



From the Principal...

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This letter usually begins with Happy Spring and acknowledgments of the warmer weather; but the warm weather has not arrived. However, spring is here and with it the beginning of all the wonderful activities that highlight the talents of our students. The Drama performances are May 3, 4, and 5, Dance club performance May 17, Band and String concerts June 7, Chorus concert June 9, the 8th grade celebrations, and numerous field trips. Be sure to read the PTSA Blast and check your email for upcoming events at Central Middle School. Additionally, please be sure to save the dates for the upcoming events found in this newsletter

The month of March was certainly a very busy one. Our students have been very pro-active in planning and voicing their opinions relating to how we can make Central Middle School a safer environment, as they have been impacted by the number of schools experiencing violence.

As principal of Central Middle, my number one daily priority is to ensure students and staff safety. The tone set here is that all safety and security procedures are followed with fidelity. As you know we had our students participate in an opening Intruder Drill. Prior to this drill I presented information to the students regarding how they were to respond, and discussed actions for drills vs. actions for real situations. They were informed that in REAL situations they may have to make independent decisions regarding their safety.

Students were encouraged to think about what they would do, and where would they go that is secure and safe. The drill was observed by the Chief Security Officer for AACPS, Mr. Doyle Batten. He returned that afternoon to give faculty feedback regarding our drill, answered questions, and will return to provide additional training. The students were asked to respond to the drill, and they provided me feedback as well. Last week, I responded to the student feedback and provided the feedback that Mr. Batten had shared with the faculty. I have included the contents of the announcement broadcasted to the student in this newsletter.

The eighth graders have completed the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment. This assessment is in the pilot stage, and we will not receive school scores. Our students worked hard and have contributed to the creation of the future science assessment's validity and reliability. The eighth graders are gearing up to complete their middle school experience, and as the end of the third marking period closes in, we are concerned about their perseverance and focus moving forward. There are numerous distractions at this time of year with school performances and spring sports. Please work with your child to prioritize their tasks, so that they successfully complete the year. This is especially true for those taking Algebra and a World Classical Language.



April 12 is the last day of the marking period. The report cards will be distributed on April 20. As students enter their fourth and final marking period on April 13, it is a good time to remind them to stay focused. Their social life, team sports and end of the year events become huge distracters. It is important that both home and school are encouraging students to make good choices.

We have just completed our registration for the 2018-2019 school year. Thank you to everyone who returned their forms on time. Our staffing is being adjusted to our enrollment and we are presently building the new master schedule. It is also the time that the Superintendent works with the county council to obtain approval of his budget. The Superintendent has asked for additional money to support the current staffing levels. It is very important that his budget is supported to maintain the student-teacher ratios. Please try to attend a budget hearing to support his proposed budget. You will find the budget on the AACPS website.

The counselors are working with teams and parents to support students in danger of failing this year. Ms. Beall is holding conferences with students to explore strategies to help struggling student be successful. Our goal is to have no child fail any grade while in middle school. A failure in middle school significantly decreases a student's chances of graduating from high school. Working together we can prevent failure. Please contact your child's counselor if you have concerns about your child.

I hope you will check our calendar on the school website for upcoming events. Our students give quality performances and I encourage you to come out and support the arts at Central Middle this spring.

Sincerely,

Millie Beall

Principal

mlbeall@aacps.org



Intruder Drill: Broadcasted Announcement

Good Afternoon students and teachers, this afternoon I will be going over the feedback on our intruder drill. First of all I want to share Mr. Battens input. He was very pleased with our response to an intruder. This drill was the most realistic drill he has ever observed. There were problems with the speakers outside so this caused those on duty and outside not to know that the drill had started. The chaos that occurred was expected and is normal for this type of an event. Mr. Batten explained that this drill will help other schools learn what to do when an intruder arrives at opening. He stated we were ahead of others in responding during an opening. The video from the drill will be used to teach others. He suggested we made use of all methods of communication such as walkies, verbal commands, PA, any way possible. He cautioned that it is important for us to take a minute and breathe, to assess the situation we are in first and then take actions. He was pleased that no students were hiding under desks. This is never a good idea. He taught us that we should all be standing against the wall that the door is on. Standing would allow us to move quickly if our situation changed and we had to evacuate. He said we should never hide and hope. This means we should not find small areas to hide in that do not give us a way out if we need to move. An example would be our restrooms. They DON'T lock from the inside and there is only one way out.

When evacuating the building, use any door close to you that moves you away from danger. In this drill, we had students respond as if it were real by making independent decisions that took them too far from the school. When conducting drills all students should go to fire drill assembly areas in the back or front of the building. In a real situation, you would move away from the school to wooded areas or SRHS depending on the situation. Remember if our school is locked down so will SRHS be locked down. In fact the entire complex could be locked down. There would be first responders here very quickly to direct us to safety in a real situation.

