

## **COLUMBUS MAGNET SCHOOL INFORMATION & PROCEDURES**

### **School Hours for the 2019/2020 School Year:**

Office Hours: 8:00am-4:00pm

Doors Open: 8:50am

School Hours: 9:05am-3:40pm

### **School Contact Information:**

Main Office: (203) 899-2840

Fax: (203) 899-2844

Address: 46 Concord Street, Norwalk, CT 06854

### **Attendance/Absences/Tardy:**

As per Norwalk Public Schools Policy, if your child is going to be absent from school, you are required to contact the Main Office or your classroom teacher. If we don't hear from you, your child will be marked with an "unexcused absence," and you will receive a phone call. When your child returns to school he/she must bring a note explaining the reason for the absence.

Students arriving to school after the 9:05am start time will be listed as tardy and must be escorted inside the school by a parent or guardian and signed in. Frequent unexcused absences or tardies will result in further investigation by administration. **Please remember that attendance and punctuality directly correlate to your child's success in school.**

### **Entrances and Exits:**

There are two main doors to Columbus. All entrances are monitored by video surveillance and are locked during school hours. All other external doors are for the use of staff or in the case of emergency only.

- The "**Front Door**" is located on Arthur J. Perschino Way. The front door is used for student drop-off and pick-up and for all visitors entering the school. A security guard is on duty during school hours and all visitors must sign in at the front desk.
- The "**Rain Door**" is the door closest to the parking lot on the Chestnut Street side of the building and is used by students arriving and departing by bus and for the drop-off and pick-up of students in the SACC before and after school program.

### **Visitors:**

All visitors, including parents who are volunteering at the school, must enter through the Front Door and sign in at the front desk. All visitors are required to present ID and wear a visitor's badge while in the school building.

### **Parking:**

There are marked "Visitor" parking spots in the Chestnut Street parking lot. All remaining parking spaces are reserved for Norwalk Public Schools/Columbus staff members. Additional parking is available in the basketball court/lot located behind the school yard and adjacent to Arthur J. Perschino Way. This alternate lot may be accessed by continuing down Chestnut Street (passing CMS on right) and turning right on Merritt Place and driving behind the King Kennedy Apartments to the adjacent basketball court/lot.

### **School Closings/Delayed Openings/Early Closings:**

When the weather is severe and travelling conditions appear to be hazardous, parents/guardians are urged to listen to news broadcasts to determine whether school will be open, delayed or remain closed. Closings/delays will also be announced on the Norwalk Public Schools Information Line (203) 854-4123 and posted on the Norwalk Public Schools website - [www.norwalkps.org](http://www.norwalkps.org). Families whose information is current within the NPS database will receive telephone notification of any change in schedule. Early closings are kept to a minimum. If, in the interests of safety, a decision to close school early is made, announcements will be made via local radio stations and the telephone contact system. Parents are urged to have a plan in place in the event of early dismissal and to communicate that plan to the school.

## ARRIVAL, DEPARTURE & TRANSPORTATION

### Bus Transportation:

Bus transportation is available for all Columbus students, regardless of how close they live to the school. For information on your nearest stop, please call the Norwalk Public Schools Transportation office on (203) 854-4000 ext. 4074. Students arriving at Columbus by bus are greeted by staff members at the Rain Door. Students travelling home by bus are dismissed from their classrooms to the waiting buses outside. Hall and Bus Monitors are stationed along the route to the buses. If your child will be riding the bus, please let the school know your child's bus number and make sure that your child has some form of identification in his/her backpack. Kindergarten students will be seated at the front of the bus, and **MUST** be met off the bus by a designated parent or caregiver.

### Arrival Procedures for Student Drop-Off:

- Parents bringing their children to school by car should be aware that the bus lane on Chestnut Street is to remain clear at all times.
- Arrival for students being dropped off begins at 8:50am.
- Parents/guardians dropping off students may begin queuing in their cars at 8:45 via the King Kennedy Apartment access to Arthur J. Perschino Way.
- Children should not exit a car until it is the first car stopped at the stop sign. Children exiting from the passenger side of the car should walk around the front of the car to the Front Door where they will be greeted by CMS staff members.

It is not necessary to escort children to class. Parents choosing to do so must park their cars, sign in at the front desk and get a Visitor's Badge before going to the classroom.

