



# The Chicago Academy



## Parent Handbook 2012-2013

3400 North Austin Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60634  
Ph# 773-534-3885  
[www.chicagoacademy.org](http://www.chicagoacademy.org)



# The Chicago Academy

## School Vision

At TCA, we are dedicated to preparing students to succeed in high school, college, and beyond, as we all strive to make a positive and dynamic impact on our world.

## School Mission

At TCA, staff, parents, and students:

- Think critically and globally
- Care about community and respect diversity
- Achieve in a rigorous, supportive environment

### Attendance

Regular attendance at school is extremely important. Successful learning is directly related to coming to school every day. The basic responsibility for the regular attendance of the student lies with the student and the parent. Parents of children who are absent from or late for school should call the office (773) 534-3885 between 7:30 and 8:30 a.m. We will try to reach parents who do not call the school to notify us of their child's absence. A child returning to school after an absence must bring a note from a parent explaining the absence. There are four acceptable causes for student absences: illness, death in the immediate family, family emergency, and observance of a religious holiday. Students absent for any other reason or students returning without a note will be marked "truant" (absent without a valid cause) in the daily attendance.

Parents may request homework for an absent child when they call in the child's absence in the morning. A message will be given to the child's teacher. The homework books and assignments will be ready for pick-up in the office at the end of the school day, after 3:30 p.m.

**According to Board policy, students in grades 3, 6, and 8 with 9 or more unexcused absences must attend summer school.**

### Birthday Celebrations

Due to an increase in severe food allergies and concerns about childhood obesity, TCA asks families to bring only non-food items (i.e. pencils, stickers, small party favors) for classroom birthday parties. Classroom teachers will communicate with parents about how they plan to celebrate birthdays in their classrooms.

### Breakfast/Lunch Money

CPS has a goal to promote student health and academic achievement by providing a nutritious breakfast as part of a routine start of every school day. Therefore, TCA serves a free breakfast in the classrooms daily, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:10 a.m., on an optional basis. After 8:10 a.m., breakfast is no longer available to students, to minimize the impact on instructional time.

Lunch is served in the school cafeteria. Students may pay for lunch in a lump sum. The cost of student breakfast/lunch is automatically deducted from their paid accounts when their lunch tickets are scanned as they go through the lunch line. **It is the parent's responsibility to keep breakfast/lunch accounts current.**

Breakfast - Free

Paid Lunch - \$2.35

Reduced-Price Lunch - \$.40

Milk Only - \$.35

### Calendar

Please refer to the CPS Calendar that is included in the "Back to School Packet" that your child has received. Refer to the calendar often to be aware of CPS holidays and other non-attendance days. Chicago Academy also sends home a monthly calendar with your child with important dates and events. Teacher Institute Days and Professional Development Days are non-attendance days for students.

### Cellular Phones and Other Electronic Devices

**No cell phones, iPods, cameras, music players, handheld video game devices, or any other type of electronic devices are allowed to be brought to school and will be confiscated by staff.** Any electronic devices or cell phones confiscated from students will be sent to the office with appropriate misconduct referral forms, and a parent must meet with an administrator to request the return of the confiscated cell phone or electronic device.

Cell phones are to be brought to school **only if there is an approved parent application on file.** Parents must fill out a cell phone application **every school year.** **Authorized cell phones must be turned off and stored in lockers or in backpacks on hooks the entire time students are in the school building both during school and after school.** Cell phones are not to be accessed or seen while in the school building. Staff members will confiscate any student cell phone

that is seen. Additionally, the school is not responsible for any lost or stolen cell phones. Students with authorized cell phones who violate this policy will have their cell phones confiscated and sent to the office and will receive the appropriate misconduct referral forms and consequences. Parents must meet with an administrator to request the return of the confiscated cell phone, and students may lose the authorization to bring the cell phone to school.

### **Damage to Books and Property**

The cost of school books and equipment has increased substantially over the years. Many textbooks cost \$75.00 or more. Students must take care of school books and equipment. Should a student lose a new textbook, the student will be responsible for the full cost of a brand new book. If the book is damaged in any way beyond normal wear, we will assess an appropriate damage fee. Students are expected to put book covers on textbooks.

