirements. Parents will be contacted if their child is absent or tardy repeatedly without explanation, or if absences are excessive. Failure to improve attendance may jeopardize the student's readmission for the following school year or cause him/her to be retained at grade level.

### **Computer and Internet Use**

All Middle School classrooms have Internet access, and each student is assigned an individual student account. Students will not be able to access the Internet until they and their parents have reviewed and signed the school's Internet Use policy and student contract; for more information on Capital City Internet expectations, please see the Appendix for a copy of this form. Students are prohibited from using school technology for any unauthorized or unlawful purpose. The activities listed below are not permitted:

- Sending, viewing or displaying offensive messages or pictures (including, but not limited to, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material, sexual comments, and jokes or images that would violate school policies)
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information about yourself or someone else, such as name, phone number, address or photo, without permission from a staff member and parent/guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems, or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws or trying to pass off material copied from the Internet as your own
- Using others' passwords or disclosing your password to an unauthorized person
- Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain, or fraud
- Uploading, downloading, or copying software or other material without the authorization of a staff member

To protect the integrity of our computer systems, Capital City reserves the right to limit or restrict, without notice, any individual's use of these systems, and to inspect, copy, remove or delete any unauthorized use of this technology upon authorization of the Director of Student Services or the Principal.

### **Elevator**

Students are not allowed to use the elevator unless accompanied by an adult and are expected to use the stairs when traveling within the school building. Parents are welcome to use the elevator as needed.

### **Public Displays of Affection**

Capital City is a school that respects students' relationships with each other; however, appropriate displays of affection require good judgment and consideration of all parties. When greeting each other brief, friendly hugs are permissible. More extensive displays of affection are not permitted on school grounds or at school events.

Some examples of inappropriate displays of affection include, but are not limited to:

- Sitting on students' laps
- Hitting, kicking, leering, pinching, patting and any other forms of unwanted touching
- Kissing or hand holding

### **Language**

All members of the school community are expected to adhere to the highest levels of respect for one another and to use language that reflects that respect. Language that demeans, insults, harasses, or humiliates another member of the community will not be tolerated.

### **Horse-play/Jonin'**

All members of the school community are expected to behave respectfully and appropriately towards all students and staff members. Acts of horse playing, roughhousing, and jonin' (disrespectful language towards peers) are not tolerated.

### **No Smoking Building/Drug-Free School**

Capital City is a non-smoking building. Parents, students, and staff are prohibited from using or possessing any tobacco products in the building or on school grounds at any time. Student use or possession of tobacco products is considered a serious disciplinary infraction.

Capital City is also a Drug-Free School. Parents and other visitors whom we suspect may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the building immediately. Students will not be released to caregivers we suspect of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If such a situation arises, we will first seek to contact an authorized family member to pick up the student, and if unsuccessful, we will contact Child Protective Services. Alcohol and drug use or possession by students is considered a serious disciplinary infraction.

### **Hallway Passes**

Students are expected to travel to classes with their class cohort. On the occasion they are traveling alone in the hallway, they are expected to have a hallway pass from a staff member. Students must be prepared to show their pass if requested by any staff member. Any student in the hallway without a pass will be disciplined according to our policy.

### **Tardy to Class Policy**

All students are expected to be in classes when the tardy bell rings. Any student who is not in class when the bell rings will be escorted to the office and required to get a pass in order to be admitted to class. The following consequences will apply for students who are continuously out of class and/or in the halls.

1<sup>st</sup> Tardy – Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> Tardy – Phone Call Home

3<sup>rd</sup> Tardy – Detention

4<sup>th</sup> Tardy – In or Out of School Suspension

### **Restroom Policy**

Having safe access to restroom facilities is important to the health and wellbeing of all people, including those who identify as transgender and gender-nonconforming. Students are permitted to use the same bathrooms as their peers. This means that transgender and gender-nonconforming students are entitled to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity. Any student, transgender or otherwise, who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of underlying reasons, also has the right to access a single-user restroom. These restrooms are available on the second floor near the gym.

### **Fieldwork**

Our instructional program affords us the opportunity to extend our classroom experiences outside of the school building on many occasions during the school year. We consider all of our students ambassadors for the school when working in the community and with community organizations. At any field site, students must act in a safe and responsible manner. All school rules and expectations apply. If the teacher feels that a student's behavior would compromise their safety or the safety of

others, the Director of Student Services will develop a fieldwork behavior contract with the teacher, student, and parent.

## **Student Services**

### **Developmental Designs**

At Capital City Middle School, we believe that student success is achieved by providing a supportive community and motivating instruction, while developing strong social-emotional skills.

Developmental Designs is a holistic approach to teaching and learning that recognizes/emphasizes the significance of positive student teacher relationships in student achievement.. The Developmental Designs approach allows teachers to meet the needs of students in age-appropriate ways by providing an engaging atmosphere, promoting student autonomy, developing academic competency and encouraging positive student and adult relationships. It also maximizes student potential by using an Advisory (also known as Crew) program to build a strong community culture and educate students on how to manage their behavior through reflection and self-discipline. For more information on the Developmental Designs approach please visit [www.orginsonline.org](http://www.orginsonline.org).

