

# Middle School Guidebook

## Student-Parent Resource

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Central Minnesota Christian School 2023-2024

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**BETTER TOGETHER**

**BEING TRANSFORMED**

**BUILDING TRUST**

**BRIDGING THE GAP**



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# OUR MISSION, VISION, AND OBJECTIVES

## **Our Mission**

It is the mission of Central Minnesota Christian School to provide a Christ-centered, quality education to equip students for a life of service.

## **Our Vision**

Surrounded by our community of believers where God's presence is evident, our students will find their calling in God's world through an exceptional education, delivered from a Biblical worldview. Students will be known personally, disciplined intentionally, and challenged academically.

## **Our Specific Objectives**

At Central Minnesota Christian School, we are committed to providing a quality education through the lens of a biblical worldview. We strive to be a place where students:

- Develop and grow in their relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- Learn to discern God's will for their lives.
- Discover their God-given talents and learn to use them for the benefit of His kingdom.
- Love, encourage and accept one another with the attitude of a servant.
- View the universe as being created and sustained by a loving God and worship Him accordingly.
- Acquire a life-long passion for learning more about God's Word and God's World.
- Use the instruction, resources, and technology available to achieve the highest standards of excellence in education.

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# PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The mission of Central MN Christian is “to provide a Christ-centered, quality education to equip students for a life of service”. As we work together this year to make this mission a personal reality in the life of your son or daughter, let us reiterate what we at CMCS believe about education and curriculum.

**We believe** all things exist to glorify God, whom we know in Jesus. Therefore, we must teach children that every part of their lives must serve to promote God’s glory.

**We believe** because God made and upholds His creation, it is of essential goodness and worth. We take delight in all aspects of the physical world, the world of ideas, and biblically lawful human activity as good gifts from the Creator. Therefore, the Central Minnesota Christian School curriculum must study the entire created order; reflect the principles of truth, goodness, and beauty vested in our world; and interpret each fact in the universe as belonging to the upholding work of God.

**We believe** God made men and women to tend the world as bearers of His image. Therefore, we must teach children to study our world and stewardly use its resources to fulfill our task.

**We believe** God has created a world of order, not chaos. Therefore, God has given human beings the ability to understand and find meaning in the created order.

**We believe** sin darkens our hearts and our understanding of the world. Therefore, we teach that all human culture is affected by sin and falls short of glorifying God. We must continually evaluate all human actions, including our own, from a biblical perspective.

**We believe** the Bible is God’s inspired Word and as we read it, illumined by the Holy Spirit, we are taught how to view all of life and creation. Therefore, we support education that accepts everything contained in the Bible and which interprets all things in the universe accordingly.

**We believe** Jesus Christ, as Lord of all, renews His people in His image and calls them back to the task of tending God’s creation. Therefore, we support Christian education, which does not divide life into secular and sacred parts, nor ignores any part of the world as outside its interests.

**We believe** Christ has called the members of His community to serve Him together and has obligated them to teach their children how to serve in His kingdom. Therefore, we affirm that education is the task of the whole Christian community; Central Minnesota Christian School takes its place beside the family and the church and fulfills an important role in instructing and nurturing students.

**We believe** children of believers are members of the Christian community and are regarded as God’s servants. Therefore, we support schools that encourage students, beginning while they are young, and continuing through high school, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in everything and to use their skills in the interest of the kingdom of God.

If you share these beliefs about education, we invite you to join us on an exciting adventure. We trust that the Student Academic Pathway will assist you and your student through the process of course selection and registration. May God bless our combined efforts as we seek to nurture growth in your student at Central Minnesota Christian School.

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# VALUES STATEMENTS

## WE ARE:



**Better Together** - God created us in his image to live in **Community**. Therefore, we honor and care for the well-being and success of all. We value encouragement and helpful communications while *speaking the truth in love*. We celebrate the individual gifts and character of each member and provide an environment for them to struggle and grow.

(Rom 12:4-5; Gen 1:27; Col 3:12-14)



**Building Trust** - We strive for **Excellence** in our character and proven-ness in our work. We do our best to *earn respect* by exceeding expectations, maintaining high standards, challenging complacency, and aiming for full potential.