### **Early Dismissal**

Parents must come to the office to pick up their child. No child will be released from school without an authorized adult signing him/her out. An authorized adult is an adult that is identified as one of the emergency contacts on the student's emergency form. *Reminder: All medical and dental appointments should be scheduled before or after school.*

### **Emergency Information**

Due to the seriousness of emergencies which sometimes occur, it is imperative that the school has correct emergency information on file for each student. This information includes:

- A correct home telephone number and address
- The work telephone number and cell phone number of a parent
- The telephone number of a relative or neighbor who lives near school
- The name and phone number of the family doctor

Parents are required to complete emergency information forms each school year and to keep the information current. Students are released for early dismissals only to adults that are listed on the emergency form. Our primary responsibility is the safety and well-being of our students while they are at school.

### **Extracurricular Eligibility**

TCA students must be in good academic standing (no F grades) in language arts, math, science, and social studies to be eligible to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Individual assessment of student conduct and behavior may also affect eligibility. The administration will review student progress in Gradebook weekly to determine eligibility.

### **Food Sources**

Food dispensed to children in schools must be prepared by facilities inspected by Health Department Personnel. The dispensing of food products prepared in private homes is an unacceptable practice. Please see an administrator if you have any questions about what food is acceptable to give to children at school. Parents must make arrangements with teachers before sending food to school. Students are not allowed to have fast food delivered to them during the school day. For example, if a student forgets their lunch, McDonalds or Burger King cannot be delivered to them. The school will only allow delivery of a home lunch or cold lunch. Lunches from fast food restaurants are a distraction to others and the school reserves the right to prohibit these types of food.

Additionally, we have a number of students with nut allergies. Parents should refrain from sending food items that contain nuts or were processed on machinery that also processed nuts to avoid allergic reactions.

### **Grading Scale**

**The TCA grading scale, beginning the 2012-2013 school year, is as follows:**

- 90% - 100% - A**
- 80% - 89% - B**
- 70% - 79% - C**
- 60% - 69% - D**
- 59% or below – F**

### **Guidelines for Promotion**

According to the promotion policy (09-1028-PO2), students in grades 3, 6, and 8 are placed in one of six categories based on their results on the district wide assessment for reading and math, followed by a review of academic performance, attendance, and conduct. Students who do not achieve promotion criteria may be required to attend summer support programs. The Guidelines for Elementary School Promotion which were revised by CPS in November 2011, were distributed to teachers and parents. Extra copies are available in the office or on the CPS website. ***Please be aware that students in grades 3, 6, and 8 are required to attend summer school if they have a "D" or "F" in Reading or Math, or have 9 or more unexcused absences, or are 8th graders that have a failing grade in writing and fail the district writing exam.***

### **Homework Success**

Studies indicate that students who spend more time on homework do better in school. They also score higher on standardized tests. While the schools are responsible for educating children, they cannot do it alone. Parents must work together with teachers to help children achieve their full potential. That is why parental involvement is at the heart of our homework policy. Parents must help their children succeed in school by becoming involved in their study habits.

### **Honor Roll Criteria**

Student honor roll lists include "A/B" and "A" lists. Both lists are prepared at the end of each quarter and also at the end of the school year. Students qualify for the A/B honor roll by receiving As and Bs in all subjects. Students qualify for the A honor roll by receiving As in all subjects. The year-end honor roll lists are based on grades received in all four quarters.

### **Junk Food**

In this era of health consciousness, it has been deemed necessary and appropriate to prohibit certain junk food items from our cafeteria. In an effort to prevent students from overindulging, students are limited to a single-size bag of chips and a "fun-size" candy bar. Students *may not bring soda pop* or other carbonated beverages (including energy drinks), full-size candy bars, or large bags of chips.

### **Late Arrival**

The **school day starts at 8:00 a.m.** for students. **Please have your children at school between 7:45 and 8:00.** The responsibility for prompt arrival to school belongs to the parent. Late arrivals will report to the security desk (first floor center hallway) for a tardy slip. Tardy arrivals to school will also be recorded and will appear on the student's report card and student records. Class tardiness may be considered in a student's grade, and excessive tardiness may require referral to the appropriate administrator, as well as disciplinary action including in-school suspensions. Students with 3 or more tardies will not be eligible for perfect attendance recognition (i.e. ice cream social or other incentives).

