

# **Middle School Handbook**

## **2025-2026**



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Dear Students and Families,

Welcome back to a new academic year filled with possibilities, growth, and endless opportunities! I hope you are eager to embark on another transformative chapter at our educational institution.

As we open our doors once again, we want to emphasize our commitment to nurturing an inclusive and supportive community that values relationships and celebrates diversity. Together, we will forge paths that lead to becoming College Graduates, Community Leaders, and Cultural Ambassadors.

At the heart of our educational mission is the understanding that true success goes beyond academic excellence. While we hold academic achievement in high regard, we firmly believe that building a strong sense of community is equally important. It is through the bonds we form, the respect we show, and the appreciation we cultivate for one another's backgrounds that we truly thrive as a collective.

Throughout this academic year, we will actively work on fostering an environment where all students feel seen, heard, and valued. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to supporting you not only in your studies but also in your personal development. We will encourage open dialogue, respectful discussions, and collaboration among students, families, and educators to create a space where everyone's voice is appreciated.

We are excited about the potential that lies within each one of you. Together, we will explore diverse perspectives, celebrate individual strengths, and learn from one another's experiences. As we aim to give rise to College Graduates who are academically accomplished, Community Leaders who are compassionate and empathetic, and Cultural Ambassadors who bridge gaps and embrace differences, we know that the journey ahead will be both challenging and immensely rewarding.

Let's make this year one of inspiration and growth, where you not only gain knowledge in your chosen fields but also evolve into compassionate and responsible global citizens. We are here to support and guide you, and we invite parents and families to be active partners in this educational journey.

Once again, welcome back to a place where dreams are nurtured, and futures are shaped. Let us unite our efforts to build a community that thrives on understanding, respect, and unity.

Together, we will make this academic year one to remember!

Principal Nieves

# **I Who We Are**

## **Our Mission**

Peterson Elementary's comprehensive STEAM program and social emotional education provides an interdisciplinary and integrated approach to learning. We differentiate support to a diverse body of learners, seeing students as current change makers and future leaders in their community.

## **Our Vision**

Every day you walk into school, you will be investing in your future. Every day students, teachers and staff will share in the 'vision' of why we work every day, sharing in the belief that,

### **Peterson School Gives Rise to**

#### ***College Graduates,***

*students who are prepared to pursue education beyond high school, and graduate college successfully*

#### ***Community Leaders,***

*students who are prepared to engage in shaping and enriching their world*

#### ***Cultural Ambassadors,***

*students who appreciate and value those from other backgrounds and cultures*

## **II What We Believe – Our Values**

Every day Peterson students will seek to live out some lasting beliefs or ideals. These Values will have a major influence on the behavior and attitude we project within our school community and are vital to our success.

### **The Values That Will Help You RISE**

#### **1) Perseverance and Grit**

*Continued effort doing something despite difficulty in order to achieve success.*

#### **2) Critical Thinking**

*Ability to think clearly and engage in reflective and independent thinking.*

#### **3) Problem Solving**

*Process of finding solutions to difficult or complex issues.*

#### **4) Self-Motivation**

*Force that drives you to do things independently without being pushed by other people or situations.*

#### **5) Compassion**

*Concern and understanding for the feelings and needs of others.*

#### **6) Courage**

*Belief that will permit you to face difficulties and challenges without fear.*

#### **7) Collaboration**

*Students working together with others to complete a task or achieve a goal.*

### III Participating in Our Community

#### Middle School Honor Code

In order to participate in a trusting and responsible school community, Peterson Middle School students will be truthful with their peers, faculty and staff, respect others, and act with academic integrity.

At Peterson, our community is based upon politeness, accountability, and respect. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment, so that every one of our students can develop to their full potential.

#### Peterson Dress Code

##### **Dress Code Goals:**

- **Community:** Clothes that represent the community's diverse backgrounds and that promotes unity and acceptance
- **Identity:** Clothes that reflect students' individual choices and their preferences
- **Safety:** Clothes that students feel safe in physically, mentally, and emotionally

#### **Section 1**

##### **Peterson Basic Principle:**

Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times.