### **Instruction Model (Full Inclusion/Co-teaching)**

At Capital City, content area and inclusion teachers collaborate during planning and instruction to ensure that all students have equitable access to the curriculum. This approach allows for greater differentiation for teaching and learning. A full inclusion and co-teaching model ensures that all students can learn together, increasing diversity, richness of ideas, problem solving, and respect for others.

### **Student Services**

The Student Services office coordinates counseling, instruction for English Language Learners, special education services, and the implementation of Capital City's discipline policy. The Upper School Student Services team strives to address the academic and social challenges that inhibit student learning. Through specialized instruction and counseling, staff members support student achievement through direct services to students and consultation with parents and teachers. The Director of Student Services, who is available to answer parent questions and concerns, leads the team.

The school psychologist and the school social worker provide individual and group counseling for students, and they make appropriate referrals when necessary. Parents/guardians are welcome to contact the school psychologist to discuss concerns about their child, including such issues as depression, academic stress, sexuality/gender identity, eating disorders, and family issues that may be affecting a student's performance in school. Students with IEPs and those who qualify as English Language Learners are provided services within the school's full inclusion approach.

The Director of Student Services oversees formal and informal student assessments and the development and implementation of IEPs. Certified inclusion teachers serve as case managers and work closely with a team of parents/guardians, teachers, and the student to ensure appropriate design and effective implementation of each student's learning plan. Parents will be contacted by their inclusion teacher at the beginning of the school year and can expect ongoing communication and regular updates. Parents of students with IEPs should contact their child's inclusion teacher or the Director of Student Services if they have questions about their child's IEP or the services the child is receiving. If you think that your son or daughter may have a special learning need, please contact his/her advisor or the Director of Student Services to share your concerns. If appropriate,

an intervention plan will be created to address the student's needs. No formal testing will be conducted without parental notice and consent.

### **Behavior Expectations & Discipline Policy**

The school's complete discipline, suspension and expulsion policies are included in the official School Policies in the Appendices. The use of positive discipline is an expectation at the Capital City Upper School. Staff members will treat students respectfully in all situations. Students are involved in making classroom rules and are expected to follow all classroom and school rules. Rules and expectations will be clearly communicated to students, and consequences for breaking rules will be administered consistently, calmly and fairly.

While on school property, parents are expected to discipline their child in a positive manner consistent with the school's approach. Parents who physically discipline their child at school may be asked to wait outside the building.

The classroom teacher first addresses all less serious classroom misbehaviors. The teacher will issue a verbal warning in order to remind the student of the relevant rule. Examples of less serious infractions and consequences can be found in the response guide on the next page. Parents are frequently contacted in these cases by the student's Crew Leader to communicate the details of the incident and discuss strategies to support the student at home and at school. When a student repeats a less serious infraction(s) continuously he or she will be referred to the Coordinator of School Culture (CSC). The CSC will investigate the incidents by talking with the student and teacher(s) involved. The CSC contacts parents once information is gathered; a meeting may be requested to review the situation and learn about any circumstances outside of school that may be affecting the student's behavior. Next steps may include mediation with another student or further consequences, which can include suspension.

A collaborative team of teachers and counselors are used to address all Mid Level infractions. Examples of Mid Level infractions and consequences can be found in the response guide on the next page. Parents are contacted in these cases by the student's advisor or the school counselor to communicate the details of the incident and to discuss strategies to support the student in school and at home. Next Steps may include loss of privileges' or in-school suspension.

"Serious infractions," for which students can be suspended or expelled, include physical fighting, threats of physical violence, sexual harassment, use of hate-related language, intentional damage to school property, and possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs. In such cases, the Director of Student Services will call parents immediately, and appropriate discipline will be determined. In addition to suspension and expulsion, possible consequences include community service to the school and payment for damages. If a student is involved in a fight of any kind, parents will be called and asked to come get their student immediately. For a complete list of Serious Infractions and Procedures for Suspension and Expulsion, please see the official School Policies in the Appendices.

## Academics

### **Middle School Academic Curriculum and Course of Study**

The fifth grade transition from Lower School to Middle School is an exciting and challenging adjustment. To support fifth graders through this change and to ensure they can confidently manage the rigor and expectations of middle school at Capital City, 5<sup>th</sup> graders share two teachers, one focusing on math and science while the other focuses on humanities. This approach continues in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

For 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, students switch to a humanities block, and separate math and science classes, each taught by different teachers. In humanities, two teachers (a general educator and an inclusion teacher) work with students on reading, writing, and history. For math, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders have the opportunity to take Pre-Algebra or Algebra, depending upon their readiness. In science, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders complete one year of life science and one year of physical science.

Capital City's goal is to have all students in one semester's worth of Spanish classes each year from 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. On occasion, students who need more support in their core academic classes may not take Spanish so that they can receive extra instruction in math or literacy. All middle schoolers take four hours of fitness/health bi-weekly, one quarter of media, information, and technology (MIT), and also participate in electives for the arts, in which they choose between offerings in music, drama, and visual arts. Arts and MIT classes meet for four hours each week.

All middle school students also have an alternate Wednesday schedule, which allows for extension of learning from the content classes during the other days of the week. This could include continuation of a learning expedition, reinforcement of skills, reflection on academic performance in preparation for portfolios, or advanced study. Additionally, Wednesday schedules allow for meeting time for CREW (our Advisory program), Community Meetings, WOYD (an opportunity to make up missing assignments) and electives. Each middle school student will rank choices for elective classes based upon course descriptions. This allows for greater student ownership over and investment in at least one of their courses. Electives rotate on a semesterly basis.