### **Medication Policy**

Only those medications which are absolutely necessary for the critical health and well-being of a student as determined by a doctor shall be administered during school hours. The following is a brief explanation of the Board of Education's revised administration of medication policy adopted January 25, 2012. This policy is designed to reduce the number of medications given in school, and at the same time, assure safe and therapeutic administration for those students who require them. If you would like a more detailed copy, please see the school nurse or principal.

#### **If at any time it becomes necessary for a student to take prescription medication at school:**

1. Two forms must be completed and signed—one by the doctor and one by the parent/guardian. These forms state that the student, *under supervision*, can self-medicate. This is necessary because there is not a nurse in the building on a daily basis to administer medication.
2. These forms will be given to the school nurse.
3. If the student must take medication in school, it will be brought to school in the labeled prescription bottle. This must be brought to the school by the parent, not the student.
4. The medication will be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet, as designated by the principal. The student will take the medication at the appropriate time under the supervision of the principal's designee.
5. The doctor's and parent's request forms must be submitted every school year and whenever there is a change in the medication or dosage.

6. Medication will not be administered if the required forms are not supplied, if the parent refuses the school access to the doctor or medical records, or if the nurse and the student's doctor agree it is not medically necessary.

**If at any time it becomes necessary for a student to take over-the-counter medication during school hours:**

1. Parents/guardians must complete an authorization form, which can be found in the main office. This form states that the student, *under supervision*, can self-medicate. This is necessary because there is not a nurse in the building on a daily basis to administer medication.
2. This form will be given to the school nurse.
3. If the student must take medication in school, it will be brought to school in the original container, labeled with the student's name. This must be brought to the school by the parent, not the student.
4. The medication will be kept in a locked drawer or cabinet, as designated by the principal. The student will take the medication at the appropriate time under the supervision of the principal's designee.
5. The parent's request form must be submitted every school year and whenever there is a change in the medication or dosage.
6. Medication will not be administered if the required form is not supplied.

**The only students authorized to carry and self-administer their medication during school hours are:**

- Students requiring inhalers—when authorized in writing by the parent/guardian
- Epinephrine Auto-Injector (“Epi-Pen”) to treat life-threatening allergies—when authorized in writing by the parent/guardian; and
- Diabetes Testing devices and Insulin—when authorized in writing by the student's health care provider and their parent/guardian.

The parent/guardian of these students must submit a self-administration authorization form, which can be found in the school's main office. These students must also log each time medication is administered during school hours and deliver such logs to the nurse, principal, or principal designee on a specified schedule.

**Money Collection**

Throughout the school year, money is collected from students for field trips. Money should be paid to the classroom teacher in an envelope with the student's name and room number.

**Parent Conferences**

Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with their child's teacher whenever they have questions or concerns about their child's progress. A conference request may be made by sending a note or email to the teacher. Teachers will respond to the request, and a mutually agreeable conference time will be arranged. Generally, parents should make a request at least one day in advance of a desired conference time. Parents are asked not interrupt the instructional day, by trying to speak with their child's teacher during school hours. Parents coming to school for a parent-teacher conference must report to the school office before proceeding to the teacher's room.

**Parent Organizations**

TCA encourages parents to participate in our parent organizations. The Friends of TCA promotes school goals through educational, social, and fundraising activities directed towards parents, teachers, and students. The NCLB Title I Parent Advisory Council (PAC) focuses on planning and promoting parent workshops and conferences in conjunction with the school. The Bilingual Advisory Committee (BAC) works to increase parent participation among our bilingual families.

**Parent Portal**

This tool will allow for monitoring of student grading and attendance data for students in grades 1-8. Please contact the main office with any questions related to the Parent Portal. To register, go to <http://parent.cps.k12.il.us>. You must have your child's ID number and 5-digit pin number, which you may obtain in the main office.

**Parent Volunteers**

Parents should consider volunteering at Chicago Academy. We regularly need volunteers to help out on field trips and at school events. Parents volunteering more than 5 hours per week must complete a CPS application, which includes a background check and certification of freedom from tuberculosis.