- A. Clothes must be worn in such a way that genitals, buttocks, breasts, and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric. (However, cleavage should not have coverage requirements.) All items listed in the "Must Wear" and "May Wear" categories below must meet this basic principle.

#### **Section 2**

##### **Peterson Students Must Wear:**

- A. A shirt (with fabric in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms), AND pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts),
- AND
- B. Shoes, including slides and slippers. (Students in PK-2nd must wear shoes that fasten around the back of the foot.)

##### **Peterson Students May Wear:**

(As long as these items do not violate Section 1)

- A. Beanies and skull caps (hats that fit tightly around the head) are acceptable.
- B. Religious headwear
- C. Hoodie sweatshirts (hoods cannot be up)

- D. Fitted pants
- E. Pajama pants (must stay up on their own)
- F. Ripped jeans
- G. Tank tops, including spaghetti straps and halter tops
- H. Athletic attire
- I. Visible waistbands on undergarments or visible straps on undergarments under clothing (as long as this is done in a way that does not violate Section 1 above)

**Peterson Students Cannot Wear Clothes that Contain:**

- A. Violent language or images
- B. Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity)  
Hate speech, profanity, pornography
- C. Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups
- D. Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (visible waistbands and visible straps are allowed) Swimsuits (except as required in class or athletic practice)
- E. Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon
- F. Any item that obscures the face or ears, such as hoods (except for PPE masks and as a religious observance)
- G. Baseball caps (May be worn outside during recess only.)

**Section 3**

**Peterson Dress Code Enforcement- All students and parents receive a copy of the dress code.**

- Step 1: Receive warning from homeroom teacher.
- Step 2: Private one on one conversation with teacher.
- Step 3: Call home and get a change of clothes.
- Step 4: Talk with parents and determine appropriate consequences

**A Healthy Community**

According to the Student Code of Conduct (SCC), bullying means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students, that has or can be reasonably predicted to have one or more of the following effects: (1) placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the student's academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Bullying may take various forms, including without limitation, one or more of the following: harassment, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, theft, public humiliation, destruction of property, or retaliation for asserting or alleging an act of bullying. This list is meant to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

-Cyberbullying means using information and communication technologies to bully.

-Retaliation means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

-Peer Conflict means disagreements and oppositional interactions that are situational, immediate and developmentally appropriate. We will work to learn new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries and peaceably resolving conflict, and to model appropriate social interactions. These interventions are designed to prevent Peer Conflict from escalating to Bullying.

It is the responsibility of every student, teacher and parent to ensure that bullying or intimidation does not occur at any level at Peterson Elementary School. All students should be aware that bullying, which impacts the dignity of people at work or school, is unacceptable and will be subject to consequences as outlined in the CPS Student Code of Conduct.

### **Respect for Our Guests - Substitute / Student Teachers**

On occasion, substitutes or student teachers may be assigned to your classroom. These people are guests at Peterson Middle School and must be treated with respect. Students are expected to be courteous and helpful.

Substitute teachers will be provided with work from your classroom teacher that is part of the regular curriculum. Assigned work is to be completed in the prescribed time allotted. Students who are rude or disruptive with a substitute or a student teacher will receive consequences consistent with the CPS Student Code of Conduct.

### **Achieving Success by Being Here - Attendance Policy**

You are expected to be in school every day and on time. More importantly, you will want to be here in order to achieve the success that you deserve. According to CPS policy, the only valid causes for absence are:

1. Illness
2. Observance of a Religious Holiday
3. Death in the Immediate Family
4. Family Emergency
5. Circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent / legal guardian for the safety and health of the student
6. Other situations beyond the student's control, determined by the Principal or Principal's designee

In order for your absence to be excused, it must be:

1. Known to the Principal or the Principal's designee (including suspensions).
2. Attested by a note signed by your parent or legal guardian stating the cause of the absence.

In addition to writing a note, your parent or guardian should also call the school the day of your absence to inform the school that you will not be in attendance that day: 773-534-5070. Any student who is absent from school will not be allowed to participate in or be a spectator at any same-day after-school activities. Students may also not show up to school only to participate in an activity—whole day attendance is required.