### **Middle School Course of Study**

| <b>Grade 5</b>  | <b>Grade 6</b>   | <b>Grade 7</b>  | <b>Grade 8</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| Humanities:<br>English, American<br>History (Common<br>Core, Revolutionary<br>War-US<br>Constitution) | Humanities: English,<br>American History<br>(Common Core,<br>Slavery-Reconstruction) | Humanities: English,<br>American History:<br>Immigration, Great<br>Migration, Harlem<br>Renaissance, World War<br>II (Common Core, 20 <sup>th</sup><br>Century) | Humanities: English,<br>Ancient Civilizations<br>Influence on Modern<br>Day<br>(Common Core, Civil<br>Rights Movement,<br>Human Rights) |
| Math (Common<br>Core State  | Math (Common Core<br>State Standards)  | Math (Common Core<br>State Standards)   | Math (Common Core<br>State Standards), Math   |



|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Standards)   |  |  | Bridge (Pre-Algebra Common Core State Standards) or Algebra (Common Core State Standards)                                       |
| Next Generation Science-Earth & Space, Matter, Ecosystems, Conservation (Trash Talk) | Next Generation Science-The Universe, Heat Transfer, Climate & Weather, Volcanoes & Earthquakes, Human Impact (Humans: Masters of Disaster?) | Next Generation Science-Cells, Human Body Systems, Reproduction & Heredity, History of Life on Earth, Evolution, Ecology (Genetics: Swimming in the Gene Pool) | Next Generation Science-Energy, Forces, Structure of Matter, Waves, Interactions (Designing the Future-STEAM & Design Thinking) |
| Spanish I or II or Academic Support  | Spanish I or II or Academic Support  | Spanish I or II or Academic Support  | Spanish I or II or Academic Support   |
| Arts Electives (Drama, Music, Art)   | Arts Electives (Drama, Music, Art)   | Arts Electives (Drama, Music, Art)   | Arts Electives (Drama, Music, Art)  |
| Fitness/Health Electives   | Fitness/Health Electives   | Fitness/Health Electives   | Fitness/Health Electives  |
| Media, Information, & Technology (MIT)   | Media, Information, & Technology (MIT)   | Media, Information, & Technology (MIT)   | Media, Information, & Technology (MIT)  |
| Intensives   | Intensives   | Intensives   | Intensives  |
| Wednesday Electives  | Wednesday Electives  | Wednesday Electives  | Wednesday Electives   |
| CREW   | CREW   | CREW   | CREW  |
| WOYD   | WOYD   | WOYD   | WOYD  |

The Middle School Curriculum Framework in the appendices provides a look at grade level themes, expeditions, anchor texts, and more. Specific information on courses and expeditions at each grade level can be found in course syllabi (distributed to each student within the first week of school), CCPCS course frameworks, curriculum maps, and expeditions maps. Curriculum documents and course overviews can be accessed through contacting the Instructional Coach/Curriculum Coordinator directly, the CCPCS Director of Instruction, or through speaking with the teacher of the course.

### Expeditions

In all classes, teachers and students undertake semester or yearlong learning **expeditions** on a topic or theme drawn from course content, standards (Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, National Standards, and standards of the District of Columbia), and learning targets. Learning expeditions usually involve research on real problems or issues, case studies, **fieldwork** outside of school, community service, and the use of technology to complete projects. By

nature, learning expeditions are interdisciplinary and guided by our curriculum frameworks to provide students with a comprehensive set of experiences upon passage into high school.

### **Fieldwork**

Fieldwork is an integral part of the Expeditionary Learning program at the middle school level. General permission slips for students to walk to nearby locations that support expeditions and academic growth are collected at initial CREW conferences in August and will be kept on file in the office. Teachers will send home additional permission slips for any trips outside the neighborhood. Students who do not have written permission from their parent/guardian will not be allowed to participate in fieldwork. Permission will not be accepted over the telephone. Capital City allots fieldwork funds to each class to defray the cost of fieldwork for families, but for most fieldwork there is a fee (usually for transportation). Please notify the teacher leading the fieldwork if you are unable to afford the charge, as financial assistance is available. Families may also contact the Principal, Office Manager, Counselor, Director of Student Services, or Coordinator of School Culture if this becomes a concern.

Excellent behavior is expected during fieldwork. If a teacher feels that a student's behavior would compromise their safety or the safety of others, the teacher may ask that the student not go on the fieldwork unless accompanied by a parent. Additionally, the Director of Student Services or Coordinator of School Culture may also require modifications to a fieldwork plan for a student as necessary. Family members are encouraged to assist students during fieldwork, and fieldwork often requires family members to serve as chaperones, but teachers reserve the right to limit the number of family members who may attend.

### **Exhibitions**

**Celebrations of Learning** are public presentations of student work, families and community members are invited to view projects. During the **Celebrations of Learning**, students describe the process of their expedition and reflect on the expedition journey as well as the end result. In the middle school, **Celebrations of Learning** happen twice a year (once each semester).