(Matt 13:12; Titus 2:7; Phil 1:9-10)



**Being Transformed** - We value whole-person **Growth** and practice continuous improvement through learning, personal reflection, and Christian development. We are open to new ideas and *seek God's kingdom dream for our lives* and the world.

(Rom 12:2; II Cor 5:17; Ps 51:10)



**Bridging The Gap** - Through **Service**, we identify needs and address them. *We see God-possibilities* and obediently follow the Spirit to make them our reality. In humility, we give of ourselves, investing in the cause of Christian education and thus, the future.

(I Peter 4:10; Col 3:23; Isa 58:10)

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# WELCOME TO MIDDLE SCHOOL

We are excited to begin a wonderful year with you! Our deep hope for the year is that you will be challenged to grow your God-given gifts, talents, and abilities in and out of the classroom. We also hope you feel a sense of belonging in God's kingdom, the Central community, Middle School, and your 6th, 7th, or 8th-grade class.

This year, we will learn about the many aspects of God's kingdom through a variety of lenses, such as Science, Math, English, History, Bible, Art, Band, Choir, PE, and our everyday interaction with each other. We will also invite you in a variety of ways to take on leadership responsibilities throughout the year as you develop the gifts, talents, and abilities God has given you.

As we enter the "transition" period from elementary to high school, we know that there are many different experiences that will happen throughout this next year. But one thing that has proved true for all of us to have an excellent year is learning organization and responsibility. As you enter middle school, you will be challenged, reminded, and expected to be more and more organized and responsible as the year goes along. This is especially true for those of you who already have a year or two under your belts with middle school - we're all looking forward to seeing you grow as leaders in our wing next year!

As a middle school staff, we would all like to say again how excited we are for the coming year! We are all hoping and praying for a year filled with blessings from the Lord!

Blessings,  
The Central Middle School Staff

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# SCHEDULING & LOGISTICS

## **Squad Time**

We are Better Together and value the time we can spend developing relationships with each other.

You will begin each school day with your squad (a group of 12-15 middle school students) and your squad teacher for devotions, discussion, games and other activities. This teacher will be your point of contact for general questions, and is the teacher your parents will meet with for parent-teacher conferences.

## **Chapel**

You will attend chapel on Friday mornings with the high school students. Chapel services are intended to be a joyful Christian experience. Students are encouraged to bring a positive attitude, participate enthusiastically, and listen attentively to receive the full blessing from this worship time.

## **Breaks Instead of Recess**

You will no longer need indoor and outdoor shoes. Students will only go outside during breaks if the weather is nice. Middle School and High School students have a 10-minute morning break, a 30-minute lunch break, and a 5-minute afternoon break.

## **Classrooms & Lockers**

You will be moving from room to room for your classes. You will also be assigned a locker of your own. Lockers are not locked, although if you wish to rent a combination lock for your locker, you may contact the office for details. We trust you to respect your classmates and stay out of each other's lockers. We also expect you to keep your lockers tidy and in good condition. For a full description of our locker policy, please refer to the Student Handbook.

## **Clothes for P.E.**

You will be expected to change into a different set of gym clothes when you have P.E. class. Athletic shoes also need to be worn. You will be allowed to change in either set of locker rooms or bathrooms.

## **Library**

Middle school students no longer have Library as a separate class. Study halls will either be hosted in a teacher's classroom or the MS/HS library. Students may have the option to visit the library during a study hall, if given permission by their study hall teacher. Students are expected to maintain a quiet, studious atmosphere when using the library. Books may be checked out for two weeks at a time.



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# COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY

## **FACTS and Google Classroom**

You will no longer be receiving regular lesson plan emails from your teachers. Lesson plans and homework can be found in FACTS. You can also download the app for quick and easy access to all your child's information. See Appendix A for details.

Central utilizes the Google platform for communication and file organization. Students will use Google Drive and Gmail to access information and communicate with their teachers. See Appendix B for more details.