***E-Absence – a new way to report excused absences – is now live. Parents and guardians can now submit, schedule and track student's absences through the Aspen Parent Portal. You can sign in to your account at [ASPEN.CPS.EDU](https://ASPEN.CPS.EDU) and start using the E-Absence feature today.***

### **Middle School Cell Phone Policy** (5th-8th Grade)

To ensure the safety of all Peterson students and to maintain the integrity of the instructional program, Peterson students must adhere to the following expectations:

1. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours.
2. Students who choose to bring their cellphones to school are required to hand in the phone to their homeroom teacher at the beginning of the day and collect it at the end of the day.
3. It is each student's responsibility to sign the Cell Phone Log each time they hand in or pick up their phone from their homeroom teacher.
4. Students are prohibited from using a cell phone to take pictures or videos at any time on school property.
5. If a student violates the Cell Phone Policy, the cell phone will be confiscated and stored in the main office. Confiscated cell phones must be picked up by the student's parents.
6. If a student violates the Cell Phone Policy, the appropriate administrator will assign disciplinary action pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct and parents will be notified.

***If students need to call their parents, they must come to the main office and request to use the phone before or after-school.*** Students may request to use the phone in the main office during recess or lunch, but only with a pass from a teacher. If students do not have a pass, they will

not be allowed to use the phone during recess and lunch. ***No students will be allowed to use the phone in the main office during instructional time.***

***If a student chooses not to turn in their cell-phone, then they will be subject to discipline pursuant to the SCC.***

All middle school students and their parents will be asked to sign an agreement acknowledging receipt of this policy.

**Addendum:** Unless explicitly requested by an educator for educational purposes, the use of headphones while in class is prohibited. Headphones, EarPods, earbuds, and the like, must be stowed away in the students' locker.

## **IV Sharing Space Respectfully**

### **Arrival and Dismissal Expectations**

- Students are encouraged to ride bikes, scooters, and/or skateboards to school; however, you must walk bikes, scooters, or skateboards when on school grounds. School grounds include the entire block around the perimeter of the school from Bryn Mawr to Christiana, Christiana to Catalpa, Catalpa to Kimball and Kimball to Bryn Mawr.
- No pets are permitted on our school campus while school is in session.
- In the morning, please be in your classroom at 8:45 am. If you are not in the building by 8:50 am, then you will be considered tardy.
- Please note that after accumulating two (2) late arrival 'tardies', students may be asked to attend a make-up session on Fridays after school from 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm or participate in a lunch detention.

### **Hallway Transition and Classroom Arrival Expectations**

You are expected to be in your seat ready to learn when class starts. In between classes, you have two (2) minutes to move from class to class, including your scheduled Encore classes.

Students who arrive tardy to class (including Encore classes!) without a teacher-signed pass may be assigned a **class time make-up session** by the teacher which will take place from 3:45 pm- 4:45 pm every Friday after school.

### **Locker Policy**

- ***In order to be issued a locker and keep your locker, you must comply with the following expectations. Please ensure that your locker is...***
- Kept clean and organized. All food must be kept in sealed containers and brought home every night so as to not attract insects.
- Used only by you and your locker mate.
- Used to store only books and school appropriate personal items. Items such as fidget spinners and slime are banned from school and should not be kept in bags or lockers. Inform an adult immediately if you see a prohibited item in the locker of another student.
- Free of exterior decorations. This includes birthdays and/or other celebrations for friends. The only exception to this rule will be for school-wide celebrations e.g. paws hearts.
- Bags of any kind, including fanny packs or belt bags, will not be permitted in the classroom or at recess. Lunch boxes will be permitted for lunch.

### **Hallway Expectations**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor is a **BLUE** hallway. In the BLUE hallway, conversational talking is permitted. However, shouting is not acceptable, nor is physical 'play.' In the middle school hallways, you are also expected to use appropriate language and behaviors, keep lockers organized and closed, and pick up trash.

The stairways are **ORANGE** spaces. These are spaces where noise should be kept at a minimum as you prepare to enter the first-floor hallway.

The first floor is a **RED** hallway. In the first-floor hallways, you are expected to walk quietly and whisper all times. Staying silent allows all younger students to learn without distraction or disruption.