### **Portfolios**

Middle School students create a portfolio of work each year. 6th, 7th and 8th grade students present portfolio pieces to their families at February student-led conferences and all students present portfolios to their families at June student-led conferences. Portfolios will be kept at school for the duration of a student's middle school experience. This allows students to continually reflect on their progress, add and change items, and pull from the portfolio to support later work. Students pass their portfolios to their new teaching team at the conclusion of their student-led conference in June. The Middle School Portfolio may be taken home at the end of eighth grade.

Eighth graders have a more rigorous portfolio process. Eighth grade students create a passage portfolio to support their defense of their high school readiness. This passage portfolio includes a panel presentation and an accompanying PowerPoint, the physical portfolio, and a letter to a future high school advisor. The passage portfolio is presented to a panel of Capital City staff members and community members in June of their eighth grade year. The panel members ask questions about the

strengths and weaknesses of each portfolio piece and about student high school readiness, and evaluate the student according to a rubric. Students must successfully complete and defend portfolio items in each of the core disciplines to graduate from Capital City Middle School. Students who do not successfully complete the panel presentation have another chance to present, following more practice and thinking about their work. If a student does not pass portfolios after the second attempt, he/she will be required to create and present a summer passage portfolio and achieve a passing score. A student must pass a panel presentation in order to move on to the next grade. Passage portfolio and general portfolio requirements will be shared with families and students in the early fall.

## **Testing**

As a public school in the District of Columbia, Capital City is required to administer all District-wide standardized assessments. All middle school students will take the Next Generation Assessments each spring. This includes the PARCC (reading, writing, and math), which will now consist solely of an End of Year Assessment to be taken seventy-five to ninety percent through the school year. In addition to the PARCC, 5th and 8th grade students are tested in science. Middle school students also take the health and fitness assessment. Given that the Next Generation Assessment System is only in its' third year for everyone district-wide and nationally for the 2016-2017 school year, the Middle School will collaborate with families to best prepare students for these shifts. Families can expect further information on assessment systems for this year as soon as it becomes available, but can also use <http://www.parconline.org> or <http://osse.dc.gov/service/dc-state-assessments-new> as resources in the meantime. Along with the administration of the Next Generation Assessments, middle school teachers use several other standardized tests to gain information about how best to plan for instruction and support students. These tests may include Amplify (mClass Beacon), The Developmental Reading Assessment, or others. Families will be notified in advance of testing days and will be integral partners in supporting the best efforts of students during these times. These tests can be helpful indicators, among many indicators, of a student's learning strengths and weaknesses. Students will be given some instruction on how to take these tests, but teachers will not organize lesson plans or limit studies to suit the test. Families will receive a copy of test results after they are received and processed by the school. Information on how families can use the data provided by such tests will be given during conferences, Family Nights, and through the distribution of written materials. Parents/guardians may make appointments to discuss test results with teachers, the Instructional Coach/Curriculum Coordinator, Director of Student Services, or the Principal.

## **Middle School Grading System, Promotion Requirements, and Conferences**

### **Grading Periods/Conferences**

At the middle school level, the academic calendar is divided into four grading periods known as quarters. Quarter divisions are as follows:

- A. Quarter I-August 28th -November 1st (Conference: 11/10 or 11/15)
- B. Quarter II-November 2nd-January 25th (Conference: 2/9 or 2/14)
- C. Quarter III-January 29th-April 6th (Conference: as needed)
- D. Quarter IV-April 9th-June 8th (Conference: 6/13 or 6/15)

**\*\*Note:** School year kickoff conferences with crew leaders take place 8/21 or 8/22\*\*

Conferences with crew leaders (advisors) will be held in each of the four quarters. *Conference presentations are often part of a student's passage preparation or are completed as an assessment.* Families are notified a few weeks prior to each conference of time slots and asked to sign up in advance for a conference time.

- In the **August** conference, parents/guardians meet their student's crew leader. Initial introductions are followed by a review of the Student and Parent Handbook with an emphasis on the Code of Conduct and explanation of Capital City PCS policies and procedures. Students and parents commit to uphold the Capital City 'Way' by signing the Parent/Student Code of Conduct contract.
- In the **November** conference parents of all students will meet with the crew leader. At this conference your child's initial assessments and observations are shared in addition to the student reflecting and goal setting. Information about the student's habits of work, academic performance, and social skills is also distributed.
- In the **February** conference parents of all students will meet with the crew leader. At this conference your child's mid-year assessments and progress are shared in addition to the student reflecting and goal setting. Information about the student's habits of work, academic performance, and social skills is also distributed.
- If needed, a conference will be held in **April** to discuss any students who may have academic concerns that may require summer school.
- In **June**, conferences are student-led with the student presenting his/her portfolio and answering family questions about the work, and a full progress report is shared.

It is required that each Middle School student attends all three (or four as needed) student-parent conferences. **As all conferences are partially or fully student-led, you must attend each conference, along with your parent or guardian, or the conference must be rescheduled.**

### **Grading System**

Middle School students receive a report card at the end of each semester. Instead of letter grades, a **standards based** score of 1-4 is assigned for each core academic class according to the following system:

- 4- Consistently exceeds standards
- 3-Meets the standard
- 2-Approaching the standard with skills
- 1-Does not yet meet the standard.

Grades for each class are reflective of a student's current mastery of the long-term learning targets in each course as measured through performance on course benchmarks, projects, quizzes, expedition

work, and more. All students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery through a variety of measures.