### **Safe Passage to and from School**

The most dangerous part of a child's day is going and coming from school. Some safety tips that all Chicago Academy families should discuss with their children are as follows:

For children walking to school:

- Stay alert at all times while walking. Accidents happen most often when we are not paying attention.
- Parents need to designate the safest route. Children must always follow the designated route to school. Stay out of alleys and stay away from abandoned buildings.
- Never talk to strangers. Never accept rides from strangers. If someone you don't know offers you a ride, run away from him/her. Run where there are other people. When you get home, tell your parents what happened.
- If a stranger tries to grab you, fight and yell, "Help! This is not my Mommy (Daddy)!"
- Look for and obey traffic lights. Cross the street only when the sign says WALK. If there is no WALK/DON'T WALK sign, then cross only on the green light.
- Especially watch out for cars making right turns on a red light.
- Always look both ways before crossing the street – look left, look right, look left again – then proceed carefully.
- Never run across the street; if you fall, you might not be able to get up in time. WALK.
- Always cross the street at the corner. Don't cross in the middle of the block or walk between parked cars.
- Wear bright reflective clothing, especially during the winter months.
- Pay attention to traffic sights and sounds. Don't wear headphones on the way to school.

For students riding a school or CTA bus:

- While waiting at the bus stop, stay at least six feet from the street curb.
- Never walk behind a bus or cross within ten feet of the front of the school bus.
- Stay in your seat at all times, and to avoid falling, only get up after the bus has come to a complete stop.
- Always listen to the directions of the bus driver.
- Always be quiet on the bus when it stops at railroad crossings.
- Keep the aisles clear at all times and help keep the bus clean and safe for everyone.
- Never throw anything out of the bus window and always keep your head, hands, and arms inside the bus.

For parents driving children to school:

- Obey all traffic safety rules.
- Drivers must never block crosswalks. (Police enforcement)
- Drivers must not double-park. (Police enforcement)
- Drivers must not park in the circular drive of the main parking lot.
- Drivers must have children enter and exit cars from curbside doors.
- Do not unintentionally cause problems by blocking traffic, getting in the way of school buses, or by dropping children off in the middle of the street or on the side of the street opposite to the sidewalk of the school entrance.
- Be patient and exercise caution. We must all be responsible for keeping all children safe.

### **School Atmosphere**

We strive to maintain a school atmosphere of **Safety, Respect, and Learning**. We want students, teachers, and parents to experience school as a very safe, violence-free environment. We want communications between students, parents, and teachers to stand as models of respect and concern for each other. We strive for academic rigor that holds students, parents, and teachers to a focus on learning.

### **School Day**

**The school day for students begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m.** The line-up bell rings at 7:55 a.m. Students enter the building at 8:00 a.m. Students should present a note from parents explaining all cases of tardiness. Students should not be on school property before 7:45 a.m. or after 3:15 p.m. unless they are supervised by their parents or participating in a supervised school activity.

### **School Security**

All parents and visitors must enter and exit the school through the main Austin or Meade (playlot) entrances only. All parents and visitors are required to report directly to the office or security desk to obtain a visitor's pass before reporting to any other location in the building. A security station is located inside the main school entrance.

Weapons and certain other dangerous objects are forbidden on school premises. All persons entering the school are subject to personal search and examination of their hand-carried possessions. Metal detector screenings of students and their personal effects will be conducted periodically.

### **Student Code of Conduct -SCC**

Appropriate behavior is necessary in order for instruction to take place. Every student received a copy of the Student Code of Conduct. The CPS Student Code of Conduct describes inappropriate behavior, prescribes equal disciplinary actions for misconduct, and suggests specific actions for remediation of prohibited behavior. Please read over the code with your child. Make sure that your child understands his/her responsibilities and the actions that will be taken when rules are not followed.

Parents are expected to review the SCC with their children, sign the Receipt that is located on page 71 of the SCC, and encourage their children to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Students are also expected to sign the Receipt and exhibit appropriate behavior by observing school rules and Board policies. **Please return your signed receipts by Friday, September 28, 2012.**

### **Student Dress Code**

Students are expected to dress appropriately for school. For Gym, students should wear the TCA gym uniform. For safety reasons, no clothes with zippers or buttons allowed.