Since 7th and 8th graders have Encore classes that differ from their other academic classes, you will transition to classes independently. Teachers will be stationed in the hallway to monitor you, but you are responsible for getting to Encore and following school-wide expectations while doing so.

Additional expectations for all colored hallways include the following :

When walking in the hallway by yourself :

- All students in passing should have a pass in their possession
- Whisper voice - Level 1
- Walking through the hallways, not running
- Stay on task and Walk to where you are going
- If you see a friendly face, wave and keep walking
- Maintain a Safe Body
- Respect locker privacy by keeping yours closed and not looking inside others

When Walking in the hallway with a group/Class :

- Whisper Voices - Level 1
- Walk through the hallways
- Walk in Two straight lines (first floor)
- Stay with your Class and Follow Lanes of Traffic
- If you see a friendly face, wave and keep walking
- Respect locker privacy by keeping yours closed and not looking inside others
- Maintain a Safe Body

## **Bathroom Policy**

**Permission is required from an adult any time a student wishes to use the bathroom.**

Students may **not** use the washroom when entering the building or returning from lunch/recess without receiving permission. All students must sign-out before using the restroom. If you are headed to a class, please go to that class and sign-out before going to the bathroom. If you are in a class, please request permission from the teacher, (be patient if your teacher asks you to wait), get a pass, and sign-out before going to the bathroom. Once in the bathroom, students are expected to:

- |                                         |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| ● Use appropriate language              | ● Inform teachers if there is a problem - |
| ● Respect others' privacy               | failure to do this will mean you could be |
| ● Leave the area litter free            | held accountable                          |
| ● Flush the toilet and wash their hands | ● Return to class as quickly as possible  |

This past year, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights issued guidance expanding the breadth of Title IX's protections against discrimination on the basis of sex to include: (1) discrimination based on sexual orientation and (2) discrimination based on gender identity. ***For Peterson this means that students must have fair and equitable access to restroom facilities that align with their gender identity and comfort. However, our bathrooms will continue to be grade specific and students will continue to use the bathrooms assigned to their specific grade level.***

## **5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Boys**

The 6<sup>th</sup> boys will use the boys' restrooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. 5<sup>th</sup> grade boys will only use the boys' restroom on the first floor located near the south stairway. If 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> boys are found in the wrong bathroom, they will be subject to consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. The only exception to this will be for 6<sup>th</sup> graders who have a class with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who then may use the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> bathroom during that class period in order to prevent the loss of instructional time.

***Vandalizing the bathroom will be subject to consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Please inform a staff member about any vandalism you see in the bathrooms.***

### **Middle School Recess and Lunch Expectations**

Please note the following expectations around transitioning from recess to lunch:

- When an adult blows the whistle, middle schoolers are expected to stop what they are doing and return to the plaza immediately.
- Middle schoolers will line up with their advisory/homeroom
- Middle schoolers should get quiet and be ready to enter the building.
- An adult will let students know when to go into the building. When you are in the building, you should quietly stay to the right of the hallway.
- Middle school students will be dismissed from the lunchroom by the security officer and adults in the lunchroom. Students should clean up their eating area in the lunchroom and remind their peers to do the same.
- You are expected to keep food on your plate. If you throw food inappropriately, you will be subject to consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.
- Students need to raise their hand in order to get passes for bathroom/water.
- At recess, you may participate in organized activities, walk along the path, or talk with friends; however, this does not include throwing rocks, or other objects, approaching the fence to talk to a stranger, or going outside of the fence.
- For safety reasons, eating, gum chewing, and drinking--with the exception of water--are not allowed during recess.
- Students must bring a pass in the event that they are late to recess or lunch.
- ***If an adult supervising recess or lunch gives you a direction, you are expected to follow it the first time it is given. If you ignore or disrespect the directions of an adult, you will be subject to consequences as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.***

### **Student Discipline**

The [Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (SRR) is adopted by the Chicago Board of Education each year to help create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and school staff. The SRR contains the Student Code of Conduct (SCC) which CPS uses to set clear expectations for responsible student behavior and disciplinary procedures for responding to behaviors. The SCC is only a resource. It will take the collective efforts of students, parents, teachers, and administrators to create a safe learning environment for all students. In the event of a disciplinary incident, a student's due process will be exercised. Peterson uses a restorative justice approach to discipline built on logical consequences, appropriate interventions and restorative problem solving. Parents of students

involved in incidents will be notified. Due to privacy laws, you will only receive information about your child, information regarding other children must remain confidential.

