

Cohoes Middle School

CMS Student Handbook & Summary Code of Conduct 2024 - 2025



SCAN THE ABOVE CODE WITH YOUR CELL PHONE CAMERA FOR OUR 2024-2025 HANDBOOK

Home/School Communication:

We embrace the opportunity to communicate with parents and guardians concerning their child's progress. Please feel free to contact our staff regarding your child at any time via phone at 237-4131, e-mail, or through Schoology (our Parent Portal) or through ParentSquare as outlined below.

Schoology/Parent Portal:

We encourage all families to utilize this free offering. Schoology is a web-based learning management system that allows parents instant access to learn about their child's grades, information about assignments, school calendar, and view teacher pages. Middle school students also have access to the portal by way of their own username and password. Please visit www.cohoes.org for additional information, and to download the appropriate forms.

Parent Square:

Parent Square is a web-based system that we use to communicate with parents. Important announcements are posted on Parent Square, but parents and staff can also communicate through direct messages. Please visit www.cohoes.org and click on the Parent Square link.

Parent/Team Conferences:

All parents and guardians are encouraged to schedule a parent/team-teacher conference through our guidance office at 237-4131 x2227. At this conference, you will meet with your child's core academic team (ELA, math, science, and social studies teachers) and guidance counselor. Specials teachers will be requested to attend as needed.

At your child's parent/team meeting, you can expect the following:

- We will encourage you to ask questions and offer your parent perspective and details that will help us know your child better.
- We will ask you to please review and update your contact information and emergency contacts as needed.
- You will receive a copy of your child's most recent interim report or report card.
- You will receive a copy of your child's current grades, an explanation of any progress monitoring that has occurred, and a discussion of current classroom activities.
- There will be an opportunity to move forward with a plan of action coordinated by your child's guidance counselor.

Attendance Policy:

The Cohoes Middle School staff believes that regular school attendance and student success have a direct correlation. It is the policy of the Cohoes Middle School to strongly encourage students to be in attendance every day. If a student accumulates ten or more absences or ten or more tardies, a notice will be sent home noting that excessive absences from school are occurring. It should be noted that all children of compulsory age must attend school on a regular basis. To encourage better student participation in school, additional resources may be used including but not limited to assigning detentions, holding a Principal's Hearing, filing an Albany County PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) petition and contacting CPS (Child Protective Services). Please note that we are required to notify you of both excused and unexcused absences. If we are aware of a specific issue or incident that is causing absences (ex: serious medical issues) we will take this into consideration as we move forward with consequences/reports. Please call if you get a letter, and you are concerned.

In the case of a student's absence from school, parents are required to call the main attendance office at 237-4131 ext. 2228 by 8:00 AM to inform us of the reason for the student's absence. Otherwise the school will make every reasonable attempt to contact the parents regarding the student's absence.

Please note that a written excuse must be provided and brought to the attendance office by the student upon his/her return to school. If not, the student's absence from school is deemed unexcused, and the student may expect to receive the appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to: detention, loss of privileges, or contact of outside agencies.

The following reasons are considered to be excused absences or tardies to school:

1. Personal illness/medical necessity (may require documentation)
2. Impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe
3. Religious observance
4. Serious illness/death in family
5. Court or legal appointment
6. Doctor/dentist appointment

The following are **some** examples of **unexcused** absences or tardies:

1. Babysitting
2. Transportation issues
3. Vacation
4. Walking younger siblings to school

Classroom Attendance:

Students are to be in their assigned classes on time. Students who report late for class must have a pass from the teacher of the previous class. Students who are late may be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Attendance at School Functions:

Students will not be allowed to attend any after-school activity, practice, or game on a day on which the student has been absent or assigned in- school or out-of-school suspension. In order for students to participate in sporting events or other extra-curricular activities, ***students must arrive at school no later than 10:00 AM (including Fridays for a Saturday event).*** Students who leave early for a professional appointment must provide a written excuse from their service provider or will not be able to attend.

No student is to remain after school unless participating in an activity supervised by a teacher, administrator, or authorized staff member. Adhering to the CMS Code of Conduct, cooperation, and school citizenship are expected of all students.

Once on school property (in or within any building, structure athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school; or in or on a school bus), a student intending to attend a school function will become the responsibility of the school, all school district rules apply and will be handled as would a student who has already been admitted to a school-related function.

Persons loitering on school grounds when a school function is in progress will be requested by the building staff or administration to leave, and if this request is ignored, the police will be summoned to ensure compliance and a disciplinary referral will be written.

Academic Honor Code:

The Academic Honor Code: We, the students of the Cohoes Middle School community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at CMS, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." Students who violate the academic honor code may be subject to loss of credit, assignment points, and disciplinary consequences.

Our Response to Behavior Infractions:

As a school, we recognize that students will occasionally misbehave and make mistakes. Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair, and consistent so as to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

1. The nature of the offense and the circumstances that led to the offense.
2. The student's prior disciplinary record.
3. The effectiveness of other forms of discipline.
4. Information from parents, teachers, and/or others, as appropriate.
5. Other extenuating circumstances.