Students were observed running past teachers and not going into classrooms. They were observed ignoring adult directions. One of these adults was a member of the security team. Students in real or drill situations must follow adult directions not following the directions may result in bad things happening.

We had two doors that were not locked because of lack of keys or bad latches. These problems are easily solved and will be. If students get to a classroom and the adult is not there they should close the door, lock the door and take their position against the wall.

Some of you had feedback and questions which I will try to answer.

- The first was regarding making independent decisions. Independent decisions do not mean you ignore adults. In real situations you do whatever necessary to be safe. Assessing the situation and listening are extremely important. If an adult says get out of the building go!
- What do we do if someone is injured? Your first responsibility is for your safety. As hard as it is you must leave and let the first responders take care of the injured.
- Should I wait for friends? No go to a safe place fast
- Why don't we use an annoying sound to let us know someone is intruding? Signal often fail as did the sound system and this does not let us know what is happening. Where the intruder is entering or other important information we need. Mr. Batten did not recommend the annoying signal for this reason.
- Can we do more drills more often? Yes, and next year we will replace some fire drills with other emergency situations



- Suggested teachers not lock their doors when they leave. Classroom doors are locked for security reason. If the door is lock go to another room or outside.
- During drills could we have people try to get in classrooms to test whether someone would open the door.
- What is being done to improve safety?
- Changing locks on doors so they all can be locked from the inside.
- Requested outside speakers be repaired
- Requested double doors be reconstructed
- Safety procedures emphasized such as check-in of visitors and larger groups during the school day
- ID badges are required on all employees on school grounds
- All doors are monitored at opening
- Students are asked not to hold doors or open doors allow people in even if you know them
- Chief of School security has visited during a drill and provide training and will return again
- Blinds were purchased for door windows
- Our 99 cameras are monitored by secretaries throughout the day

Everything that can be done at the school level is being done at Central Middle School. Our students, parents, teachers, and staff take safety and security very seriously. You tell us when see something unusual or have a suggestion. The thoughtful reflection on our recent drill is appreciate and all of us are safer today because me are vigilant. Remember if you see something Say Something.

Thank you and I hope we all get rewarded for our good work with a nice snow day tomorrow!



Cafeteria

A message from “Mr. Tommy” – CMS Cafeteria Manager...

Dear Central Middle Golden Cobra Parents,

Breakfast and lunch meal prices have stayed the same price as last year to all students. Breakfast cost \$1.50 and Lunch cost \$3.00. Milk is included in the price. If your child is allergic to milk (or any other foods), you **must notify** the school Nurse and they will send a formal notification to the cafeteria. Once received, students’ milk will be substituted with orange juice at no extra charge. If you are in need of or want to see if you qualify for any of the school meals financial assistance programs, please visit the county website: www.aacps.org, under the “School Meals” link near the top of the screen. If you are already enrolled in any of these programs, you must re-enroll every year prior to October.

Adding Money to your students’ account – you can send in cash, check or money order in a sealed envelope or zip lock bag with students’ name and ID number printed on it both envelope and memo section of check/money order. We encourage every parent to register their child on the “MyPaymentPlus.com” site. It costs nothing to register and to view what your child is purchasing. This service will notify you through email that your child’s account has a low balance and they need more money added to their account soon. However, if you use the “MyPaymentsPlus.com” service to put money on an account by way of credit/debit card, MyPaymentsPlus.com will charge you a 4.75% service surcharge.

If your child has a negative account balance, Anne Arundel County Public Schools allows up to five regular meals before an “Alternative Meal” will be served. Once resolved, regular meals will resume. Also, any time a **students’ account is in the negative**, the main contact person on record for that student will receive an **automated phone call every day after 5p.m. until that negative balance is paid**. Any student account that has a bounced check entered must pay with cash until both the check and related fees are paid. Bounced checks that are not paid will follow that student through 12th grade and jeopardize the student attending graduation activities until said bounced check is made good.



Video Camera System/V-Soft School Security

CMS is equipped with a video camera system. It covers selected interior and exterior public portions of the building/grounds.

It is NOT monitored constantly, but is monitored during emergency situations. During events when the safety or security of students may be in question, authorized personnel from local, state or federal police or fire emergency units may be given access to view images projected on the camera system. If you have any questions about the system, you should call the supervisor of School Security at 410-222-5083.

V-Soft by Raptor Ware.....

When you visit our school you will be asked to present a government/state issued photo ID (i.e Driver's License) to a staff person in the school office. The ID will be scanned and the following information collected: your photo, name and date of birth. This information will be

utilized to check you in, create an ID badge, and compare your information against sexual offender databases throughout the county.

If your name appears on the list or you refuse to allow the use of your ID, you will NOT be allowed access to the school.

You will also be asked to check out with the office upon leaving. The information will not be shared outside of the school and is kept on a secure server. Your assistance in keeping students safe is appreciated.