Additionally, report cards will have a separately notated **effort/participation** grade reflective of progress on the **Habits of Scholars** (learning targets specifically linked to the traits of highly effective scholars) for each course. These scores will also be given in the 1-4 format.

Students receive similar ratings for specialty classes including Arts Electives, Fitness/Health, MIT, and Spanish. For Intensives and Wednesday Electives, students will only receive a **Habits of Scholars** grade. For Crew, students will be assessed on our Habits of Scholars.

In order to further support communication and collaboration between school and home and to ensure that students have ample time to seek support and apply recommendations before the end of a semester, students and families have access to the most current grades in each class through our online grading system, Jump rope. Information for accessing the system is provided to students and families during August kickoff conferences. Should questions arise regarding how to access the online system, please contact Wil Hawk, Student Information Systems Director ([whawk@ccpcs.org](mailto:whawk@ccpcs.org), x1725).

Each quarter students will receive a progress report with current standings for **standards** and **Habits of Scholars**. This progress report is not representative of a final grade in any of the two categories, but instead serves to inform students and families and allow them to make educated decisions about how to proceed for the remainder of a semester. Administration will also provide mid-quarter grade updates to students and families. Additionally, teaching teams will send home a “Missing Assignments Notice” every two weeks (typically on Wednesdays). Students have until the following Monday to submit Missing Assignments for credit. For further information on policies regarding missing work, homework, and or absences, please see a copy of the course syllabus. One copy of grade updates and progress reports is signed and returned to the Crew leader. A copy of the report card is signed and left with the Crew leader during February and June conferences.

In addition to the numerical scores in each section, on report cards only, all teachers write narratives that summarize the class for the semester and highlight particular strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for each student. Comments may also be included on progress reports to either demark the completion of a course or to indicate exceptional performance or a course grade that is not currently passing. Cover letters explaining the grade mapping and standardized testing results may also be included with report card/progress report mailings and shared at conferences.

In the middle school grades, students must receive a final Semester 2 standard and Habits of Scholars grade of at least a “2” or higher in each of the core subjects in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Students must also pass their portfolio panel presentation at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade in order to move on to high school. Please see the “Exhibitions” section above for more information. Promotion for students with disabilities or who are learning English as a second language who do not meet this requirement will be considered on an individual basis.

## **Student Retention Policy**

Our wish is for all students to make suitable progress and achieve a level of proficiency that enables them to be promoted to the next grade level. However, there are cases when students do not achieve the desired level of proficiency and should be retained at the same grade level. Students who fail a Humanities or Math course for the year will be required to attend summer school in order to be promoted to the next grade. Students who fail both Humanities and Math for the year will be considered for retention at grade level.

In such cases, the Principal, Director of Student Services, and the Crew Leader will hold a conference with the child's parent or guardian to present information on the student's progress/proficiency and recommendations for retention. Written documentation will be provided.

### **Student Summer School Policy**

It is our desire for all students to master grade level standards across all courses during the year. However, there are cases where students may master the academic standards in some core classes but not in others. When this happens, a student will be required to attend summer school in order to be promoted to the next grade. Parents will be notified through a conference that will be held by the Crew Leader. Written documentation will also be provided.

### **Sports Eligibility**

In an effort to hold our students accountable to being athletes and scholars, the Middle School has eligibility requirements for all students participating in competitive sports. In order to participate in these activities, in addition to receiving the approval of a doctor on the student's Universal Health Certificate, students must maintain a 2.0 or higher in both Habits of Scholars and Academics in Math, Science, Humanities, Arts/Spanish, Fitness/Health, and Intensives. In addition, students must represent our Community Values and maintain good attendance and behavior.

- Any student who has below a 2.0 will be on probation, which means they will not be allowed to attend practice or play in the week's game(s). They must attend HW Center for the entire week and work to pull their grades up. Students have to get "signed off" by their teacher(s) in order to be taken off of probation. If a teacher signs off on a player, they are signing off that the student is showing good effort on increasing their grade. Parent signature is required as well.
- Any student who has between a 2.0-2.4 will be on warning, which means they are allowed to attend practice and play in the game(s), but must attend HW Center from 3:30-4:30 for the entire week before going to practice at 4:30. They have to get "signed off" by their teacher in order to be taken off of warning. If a teacher signs off on a player, they are signing off that the student is showing good effort on increasing their grade.
- Any student who refuses to serve any of the consequences or who faces probation more than two times during the season will meet with Mrs. Cox and the coach/teacher to determine next steps, which may include suspension from practice and games/performance and/or dismissal from the team/performance.

### **Habits of Scholars (HoS)**

In the Middle School, a student's effort and work habits are equally as important as academic achievement. In each of the core courses and in CREW, students are evaluated on learning targets

representative of the habits of effective scholars. These characteristics are separate from, but often correlate to a student's academic achievement. The grading is as follows:

HoS for Core Classes:

***Scholars are...***

**A. Organized**

- I can come to class fully prepared

**B. Timely**

- I can use my time productively and complete and submit work on time

**C. Reflective**

- I can use reflection as a tool to improve my retention of the information presented in class and to set goals

**D. Communicative**

- I can articulate my thinking and understanding of a topic in a variety of written and oral presentation formats

**E. Accountable**

- I can take responsibility for what I say and do by focusing on my learning and staying on task individually or in a group