### **Incident Reporting**

With all serious injuries, disciplinary or other student-based incidents Peterson follows protocols to communicate with parents and create action plans. Your child's homeroom teacher should be your first point of contact for most issues or concerns, especially related to the school day, peers or academic issues. Other specific areas of concerns should be directed to:

- Social emotional concerns to a member of the counseling team which includes Ms. Vasilev (svasilev1@cps.edu), and Ms. Correa (mcorrea27@cps.edu)
- Special education concerns to case manager Mr. Bochenek (bpbochenek@cps.edu)
- Disciplinary issues, student conflicts, and safety concerns to Restorative Justice Coordinator Mr. Caldwell (mccaldwell@cps.edu)

If after reaching out to your child's teacher, or the above, and you feel the issue is still not resolved, you may reach out to administration. Email or call the main office to schedule an appointment.

### **Incident Referral Follow up Actions**

All incident referrals tend to be unique in their own way, which requires different options of restorative approach. Some responses to conflicts include restorative conversations, restorative peace circles, and meaningful work. These restorative actions are conversations between two or more people with the intention of resolving conflict, repairing any harm that was caused, and restoring relationships. Restorative practices are not only limited to the student body, but can also take place between a teacher and a student, or even between staff members. These practices are not punitive, but rather focus on one's understanding of the impact of their actions, accepting accountability, and displaying empathy.

### **Investigation Process**

Some incidents might require a more in depth investigation before action steps from the SCC are applied. The investigation process conducted by school staff looks as follows :

1. **Gather Information:** Interviewing students, staff or other stakeholders that may be involved in the incident. We need to gather as much detail as possible to understand what happened leading up to the event, what role each party played, and the most complete picture of the incident. If electronics are involved (email, social media) the school may request transcripts, screenshots, or other evidence.

2. **Analyze:** Based on the information and evidence, administration (often in consultation with other CPS leadership departments) determine the level of disruption caused and identify the context of behavior using codes from Student Code of Conduct (SCC).
3. **Discuss:** Inform the student and their parent of the inappropriate behavior, ask for more details from their perspective, try to identify root causes of the behavior.
4. **Assign interventions:** Following the SCC and in consultation with CPS leadership departments, interventions will be assigned based on the best interest of the school community. At all times possible, students and staff are involved in making a plan of action for moving forward.
5. **Document and communicate:** All events and details are logged in CPS' student information system, ASPEN. Outcomes of the investigation will be shared with students directly impacted by the incident, however only information regarding your student will be shared with you. *NOTE: we are legally unable to share specific information about other students' interventions or even names of other students involved. We do share as much as we are able about what we learned and have done about the situation, as allowed by CPS rules and legal restrictions.*
6. **Restore:** Support the repair of harm to all parties harmed including students, classes, or the community.

## **Emergency Drills**

There are four types of emergency codes at Peterson Elementary. They are the evacuation drill, the lockdown, the shelter-in-place, and the all-clear.

1. The **Evacuation** code is used whenever it is safer outside than inside the building such as in case of a fire, explosion, indoor hazardous material spill, structural failure, etc. The principal will call an evacuation, and you will hear an alarm sound. You should go with your class out an exit to your designated exterior safe location. You should always stay with your class.
2. **Lockdown** is used when there is a threat of violence or serious incident that could jeopardize the safety of students/staff such as an armed intruder, shooting, hostage incident, gang fights, civil disturbance, etc. The principal will announce that the building is on lockdown. Students should enter their classrooms immediately, get quiet, and listen to directions from the teacher.
3. **Shelter-in-place** is used when evacuation would place people at risk. Shelter-in-place provides a refuge for students, staff, and the public inside the school building during an emergency such as severe weather, a hazardous material release outdoors, or threat of violence in the neighborhood. Interior safe locations are located in areas of the building that maximize

the safety of occupants. Interior safe locations may change depending on the emergency. Students should go to their assigned interior safe location with their class.