## **Chromebooks**

You will be assigned a Chromebook for use during the school day. They may not be taken home. We expect you to take good care of your Chromebook and to use it responsibly. There will be consequences for dropping, losing, or misusing your Chromebook. All teachers in the building can see exactly what tabs you have open and can assign demerits for 'misuse.'

Examples of 'misuse:'

- Any Google search, Youtube video, online game, or Pinterest search that has nothing to do with your schoolwork.
- Using your Chromebook during break without specific teacher permission, because we encourage active play and face-to-face interactions.
- Email is only to be quickly checked for communication with teachers.

For the complete Chromebook policy, please see the Central Student Handbook.

## **Cell Phone Technology**

Cell phone usage (including iPods and non-school-issued iPads) is prohibited during school hours. We want you to fully engage in your learning and present with your classmates and teachers! Phones should be turned off and kept in lockers for the entire school day. Students may use the phones in front offices if they need to connect with a parent. Students who violate this policy will have their phones confiscated. Please see the Student Handbook for full policy details.

Smartwatches will be allowed, so long as they are not used for anything other than a time-keeping device (e.g. scrolling, speaking into, or tapping). Clocks are present throughout the school and students have the ability to communicate with parents through the office phone.

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# ATTENDANCE & HOMEWORK

## Attendance

Attendance is an important part of the educational process, as students are more likely to succeed in their academics when they are in class. Instructional time in the classroom allows the teacher to build each student's skills and knowledge in each subject. We recognize that absences will happen but want to stress the importance of regular class attendance for the success of our students.

Central has adopted a 10 Absences policy. Students will be allowed no more than 10 absences per class per semester (5 absences for classes that do not meet daily). Please see the Student Handbook in regards to our full policy concerning excused and unexcused absences.

## Homework & Missed Work

Students are responsible for keeping track of their homework. Teachers have homework and tests listed in the "Homework" section of FACTS.

- When a few class periods within one day are missed: Students should check with FACTS, friends, or teachers to get their missed work.
- When one whole school day is missed: Students and parents should check FACTS for links, lessons and homework assignments. We will no longer be assigning "Study Buddies" to collect homework. Instead, students will be responsible to collect missed work when they return to school.
- Planned extended absence planned due to vacation or medical reasons: Students or parents should let the teachers know at least a week in advance. Depending on the curriculum, we will give the students some of the work they will miss. While students are gone, we will collect the rest and he or she should make it up after returning. We cannot give all homework in advance because our lesson plans change daily depending on how fast or slow the students work, and whether or not we need to add an extra lesson to help them understand.

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# GRADING & GPA

## Grading

Each middle school teacher may weigh tests, homework, and projects differently. When you look in the "Gradebook" section of FACTS, you will see how these categories are weighted in that subject. If you have any concerns about grades at any time of the school year, please do not hesitate to email any of the teachers!

- Missing: If a student doesn't hand in an assignment on time, it is entered as missing ("M"). We encourage both parents and students to regularly check for missing assignments, or to sign up for automatic alerts in FACTS. Students should email the teacher directly for help in figuring out what is missing.
- Pending: "P" means the assignment has been handed in, but not yet graded.

## Grading System

Middle School teachers use the GPA grading scale below. GPA is calculated by the semester. The percent/letter grade averaging scale equivalents are:

| Average  | Letter Grade | GPA |
|----------|--------------|-----|
| 100-96   | A            | 4.0 |
| 95-92    | A-           | 3.7 |
| 91-88    | B+           | 3.3 |
| 87-84    | B            | 3.0 |
| 83-81    | B-           | 2.7 |
| 80-77    | C+           | 2.3 |
| 76-74    | C            | 2.0 |
| 73-70    | C-           | 1.7 |
| 69-67    | D+           | 1.3 |
| 66-63    | D            | 1.0 |
| 62-60    | D-           | 0.7 |
| Below 60 | E            | 0.0 |

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# ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

## 6th Grade Courses

Bible  
English Language Arts  
History  
Math  
Science  
Life Skills (5 days/week)  
Art (2-3 days/week)  
Music (3 days/week)  
PE (2 days/week)  
Band\* (3 days/week)