**F. Producers of quality**

- I can produce work that is neat, accurate, and thorough

**G. Participants in revision and critique**

- I can produce multiple drafts, use rubrics and feedback/critique given of my work in order to improve quality

Community Value Learning Targets for CREW:

| Community Value | Learning Targets   |
|-----------------|--|
| Compassion      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I treat others and myself with kindness, care, and respect.</li><li>• I listen to others respectfully, even when I disagree.</li></ul> |

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Integrity       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am honest with myself and others.</li> <li>• I keep my word and follow through on commitments.</li> </ul>  |
| Self-Discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I participate appropriately and willingly.</li> <li>• I manage my body (actions &amp; emotional reactions) and mouth (words).</li> <li>• I complete assignments and create high quality work.</li> </ul> |
| Contribution    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I collaborate to solve problems or group initiatives.</li> <li>• I postpone preferred activities to help meet the needs of the group.</li> </ul>   |
| Courage         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I take social, emotional, academic, and/or physical risks.</li> <li>• I take responsibility for how my actions and words impact others.</li> <li>• I offer and accept constructive feedback.</li> </ul>  |

Each of the learning targets will be included on the progress report and report card. Scores on each target will be averaged together to determine a final HOS grade for the course. Grading is as follow:

- 4 – Consistently (Student demonstrates this habit consistently)
- 3 – Often
- 2 – Sometimes
- 1 – Rarely

Students must achieve a minimum of “2” on the final HoS grade for each course in order to pass.

### **Homework Expectations**

All Middle School students are expected to complete all homework assignments every night.

Homework reinforces the skills and understandings gained in class and prepares students for upcoming concepts. Teachers assign purposeful homework to reinforce mastery of skills, instigate thought around a new topic, and to stimulate critical thinking. Additionally, nightly homework supports the development of productive work habits in preparation for the demands of college. As a result, homework assignments will be primarily assessed for Habits of Scholars. The amount of time spent on homework each night varies according to project deadlines, current expeditions, and the individual student, but should average between 1.5-2 hours per night. Homework assignments may include:

- *Revision:* Students work on improving their work to a high standard of quality. Examples could include revising the draft of a paper or correcting their work on a math assignment or assessment.



- *Review*: Students practice the concepts and skills developed in class in order to reinforce their understanding and move towards mastery. Examples might include reviewing Spanish vocabulary and solving a series of math problems.
- *Reflection*: Students process their work and their learning by reflecting about an assignment or experience. Examples could include journal writing and preparing a lab report.
- *Research*: Students use time outside of class to gather information and perspectives from multiple sources. Examples could include searching the Internet and taking notes from books or articles.
- *Reading*: Students should spend time reading assigned books or selected articles/essays, or read books of their own choosing.
- *Instigation*: Students might consider new ideas, tackle a challenge, or be exposed to a new perspective. This instigation will typically prepare a student for a new topic of study or for the next day's activities.

All Middle School students are given a homework planner at the start of the school year and are given time in class to write down their assignments for the evening. Entries for each subject should include the assignment topic and a verb for what you are expected to do. Lost or forgotten homework planners must be replaced within three days. Replacements can be purchased from the school for \$5.00.

Teachers try to explain all assignments clearly, but if confusion arises or a student is regularly struggling to complete homework, please let the teacher know this directly or reach out to the crew leader. Your feedback on homework is extremely useful to teachers, as adjustments may need to be made. Homework assignments may also be posted electronically or in regular school/home communications.

In the circumstance that a student cannot complete homework on a given night, a parent/guardian should write a note to the crew leader explaining the reason. Students who were unable to complete homework due to an absence or some other circumstance must make up all missed assignments. The WOYD structure on Wednesdays provides an opportunity during which this might be completed. It is the responsibility of the student to request work from teachers upon returning to school. Students exceeding three unexcused absences in a row must see their teachers to create make-up work plans. If a student knows he or she will be absent, the student is responsible for seeking out teachers to create a plan for the duration of the absence.

### **Celebrations of Achievement**

Middle school students are celebrated when they meet and exceed academic and social expectations. To support the development of a school culture of scholarly excellence, the Middle School regularly schedules opportunities for acknowledgment, celebration, and fun! Though these Culture Days may change in theme from year to year, consistent celebrations include Spirit Days, awards given in Community Meetings, acknowledgments given in All School Meetings, and CREW activities and rewards.

Students who meet and exceed academic expectations are celebrated quarterly. Students who earn all "4s" on quarterly progress reports are deemed the Fabulous Fours and are invited to a catered

luncheon at the conclusion of the quarter. Students earning threes and above are known as the Terrific Threes. Both Fabulous Fours and Terrific Threes are invited to participate in a celebratory activity or field trip (known as “Fun Day”) to acknowledge their hard work and exemplary performance. As the calculations for Terrific Threes and Fabulous Fours are completed four times throughout the school year, students have multiple opportunities to earn recognition and be celebrated. Students and their families are encouraged to use mid-quarter progress reports to support working towards these titles.

In addition to scholastic celebrations, students who exemplify our Community Values are nominated for celebration by the Crew leader. Students are also celebrated for outstanding performance in Habits of Scholars through a quarterly pancake breakfast hosted by the administration. Students with perfect attendance are also celebrated, in addition to students who demonstrate growth academically or socially.

Families will regularly be informed of upcoming celebrations of achievement and will often be included in the invitation to celebrate.