4. **All Clear** is used when the threat or emergency has passed and the school is safe to return to normal operations.

## **V Working for Academic Success**

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity means producing and turning in work that is truly your own, relying on your own skills in assessments, and abiding by the rules for completing work set by your teacher(s).

Examples of failure to act with academic honesty include:

- submitting in-class or out-of-class work that has been copied from another student, or allowing another student to copy your work;
- submitting work that has been taken directly from other sources such as the Internet without being put into your own words (plagiarism); and
- any form of cheating during tests/quizzes or other types of assessments.

Students who do not conduct themselves with academic integrity will be subject to a disciplinary review with teachers / school administrators that may result in consequences as outlined by the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Planning for Academic Success**

Students will work with their Advisory teacher to learn and use effective strategies as learners. This will include the use of a Peterson-provided Agenda/Planner that will be an important tool in organizing daily learning experiences. Any real success will be achieved when students 'own' their learning experiences. Remember those Peterson Values!

### **Grading Policy**

As a middle school student, it is very important for you to understand how your grade is calculated. At Peterson, the work that you do on a daily basis as well as your ability to show mastery of the grade level standards on projects and tests play an important part in making up your final grade.

Please review the gradebook policy [here](#) to see how your grade will be computed.

## **Homework Policy**

Completing homework is an important key to your success as a student. All out-of-school work (homework) is due in class on the assigned date. Work that is not completed and brought to class on time, during the scheduled period, (unless otherwise stated) will result in the following consequences:

1. Grades for the homework assignment will be recorded as an “F” (50%).
2. Students that consistently fail to complete homework may be required to attend a lunch or after school study period.

In instances of absence, students will be allowed one school day for every day absent to complete classwork and homework assigned while they were out of school.

## **Managing and Monitoring Your Progress**

All students in grades 5 to 8 have access to Student Portal as well as a Google email account. You are responsible for checking your grades on a weekly basis to make sure that you are not falling behind in any of your classes.

### **How to check your grades**

1. Go to <https://aspen.cps.edu/aspen/logon.do>
2. Log in using your CPS username and password.
3. View your grades and attendance.

### **What to do if you have a question about your grade**

If you have a question about your grade in one of your classes, you should ask to set up a time to meet with your teacher or email your teacher. **If you need help, you may ask your parents, but as a middle school student, it is important that you learn to advocate for yourself and your academic success.** Some questions and statements you might use with your teacher when discussing your grade are:

- Would you please explain to me how my grade is calculated?
- What is affecting my grade?
- Is there work that I am missing?
- May I have permission to turn in that work?
- Would you help me establish a plan to get back on track?
- Would you please help me with...?
- Is there tutoring that I can attend?
- Would you recommend a peer tutor for me?

## **When Success Isn't Happening**

All members of the Peterson community are committed to the academic success of every student. Therefore, if you are failing in any of your classes, the following action steps will be taken:

**Step 1:** At the beginning of the year, if you are in grades 6 or 8, you will receive a copy of the promotion policy. You should discuss it with your parents and sign it when you understand it. Grades 5 and 7 will also learn the grading policies and expectations for success in their classes. Additionally, you and your parents will have usernames for Parent Portal and Student Portal and should be regularly checking your attendance and grades throughout the year.

**Step 2:** At the start of the school year, teachers will communicate their grading practices with you. They are also listed in this handbook.

**Step 3:** If you are getting a D or an F three (3) weeks into the quarter, the following steps will be taken:

- You and your teacher will establish concrete action steps for improvement.
- Your teacher will call your parents.

**Step 4:** If you are getting a D or an F at progress report time, five (5) weeks into the quarter, the following steps will be taken:

- You and your teacher will create an individual plan with concrete action steps to help you improve your grade.
- Your teacher will call your parents and communicate your grade to them.
- You will be given a copy of the Mary Gage Peterson Student, Parent, and Teacher Agreement for Academic Success.
- You will be required to attend after-school tutoring until your teacher has sufficient evidence that you have mastered the content.