## 7th Grade Courses

Bible  
English Language Arts  
History  
Math  
Science  
Art (2-3 days/week)  
Life Skills (2 days/week)  
7/8 Choir (3 days/week)  
7/8 PE (2 days/week)  
7/8 Band\* (2 days/week)  
7/8 Reading Appreciation\* (3 days/week)

## 8th Grade Courses

Bible  
English Language Arts  
History  
Math  
Science  
Life Skills (5 days/week)  
7/8 Choir (3 days/week)  
7/8 PE (2 days/week)  
7/8 Band\* (2 days/week)  
7/8 Reading Appreciation\* (3 days/week)

\*Students choose to take either Band or Reading Appreciation

## Standardized Assessments

6th and 7th Grade - Iowa Assessments (March)  
8th Grade - PreACT 8/9 (October)

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# BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

## Appearance Code

Central seeks to maintain a positive and professional learning environment, and we desire for our students to dress in a way that encourages concentrated study and doesn't distract from the learning process. As students enter Middle School, we expect a higher level of maturity and encourage students to dress in a way that reflects modesty and purity.

Some notable expectations:

- Shorts (including biker shorts), skirts and dresses require at least fingertip length when arms are placed naturally at one's side.
- Leggings may be worn if the length of the top covers the buttock and groin area.
- Jeans should not have holes that show skin above mid thigh (dress/skirt length).
- All knit pants must have pockets and should not be constructed in an overall style that is too tight or body-shape revealing.
- Clothing should completely cover undergarments, including straps, and mid-sections at all times. Girls should take care to ensure tops are not plunging or revealing at the neckline.
- Tank tops with a strap less than 3-fingers or 2 inches wide are not acceptable school attire.

Students will be asked to change into suitable clothing if they are found to be in deviation of these expectations. If students are not able to correct the violation, alternative clothing will be provided.

Please take time to read through the full Appearance Code policy in our Student Handbook for clarification. We strive to apply these standards consistently and appreciate your support and cooperation.

## Demerits & Detentions

We value the spiritual growth and discipleship of all our students and desire to see them model their character after Christ. Behavior that doesn't align with our values, whether at school or on the bus, may result in a demerit. If misbehavior doesn't stop after a verbal warning from the teacher, the student will be counseled on correct behavior and the teacher will assign and record the demerit in FACTS. Two demerits will result in a detention and will re-set at the semester. For a full explanation of our disciplinary policies, please see our Student Handbook.

## Cheating & Plagiarism

As middle school students advance to higher levels of research and writing, we expect them to use their God-given talents and to put forth their best efforts. Cheating, including plagiarism, is not acceptable. Students who are caught cheating or plagiarizing or helping another student to do so will face consequences. Please refer to the Student Handbook for policy details.

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# INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## **Student Council**

Middle School Student Council (StuCo) provides a great leadership opportunity for students. Comprising 2-4 students from each grade level, Middle School StuCo will meet as a group throughout the year to help plan the Fall Lock-In, Spirit Week themes and games, and seasonal parties. Students who are interested in actively participating and contributing in this way should fill out an application and return it to Mrs. Daugherty the first month of school.

## **Chapel Praise Team**

Students who enjoy using their gifts of music and have a desire to help lead worship are invited to participate in Chapel Praise Teams. Contact Mr. De Groot if you're interested.

## **Extra-Curriculars & Transportation**

Middle School students will have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities (see Student Handbook for a full list of activities). 6th graders will be invited to participate when there are insufficient numbers of 7th and 8th graders to fill the Middle School rosters. 7th and 8th graders are also eligible to participate in Varsity and JV competition. All Middle School students (including 6th grade) who intend to participate in athletics for the first time will need to complete a sports physical (per MSHSL guidelines) and submit their medical forms by the first day of practice. Please visit the school website to access the forms and refer to the Student Handbook for a full description of our athletic policies.

<https://www.cmcschool.org/current-families/athletic-forms.cfm>

Central does not provide busing to middle school athletic events. Our coaches and admin staff will work together to communicate with you and request parent volunteers to drive to the away events.

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## FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

Middle School students will have the opportunity to participate in numerous field trips and events throughout the school year. When additional participation fees 💰, chaperones 👤, or supplies 🍴 are requested, the teachers will communicate with parents to cover those items.