### **Code of Academic Integrity**

All students at the Capital City Middle School are expected to embrace and abide by the Code of Academic Integrity. The Code requires that all work completed by the student is done with integrity and honesty. As stated in the official School Policies, which are included in the Appendices:

Any of the following, without full acknowledgement of the debt to the original source, counts as plagiarism:

- direct duplication, by copying (or allowing to be copied) another’s work, whether from a book, article, website, another student’s assignment, etc.;
- duplication in any manner of another’s work during an exam;
- paraphrasing of another’s work closely, with minor changes, but with the essential meaning, form and/or progression of ideas maintained;
- piecing together sections of the work of others in a new whole.

Teachers in each class provide instruction and examples to help you understand and follow the Code of Academic Integrity. Be sure to ask if you are ever unclear about when and how to cite sources. Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity are considered to be a serious disciplinary infraction; please see the “Discipline Policy” section for more information.

Below are several examples of proper source citations:

### **BOOKS**

Author. Title of Book. City of Publication: Publisher, Year.

*Example:*

Brinkley, Alan. The Unfinished Nation. New York: Knopf, 1993.

### **ESSAY, POEM, or SHORT STORY in an ANTHOLOGY**

Author of Story. "Title of Story." Title of Book. Name of Editor. Edition (if given). City of Publication: Publisher, Year. Page numbers.

*Example:*

Purcell, Arthur H. "Better Waste Management Strategies Are Needed to Avert a Garbage Crisis." Garbage and Recycling: Opposing Viewpoints. Ed. Helen Cothran. San Diego: Greenhaven, 2003. 20-27.

### **NEWSPAPER ARTICLES**

Author. "Title of Article." Name of Newspaper Date, edition: Page(s).

*Example:*

Daranciang, Nelson. "Web Site Debated." Honolulu Star-Bulletin 8 April 2004, night final ed.: A3.

### **WEB SITES**

Author's last name, first name. "Title of article." *Name of home website*. Date listed, if any, that the article was published on the site. Date you accessed the article. <URL in angled brackets>.

*Example:*

Reuben, Paul P. "Chapter 10: Late Twentieth Century—Eudora Welty." *Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide*. 24 July 2001. 9 November 2001.  
<<http://www.csustan.edu/English/reuben/pal/chap10/welty.html>>.

### **Computer and Internet Use**

All Middle School classrooms have Internet access, and each student is assigned an individual student account. Students will not be able to access the Internet until they and their parents have reviewed and signed the school's Internet Use policy and student contract.

Students are responsible for good behavior on the school computer network, just as you are everywhere in the school environment. Access to network services is given to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Access is a privilege – not a right.

Students are expected not to use excessive amounts of computer resources, including but not limited to network bandwidth, storage space, and printing supplies.

Network storage areas may be accessed by network administrators to review files and communications, maintain system integrity, and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. Students should have no expectation of personal privacy in any content stored in, created, received, or sent over the school computer network, computers, email system, the Internet, or any other school equipment. These are subject to review by the school at any time, with or without notice, with or without cause, and without the permission of any student or parent/guardian.

Students are prohibited from using school technology for any unauthorized or unlawful purpose. The activities listed below are not permitted:

- Sending, viewing or displaying offensive messages or pictures (including, but not limited to, pornographic, obscene, or sexually explicit material, sexual comments, and jokes or images that would violate school policies)
- Using obscene language
- Giving personal information about yourself or someone else, such as name, phone number, address or photo, without permission from a staff member and parent/guardian
- Harassing, insulting or attacking others
- Damaging or modifying computers, computer systems, or computer networks
- Violating copyright laws or trying to pass off material copied from the Internet as your own
- Using others' passwords or disclosing your password to an unauthorized person
- Trespassing in others' folders, work, or files
- Intentionally wasting limited resources
- Employing the network for commercial purposes, financial gain, or fraud
- Uploading, downloading, or copying software or other material without the authorization of a staff member

To protect the integrity of our computer systems, Capital City reserves the right to limit or restrict, without notice, any individual's use of these systems, and to inspect, copy, remove or delete any unauthorized use of this technology upon authorization of the Director of Student Services or the Principal.

### **Family Involvement**

#### **Home-School Communication**

We make communication between home and school a priority; therefore, parents can expect to have regular correspondence from the Middle School.

|           |                             |  |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|
| Weekly    | <i>Sunday Call</i>          | Automated call of quick announcements for the week.                  |
| Bi-Weekly | <i>The Middle Messenger</i> | Notice of upcoming events and announcements. Sent home with students |

and emailed to families.

These home-school communications are emailed to all parents. Every effort will be made to translate all important communications into Spanish. Parents will be asked for their preference regarding language and how to receive communications from the school: via email, via regular mail, or by sending materials home with their child. To maintain a green school and minimize the amount of paper used by the school, we encourage families to opt for electronic communication if possible. We urge you to communicate questions and concerns as soon as they arise. It is very difficult for Capital City teachers and administrators to address problems and concerns unless they hear about them directly. You do not need to wait for designated conference times.

Questions or concerns specific to your son/daughter or to the classroom instruction should be addressed directly with the Crew Leader or the Principal. Crew Leaders will share the best times and methods of communicating with them at Back-to-School Night. We ask that you schedule an appointment with the Crew Leader to have your questions or concerns addressed, rather than trying to communicate during arrival or dismissal times. The attention of all school staff must be to supervising students at these times. The Principal is available to meet with parents whenever the need arises. You can schedule an appointment by phone or by email.