**Step 5:** If you are getting a D or an F at the seven (7) week mark:

- If you were getting a D or an F at progress report time (the 5 week mark) then your teacher will talk with you about how you are doing at the 7 week mark.
- If you are not making progress or following through with your established action plan, you will meet with an administrator, your teacher, and your parents to set next steps.

**Step 6:** If you are getting a D or an F at the end of the quarter, the following action steps will be taken:

- Your action plan with concrete steps is revised and updated.
- Additional interventions are considered and implemented.
- Your parents are called to come for a conference (report card pick-up or other).
- An administrator is present at the conference.

- The Academic Warning Letter (CPS) is filled out with the updated plan and given to you and your parents.

### **Learning Experiences Outside of Peterson - Field Trips**

In order to attend field trips, you must have written permission from your parent or guardian on the school field trip permission form. Permission slips should always be turned into your teacher well before the time of the field trip.

### **Expected Behavior**

When you are on a field trip, you are representing yourself, your family, and Peterson Elementary School. Whether on campus or away from our building students are expected to:

- Be Respectful, Be polite, Respect all chaperones, and follow their direction
- Be willing to learn and try new things, Follow the rules and expectations of the learning site
- Follow Field Trip cell phone policies -Cell phones may be taken on field trips, but the same rules that apply in school apply to field trips. Cell phones should not be taken out or used on a field trip. If they are, they will be taken by a teacher or another adult and turned over to administration. You may get permission from your teacher to use your cell phone as a camera.

### **Benchmark Grades and Expectations**

According to Chicago Public Schools, promotion decisions for students in grades 2, 5, and 8 will be made during the last week of school. The complete [CPS promotion policy](#) will be made available to students through grade level advisory programs. The Spanish version can be found [here](#).

All students must receive a passing score on The Constitution of the United States of America and The Constitution of the State of Illinois exams to receive an 8th grade diploma.

### **Promotion Criteria**

A student's promotion status is determined by the following measures:

#### **Academic Performance**

- Report card grades in reading and math shall reflect a student's unit test scores and completion of homework assignments during

- the school year. The final report card grade in each subject is an average of the grades reported at the end of each of the four
- reporting periods.

### **High Schools and Application Process**

Chicago Public School (CPS) students have many options when considering which high school they will attend. They are: 1) neighborhood schools; 2) small schools; 3) career academies; 4) charter and contract schools; 5) magnet schools; 6) military academies; 7) selective enrollment schools; and 8) multiple different programs in areas such as career and technical education.

The high school application process has three steps: 1) research; 2) choose; and 3) apply. Note that the high school application process has been streamlined with the new [go.cps.edu](http://go.cps.edu) website. This is a great place to learn, research, explore, and apply to nearly every CPS school and program through one online platform.

***It is very important that all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attend the high school application presentation in the fall with the counselors.*** You and your parents will get valuable information that you cannot afford to miss. For more information on the CPS high school application process go to: [go.cps.edu](http://go.cps.edu)

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Requirements**

At Peterson, 8th graders are expected to be leaders within the Peterson community, embodying both the Peterson vision and our vision-based values. More than any other students within the building, 8<sup>th</sup> graders are the models for what it means to be a Peterson student.

### **Student Expectations to Participate in Graduation Events and the Graduation Ceremony**

- A grade of C or better in all subjects, including Encore
- Peterson and CPS attendance requirements are met
- Any behavioral/social restorations are completed

## **VI Getting the Most Out of your Middle School Experience**

**Student Fees**

*All Peterson students are expected to pay \$50.00 in student fees by the end of the first quarter.* The student fees will be used to purchase supplies, pay for some field trips, and obtain consumables for classroom use such as magazine subscriptions. Please remember to pay your student fees. If for some reason a family is experiencing financial difficulties, please contact the office to make arrangements for these fees.

**The afterHours/OST Program**

Our afterHours program will provide a range of activities, as well as opportunities for additional academic and enrichment experiences.

**Sports**

Any student who would like to be a part of a sports team is able to participate. Games will be held on Saturdays at Mather and other local high schools, and practices will be scheduled throughout the week at Peterson.