Our dress code **prohibits** wearing the following:

- Black-hooded sweat jackets--no black "hoodies," including those with other colors or designs printed on them
- Makeup (only clear lip balm will be permitted)
- Earrings on male students
- Facial piercings
- Short shorts or short skirts (no higher than two (2) inches above the knee)
- Tight clothing
- Any clothing that exposes the midriff, chest, back, thighs, or cleavage
- Sagging pants that hang below the waist
- Flip flop shoes, open-toed shoes, and shoes with retractable wheels
- Sundresses
- Tank tops
- Bandanas
- See-through clothing
- Leggings/tights (that are not covered by a skirt or loose fitting top, no shorter than two (2) inches above the top of the knee)
- T-shirts with slogans in poor taste
- Any clothing sponsored by or depicting alcohol or tobacco companies or products
- Haircuts with shaved designs
- Hats, jackets, and sunglasses may not be worn in the building
- Students are not allowed to wear gang colors or display gang signs

All clothing should be appropriate. Students who come to school inappropriately dressed will be sent to the main office. A parent will be contacted and asked to bring proper clothing or take the student home. If a parent cannot be reached the student will remain in the office or given appropriate attire to wear for the remainder of the day. The final judgment as to the appropriateness of dress and appearance rests with the administration.

We believe that this dress code will eliminate distractions from learning and result in a better education for our children at Chicago Academy.

### **Student Fees**

School fees are an integral part of ensuring that our teachers and students have the supplies and tools they need for teaching and learning. Unfortunately, school budget challenges require our school to assess a \$35 student fee to offset the cost of consumable materials. Students use these items during the school year. All items are necessary. Please send the total fee(s) by **Tuesday, September 18**. Payment can be made in cash or by check to Chicago Academy. Payments must be submitted to the classroom teacher in an envelope clearly marked with the student's name and room number. No student will be denied materials because of financial hardship. Determination of financial hardship will be made upon completion of a Student Fee Waiver Form. These forms are available in the main office.

### **Vacations**

**WINTER VACATION** is scheduled Monday, December 24, 2012 through Friday, January 4, 2013. **SPRING VACATION** is scheduled Friday, March 29, 2013 through Friday, April 5, 2013. Use these dates to schedule all of your family trips and vacations. It is extremely important that students are in attendance days for all school days leading up to, or immediately following these breaks. *Absences for extended vacations will be considered unexcused.*

**IMPORTANT DATES  
2012-2013 School Year**

<b>HOLIDAYS 2012-2013</b>	
September 3 - Labor Day	November 12 - Veterans Day Observance
November 22, 23 - Thanksgiving Holiday	January 21 - M.L. King's Birthday
February 12 – Lincoln's Birthday	February 18 – Presidents' Day
May 27 - Memorial Day	

**SCHOOL CALENDAR** -- The school calendar includes 180 days of student attendance, which is an increase of 10 student attendance days.

Classes begin on Tuesday, September 4, 2012 (after Labor Day)  
Classes end on Monday, June 17, 2013  
Both days are full days of school for students.

**QUARTERS** -- Each quarter ends on the following day:

Q1	ends	November 1, 2012	43 days	Q3	ends	March 28, 2013	42 days
Q2	ends	January 24, 2013	45 days	Q4	ends	June 17, 2013	50 days

**PROGRESS REPORT DISTRIBUTION DAYS** -- Schools will distribute progress reports during the 6th week of each quarter

Q1	October 10, 2012	Q3	March 6, 2013
Q2	December 12, 2012	Q4	May 15, 2013

**REPORT CARD PICK-UP DAYS** -- Parents are asked to pick up report cards after the first and third quarters.

On report card pick-up days, schools will dismiss students 3 hours early. Schools will remain open for at least 5.5 hours after students are dismissed for report card pick-up activities.

Elementary schools are expected to run Report card pick-up sessions on November 7, 2012 and April 10, 2013.  
High schools are expected to run Report card pick-up sessions on November 8, 2012 and April 11, 2013.

**REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION DAYS** -- Report cards for the second and fourth quarters will be sent home on:

Q2	January 30, 2013
Q4	June 17, 2013

**TEACHER INSTITUTE DAYS** -- Teacher institute days are non-attendance days for students. These days are approved by the State Superintendent of Instruction for teacher professional development. Teacher institute days are principal directed. These days have been strategically placed to provide opportunities to review student data and plan for the upcoming quarter.

Days include: November 2, 2012; January 25, 2013; March 29, 2013 and June 18, 2013

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS** -- Professional development days are non-attendance days for students.

Days include: August 27-31, 2012 and June 19, 2013

**VACATIONS** -- Schools are closed for the following breaks

Winter vacation -- Schools are closed from December 24, 2012 to January 4, 2013

Spring vacation -- Schools are closed from April 1, 2013 to April 5, 2013

**GRADUATION DATES** -- Elementary and High School graduations cannot be held prior to June 10, 2013