Questions and suggestions about school policy and procedures may be raised with the Principal or any member of the Administrative Team. Questions the Principal cannot address may be brought to the Head of School. The annual school survey is another important, but less immediate, way to express your suggestions and concerns.

All parent suggestions are taken seriously and considered, although it would be impossible for Capital City to implement all of them. When raising concerns, we ask that parents be direct, specific and respectful. Parents should communicate directly with the Principal, Administrator, or Crew Leader, be specific about the concern and any desired outcomes, and be respectful, with an assumption that everyone cares about what is best for students. If you are unhappy with the answer you have received when raising a concern or issue, you are encouraged to pursue the matter further. This usually would involve raising the issue with an individual's supervisor. To address a concern effectively, it is important to use proper procedures. Please see the official School Policies in the Appendices of this handbook for detailed information on grievance procedures.

All Middle School students will receive a bi-weekly "Homework Slip" noting any missing work for the two week period. Students will receive progress reports midway through each quarter and report cards at the end of each quarter.

### **Student-Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Middle School students and parents are required to attend four conferences with their Crew Leader over the course of the school year, typically in August, November, February and June. Please see the School Year Calendar in the Appendices for the actual dates. Parents will be notified a few weeks prior to each conference of time slots and asked to sign up in advance for a conference time. Parents requiring Spanish interpretation will be contacted in order to schedule a conference with an interpreter present. If you require interpretation in a language other than Spanish, please let your child's Crew Leader or teacher know so that arrangements can be made. ***It is required that each Middle School student attends all student-parent conferences. For more detailed***

**information on Student-Parent-Teacher conferences, please refer to the Academic Instruction portion of the handbook under “Grading Periods/Conferences”.**

If you require additional time to meet privately with your child’s teacher, alternative arrangements can definitely be made. If you are interested in meeting with one of your child’s classroom teachers in addition to the Crew Leader, please let the Crew Leader know well in advance. When possible, such a meeting will be scheduled for before or after the student-parent conference, but please be aware that all classroom teachers serve as Crew Leaders and therefore have many conferences that they must hold for their own Crew members. Their schedules may dictate that additional parent meetings occur on days other than conference days.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

All Capital City parents and guardians pledge 20 hours of service to the school each year (10 hours for single-parent families) when they enroll their child. The need for all types of support, assistance, and involvement to build our community is ongoing. The following is a list of ways that parents/guardians can support the Middle School. If you have other ideas for how you can volunteer within the school community, please contact your child’s Crew Leader or the Principal.

*During School Hours:*

- General office help (filing, answering phones, copying)
- Collate/copy weekly announcements
- Student tutor
- Classroom assistant (no experience needed)
- Community expert – presenting on expedition or Elective related topics within your area(s) of expertise’
- Chaperoning fieldwork and community service outings
- Assisting with a Crew Service project

*Outside School Hours:*

- Chaperone after-school activities
- Help to organize Crew events (e.g. community service projects)
- Locate and schedule resources, such as community experts or fieldwork, to supplement classroom expeditions in cooperation with a classroom teacher
- Gather and file information on colleges and career opportunities for the Expose Me To College Program
- Participate in a building clean-up day
- Help to organize fundraising events, such as the annual Sunset Gala and fundraising campaigns
- Prepare/donate refreshments for community or All School Meetings
- Plan and/or host a gathering for parents or families
- Serve on the Board of Trustees

**Administrative Team-Who Do I See When?**

**Laina Cox** (Principal)-School policies, campus relations, outside partnerships & external professional development, personnel, DC-CAS extracurricular activities, school culture

Email: [lc Cox@ccpcs.org](mailto:lc Cox@ccpcs.org)

**Nakia Dow** (Director of Student Services)-Student/staff relations, special education services, modifications and accommodations, disciplinary issues, summer school, social/mental/emotional health of students

Email: [ndow@ccpcs.org](mailto:ndow@ccpcs.org)

**Katie Pick** (Instructional Coach/Curriculum Coordinator)-Curriculum and instruction, grading, internal professional development, Expeditionary Learning, university partnerships

Email: [kpick@ccpcs.org](mailto:kpick@ccpcs.org)

**Aaron Mitchem** (Coordinator of School Culture)-Student/student relations, disciplinary issues, CREW, Community Culture Academy (CCA), service projects, positive incentive programs, All School Meetings

Email: [amitchem@ccpcs.org](mailto:amitchem@ccpcs.org)

**Ellie Davis** (ELL Coordinator)- English Language Learners, instructional support for ELL, teacher support for ELL.

Email: [edavis@ccpcs.org](mailto:edavis@ccpcs.org)

**Lindsay Damon** (Counselor)-Social/mental/emotional health of students, student/student relations, external mental & emotional health resources, community service, CREW service projects, intervention, crisis consultation, child study process

Email: [ldamon@ccpcs.org](mailto:ldamon@ccpcs.org)

**Veronica Ramirez** (Office Manager)-Attendance and tardiness, admissions and registration support, student records, mailings, administrative forms

Email: [vramirez@ccpcs.org](mailto:vramirez@ccpcs.org)