### Dismissal Procedures for Student Pick-Up:

- School is dismissed at 3:40pm.
- Students being picked up by car are dismissed to the gym. There they wait in lines by grade. Outside Car Monitors record the names of parents in line and then, using fifth grade safeties, send the names of students to the gym for dismissal. Once the gym coordinators receive the names, the students are escorted out of the building to the waiting Car Monitors. **Please be patient. To expedite this process, place a name sign in your car window.**
- Students being picked up by walk-up are also dismissed to the gym and wait in lines by grade. Parents must wait at the Playground Door and give their child's name to the Door Monitor. The lists of names are brought to the gym by safeties, who then escort the children out the Playground Door.
- **Staff members are on dismissal duty from 3:40pm to 4:00pm. Students left waiting after that time will be sent to the Main Office and parents must enter the building and sign out their children.**

### Dismissal Procedures for Students Leaving School Early:

- If a special circumstance, such as a doctor's appointment, requires your child to be picked up early from school, you must send a note to the school in advance, indicating the day and time of this request and the name of the person who will be picking up your child.
- Parents/guardians picking up before 3:20pm must sign students out at the Main Office. Anyone other than a parent/guardian or caregiver picking up a student must show proof of identification.
- **Due to the business of dismissal, students will not be available for pick up between 3:20 and 3:40pm.**

### Change in After-School Plans:

Parents must inform the school if there is a change in their child's after-school plans either by written note, email, or voicemail message. Please note that messages regarding students' change of after-school plans must be left before 3:00 pm. Parents of students participating in extra-curricular, after-school activities should send a note to the teacher with the name and dates of the program.

**Before and After School Care:**

Before and after-school child care is offered at CMS through the YMCA of Norwalk/Wilton School Age Child Care (SACC) program. The SACC program is designed to meet the needs of the children and their parents. Parents can be assured that their children are being cared for in an enriching environment where the top priorities are safety, supervision and fun! Registration forms are available by contacting a YMCA representative at (203) 762-8384 x213 or online at:

**<http://www.wiltonymca.org/norwalk/programs/school-aged-child-care/>**

- ◆ SACC parents should only use the Rain Door. Please ring the bell for admittance.
- ◆ If school is dismissed early dismissal due to inclement weather, the SACC program is also cancelled.

**Application for Free/Reduced Price Breakfast and Lunch:**

Free/reduced breakfast and lunch is available to qualified families. An application form for the free/reduced breakfast and lunch program is sent home with students at the beginning of the school year. All families are required to complete the applications regardless of whether or not your child will participate in the program.

Breakfast is available to all students at the school at a nominal cost through the Whitsons' Food Service Program. Hot lunch is also available and is ordered via ticket system to control production and cost. A monthly menu is published so that parents/students can select the dates that they wish to order lunch. Each hot lunch is a completely balanced, nutritious meal.

Each student in the Norwalk Public School system has a designated account number which is used for the billing of student meals. Parents pay into the account in advance and the account is debited each time the student gets a meal. A weekly printed account balance is given to students. An application for free or reduced price lunch is sent home with students at the beginning of the year. Students may opt to bring a packed lunch from home if they prefer.

Parents may also view lunch menus and payment procedures on the Norwalk Public Schools website at [norwalkps.org](http://norwalkps.org) and click on the "Lunch Menu" Quick Link.

Breakfast: Students wishing to get breakfast are to stop at the "Grab and Go" breakfast cart in the first floor hallway upon arrival to school and bring their breakfast with them to class.

Lunch: All students eat lunch in the cafeteria. Lunch is served between 11:30 am and 1:40 pm. Grade level lunch schedules vary from year to year, your classroom teacher will notify you of lunch times.

**Recess:**

Recess usually takes place 15 minutes before a grade level's lunch period; however, due to scheduling, some classes may have recess at another time of day.

## Helpful Hints:

- Create before and after-school routines for your child to help him/her remember responsibilities and prepare for each day with a minimum of stress.
- Make sure that your child is prepared for school the night before (i.e., homework is completed, back-pack is ready to go) so that your family is not rushed in the morning.
- Have your child wear clothes that are easy to manage (either pull-on pants or those with zippers, buckles and buttons easily fastened). Remember that on days when students have Physical Education they should be dressed appropriately in loose fitting clothing and sneakers.
- Check your child's backpack every day for notices, permission slips and notes from teachers. This is especially important on Thursdays when the "Thursday Notice" is sent home.
- Create a file or an area in your home to store all information that comes home from school so that is readily accessible.
- Read all notes carefully and respond to them right away.
- Keep a calendar specific to each child's school events and enter all appointments in it. This will help you remember field trips, conferences, special days, etc.
- Volunteer both in your child's class and for school-wide events. Let your child know that you are interested in what they are doing at school. Talk to your child about what they did each day and take time to look at the work he/she brings home.
- Be an active member of the Columbus community. Attend as many of the All School Meetings and PTA-sponsored family events as possible. Not only will you be showing your child that you care about the school, but chances are you will have a great time!