All Parents and Visitors must have a government issued ID in hand upon entrance to our building.

NO exceptions!





Holiday/Birthday/Gift Protocol

To minimize any disruption in the cafeteria, classrooms or busses, Central Middle School established the following guideline:

NO balloons, snacks, food/beverage items, gift or fruit baskets are to be brought into school. Thank you for your cooperation.

Extracurricular Activity Programs



Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:05 until 4:05 are Extracurricular Activity Days at Central Middle.

Activities include intramural sports, Yearbook Club, Science Club, Mathematics Club, French Club, Drama Club, Robotics, and instrumental and choral music programs.

Student transportation is provided by activity buses.

Information about extracurricular activities is communicated via morning announcements .



Parent Connect

Applications and password assignments are now ONLINE. Please register on the AACPS website.





TRANSPORTATION:

Bus Riders, Bike Riders, Car Riders and Walkers

Parents, teachers, administrators, bus drivers and students all need to work together to ensure a safe arrival and departure for everyone each day.

BUS RIDERS: You are expected to board the bus at **your** designated bus stop. Please be **on time** each day. While on the bus, all school rules are in effect. **We expect each student to behave well so that bus drivers can pay attention to their driving.** Students who cannot comply may have the privilege of bus transportation taken away.

Teachers will review bus behavior standards written in the "Student Handbook" during the first week of school.

Changes in bus transportation arrangements can be made only by filling out an **Exceptional Transportation Request** form, available in the main office. Where possible, we ask that this form be submitted **at least three days before** the change is to take place. **Emergency** situations will be handled on an individual basis.

All requests are subject to verification prior to final approval by the Supervisor of Transportation

Types of requests that will be approved include long-term child care arrangements, medical requests. *Requests for transportation to athletic practices, doctor appointments, employment and visits to friends' houses will be denied as per Board of Education policy.*



PARKING: Our parking lot spaces are for staff and visitors to Central Middle. Any other cars parked in our areas are subject to being towed.

STUDENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP: Please honor the "Do Not Enter" signs leading into the main driveway in front of the school. Drop off your children in the morning by pulling into the parking lot and proceeding to the area opposite the crosswalk (between the two handicapped parking signs).

CAR RIDERS, BIKE RIDERS, AND WALKERS: Car riders, bike riders, and walkers report to the cafeteria after the 3:05 bell. They are to remain there until the buses depart. **This is a safety issue** for both students and parents. Buses pulling into their slots can NOT see students coming out from behind other parked buses.

In the event you need to pick up your child from school, **please wait for your child** in the portion of our parking lot **closest to the high school**. Students will be dismissed from the cafeteria about 3:15 P.M. The first week of school expect some delays due to students getting used to lockers, schedules, and bus numbers.



Attendance at Central Middle School

Anne Arundel County Public Schools has an attendance tracking system for all middle schools. Attendance is taken for each student for every period of the day through the county's student data system. Hopefully, the following information will be helpful to parents.

Parents will receive phone calls from the Anne Arundel County Public School system (ConnectEd) each morning around 9:00 a.m. and in the evenings around 6:00 p.m. every time that a student is recorded as being absent - either all day or just for one period during the day. A tardy message is also sent out via ConnectEd whether there is a tardy to school or a tardy to class. Parents can do the following to check on their child's attendance when they receive phone calls from ConnectEd:

Ask your child if perhaps they were late to class or in the guidance office of health room - if the period was coded by the teacher as an absence, that code can be changed to an excused tardy to class if the student had a pass.

If you have a Parent Connect account, you can log on and see your child's attendance for the day. You will see a code for each period by holding the cursor over the attendance icons. Parent connect will also let you see tardies.

Contact the teacher when you see an unexcused absence for a period and your child isn't sure why they were marked absent. If a correction needs to be made, the teacher will contact the Attendance Secretary. "Tardy to class" questions should be addressed first by the teacher.

According to the Anne Arundel County Board for Education, children who are absent six or more days of school per semester regardless of cause, are considered "excessively absent". We are always willing to work with parents and students to address issues which impact your child's attendance.

Make sure that when your child is absent you send in a note to the student's first period teacher explaining the absence(s). Any absence due to illness of more than 5 days requires a doctor's note. Vacations during the school year are considered unexcused absences under Maryland State law and Anne Arundel County Public Schools.



REMINDER FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

If your student feels ill during the school day, please let them know to report to the Health Room (located near the main office). The Health Room staff will assess the student and then call a parent.

Students are not allowed to use their cell phones in the classroom for texting or any other purpose. After the second offense, the phone will be held for a parent to pick it up from the office.



Blackboard

Check Blackboard often and stay informed

www.aacps.org (Anne Arundel County's homepage)

- . username: centralms (all lowercase and all one word)
- . Type in the password: cobras (all lowercase)