They include:

|                                                                                                           |                                                                                         |                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Volleyball</li><li>• Basketball</li><li>• Cross Country</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Track</li><li>• Soccer</li><li>• Golf</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flag Football</li><li>• Floor Hockey</li><li>• Wrestling</li></ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Peterson Sports Conduct - Athlete Expectations:**

1. Athletes **must** maintain a ‘C’ average in all classes during the academic calendar to be eligible to play and to maintain eligibility on the specific team. (Per the Sports Administration Handbook)
2. Athletes must display a positive attitude both in and out of the building.
3. Athletes who miss more than 2 practices that are unexcused could be subject to benching for the game or season. (You must inform the coach prior to the absence if possible, otherwise it is considered unexcused) The following are excused absences:

- 3.1. Sick (doctor's note or doctor's appointment)
- 3.2. Religious
- 3.3. Field Trip
- 3.4. Extenuating circumstances

4. Athletes must have a current physical on file.

### **Game Travel**

Athletes are responsible for transportation to and from games.

### **Getting More Involved**

While new experiences are often added throughout the school year, here are some opportunities for service and leadership.

|                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Safety Patrol:</b> Student leaders who work to ensure a safe entry and exit onto the Peterson property.<br>Staff Contact: <b>Ms. Jasmine Young</b>                             | <b>Lunch Support</b><br>Upper grade students who can support recycling and helping younger students during lunch.<br>Staff Contact: <b>Mr. Menez/Mr. Caban</b>        |
| <b>Student Voice</b><br>3 - 8th Grade leadership group selected for feedback sessions with the school principal. Staff Contact: <b>Ms. Fair</b>                                   | <b>Coneheads</b><br>7th & 8th grade students can volunteer to set up safety cones to support with arrival and dismissal.<br>Staff Contact: <b>Mr. Menez/Mr. Caban</b> |
| <b>Student Mentors:</b><br>7th and 8th grade students who support younger students emotionally and socially.<br>Staff Contact: <b>Ms. Vasilev/ Ms. Correa</b>                     |                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Advisory Reps</b><br>Leaders selected by their grade level advisory group for grade level and middle school planning and communication: Staff Contact: <b>Advisory Teacher</b> |                                                                                                                                                                       |

### **Important Dates**

Please review the CPS Calendar at

<https://www.cps.edu/globalassets/cps-pages/calendar/25-26/cps-family-calendar-english-25-26.pdf>

You can also subscribe to the [Peterson Community Google Calendar](#)

**Peterson Elementary School**  
**Acknowledgment of Handbook and Agreement to Expectations**  
**SY 2025 - 2026**

I acknowledge that I have received this handbook, and I agree to abide by the expectations outlined within it. I commit to live by our vision-based values and work toward my rise as I prepare to be a College Graduate, Community Leader, and Cultural Ambassador.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Advisory Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**I acknowledge that my son or daughter has received this handbook, and I will support him or her to abide by the expectations outlined within it.**

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Peterson Elementary School**  
**Peterson Middle School Student Cell Phone Policy**  
**SY 25-26**

1. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours.
2. Students who choose to bring their cellphones to school are required to hand in the phone to their homeroom teacher at the beginning of the day and collect it at the end of the day.
3. It is each student's responsibility to sign the Cell Phone Log each time they hand in or pick up their phone from their homeroom teacher.
4. Students are prohibited from using a cell phone to take pictures or videos at any time on school property.
5. If a student violates the Cell Phone Policy, the cell phone will be confiscated and stored in

the main office. Confiscated cell phones must be picked up by the student's parent.

6. If a student violates the Cell Phone Policy, the appropriate administrator will assign disciplinary action pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct and parents will be notified.

**Addendum:** Unless explicitly requested by an educator for educational purposes, the use of headphones while in class is prohibited. Headphones, EarPods, earbuds, and the like, must be stowed away in the students' locker.

I have read, understand, and will abide by the Peterson Middle School Cell Phone Policy.

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Student Signature

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Student Name

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Date

I have read, understand, and will have my child abide by the Peterson Middle School Cell Phone Policy.

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Parent Signature

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Parent Name

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Date