### **6th-8th Middle School Retreat (September)** 💰 👤 🍴

Although it's not a school-sponsored activity, each year in September our Middle School students have the opportunity to attend a 2-day, parent-led Spiritual Retreat in the local area. Parents are invited to join for the closing worship session.

### **Middle School Lock-In (October)** 👤 🍴

This fun evening of games, snacks, and activities provides Middle School students a chance to socialize and connect with each other outside of school.

### **6th-7th Grade Camp Encounter (May of alternating years)** 💰 👤 🍴

Our 6th & 7th graders have the opportunity to attend Camp Encounter at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer, MN. This learning experience provides the students with hands-on activities beyond the typical classroom environment.

### **5th-8th Grade Powder Ridge Skiing & Snow Boarding Trip (January/February)** 💰 👤

All middle school students will have an opportunity to ski or snowboard at Powder Ridge Resort located in Kimball, MN as part of our Physical Education program.

### **6th-8th Grade Avail Classic Track Meet (April)** 👤

All middle school students will compete at this one-day track & field event in Edina in late April.

### **6th-8th Grade Trip to Birch Coulee (May)**

Middle school students will get a day to enjoy nature and a campfire meal near the end of the school year.

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# BIRTHDAYS & HOLIDAY PARTIES

## **Birthdays**

We love to celebrate birthdays and joyous occasions! Students are welcome to bring birthday treats, but it is not required. If you bring treats, please have enough for either your whole squad or all students in your grade level. Treats will be handed out during squad time or study hall.

\*Please check with school before sending treats to see if there are any students with food allergies.

As always, we ask that if students plan to host parties that not all classmates will be invited to, that they extend those invitations outside of school. This will help to avoid hurt feelings and awkward situations.

## **Holiday Parties**

Room parents are not assigned at the Middle School level. However, we may ask for some parent volunteers who can be called on to occasionally provide snacks and help with activity planning throughout the year. The Middle School Student Council will also play a role in planning for these fun activities - including Spirit Week and holiday parties.




# APPENDIX A

## FACTS 101

*There's an app for that!*

**Why should Middle School parents and students be checking FACTS?**



The screenshot shows the FACTS app interface with a grid of icons. Red arrows point from the text descriptions to the corresponding icons: 'Gradebook' points to the 'A+' icon, 'Lesson Plans' points to the 'Lesson Plans' icon, and 'Homework' points to the 'Homework' icon.

- Gradebook:** Look here for grades on tests, projects and assignments. You should check for “M’s” to alert you to missing homework. If you can’t figure out what assignment you are missing, email your teacher for help.
- Lesson Plans:** Click here to see what you will be learning and doing in each subject, including links to relevant websites if applicable. Use this to find out when you have tests coming up. Parents, you can use these as conversational prompts with your middle schooler!
- Homework:** Find your homework assignments here, particularly for days when you have missed school, or when you are planning to miss days. This takes the place of elementary school Learning Plans.
- Announcements, lunch menus, report cards, schedules,** and other helpful information can also be found in FACTS.

**Students and parents can see all of these categories in the FACTS website and the FACTS app!**

**App:** Go to your app store and search Central MN Christian School.

- You will need the school code: **CM-MN**.
- Parents should login with their family login information; students who have personal handheld devices can also get the app and sign in with their student login information.

**Website:** Students, we will help you login the first week of school on your Chromebooks, and encourage you to regularly check FACTS during your study hall periods.

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## APPENDIX B

# Google Drive

- Visit [google.com/drive](https://google.com/drive) to access.
- Use your username: \_\_\_\_\_ and password: \_\_\_\_\_ to sign in.
- Make sure to use the school's Google drive account as the only way to share documents online with peers.
- Work can almost always be recovered by selecting 'Undo' or looking at the history of the document.
- Only share documents for peer editing with trusted peers.
- Feel free to create documents at home on Microsoft Word and then upload to Google docs as a Google document.
- You can also access Google docs from any computer that connects to the internet (at home, at the library, at a friend's house, etc.).