As a general rule, discipline will be progressive. This means that after a student's first violation, subsequent violations will usually merit a more severe penalty.

CMS Behavior Points Program:

Disciplinary behavior points are assigned through a discipline referral for breaking school rules and are in addition to other consequences. A referral that results in a teacher or lunch detention counts as 1 point. Referrals that result in the student receiving a 45-minute detention count as 2 points, two-hour detentions count as 3 points, and suspensions (in-school or out-of-school) count as 5 points. ***Students with ten or more behavior points (generated by referrals) will lose various school privileges, including, but not limited to, participation in any or all school-related activities.***

Throughout the school year, students without referrals will be invited to participate in school events such as pizza parties, ice cream socials, special lunch privileges, and other incentives. Students who wish to lower their points may have the opportunity to do so by working with the adults in the building and conducting a service project that is set up by the student and staff with parent permission. It is in a student's best interest to reduce behavior points to fewer than ten as soon as they are able to. This ensures that the points do not accumulate to such a high number that reducing them to fewer than 10 is unattainable in the time period prior to the event that they wish to participate in. ***After the Memorial Day holiday, students will no longer be able to work off behavior points. It is the primary responsibility of students to track their points and make arrangements to work them off.***

Academic Eligibility:

The Academic Eligibility Guidelines are meant to identify academic problems as early as possible and encourage students to meet with teachers and take advantage of extra help opportunities in order to be successful. Students who are not in good academic standing are expected to follow a remedial plan to help them return to good academic standing. The purpose of academic eligibility is to improve performance in the classroom instead of it being a punishment.

Grade Report Periods

Student's grades will be reviewed every five weeks based on progress reports and report cards. A grade report will be generated and sent to the designated officials from the athletic office and main office to review the grades of all students who participate in extracurricular programs. Students who receive failing grades (not including incompletes) for two or more classes will be subject to academic eligibility for all interscholastic athletic teams and co-curricular clubs and activities (including class events, senior release, school functions- i.e. prom, snowball, fundraisers, drama productions). The academic eligibility will begin the Monday following the day ineligibility lists are published.

Academic Probation- Students are allowed to practice and participate in games, contests, matches, and co-curricular clubs & activities.

Academic Suspension- Students are allowed to practice but **not** participate in games, contests, and co-curricular clubs & activities.

Students in grades 6-12 participating in athletics and co-curricular clubs & activities who are failing two or more classes, will be placed on **Academic Probation**. Students who are on **Academic Probation**:

- If a student agrees to an individual improvement plan, he/she is allowed to fully participate in games, contests, and co-curricular clubs & activities if he/she is following the improvement plan.
- If a student does not agree to the individual improvement plan, he/she is placed on **Academic Suspension** and not allowed to participate in games, contests, and co-curricular clubs & activities until the next five-week grade report.

Improvement Plan

- Student eligibility will be decided on a week-by-week basis based on review of the student progress report.
- The student will report to a structured after-school study period (Academic Seminar)
- The frequency in which the student attends the Academic Seminar will be as follows:
 - Failing 2 Courses = attend 2 Academic Seminars per week
 - Failing 3 or more courses = attend 3 Academic Seminars per week
- The student will hand in a weekly progress report for all courses to the main office for review.
- The designated official will review the weekly progress report at the end of each week.
 - If the student is following the improvement plan and making progress, they will continue on **Academic Probation** for the next week.
 - If the student is not following the improvement plan or making progress, they will be on **Academic Suspension** the following week.
- **Students will stay on the improvement plan until the next five-week grade report.** If the student is passing all classes on the grade report at the end of the five period, they are removed from the improvement plan. If they are still failing any courses they will continue the improvement plan for the next five-week period.

Vacations

- There are times when vacations immediately follow a grade report. When this occurs, students will work with their teacher to put together a portfolio of work to be completed in place of the weekly progress report. The portfolio must be approved by the designated official, and completion of the portfolio during vacation will substitute for the weekly progress report.

4th Quarter

- Students who fail courses during the 4th quarter will begin the Fall on **Academic Probation**.

The superintendent and/or principal will have the final authority to determine the eligibility for any student based on extenuating circumstances not covered under this guideline

Eighth-Grade Students:

Eighth-grade students who are failing two or more classes (math, ELA, science, social studies, technology, PE, health, foreign language, and band or chorus) at the time of their **fourth quarter interim** report are academically ineligible from participation in the eighth-grade dance or field trip.

As a reminder, eighth-grade students are responsible for knowing their behavioral eligibility for the dance and field trip. Students must pre-arrange to work off behavior points (students must have less than 10) by **Thursday, May 22nd**.

Eighth-grade students have until **Thursday, May 22nd**, at 2:49 PM to meet academic eligibility requirements. If they are not eligible, they may then obtain a co-curricular eligibility form from the CMS Guidance Office. When all teachers (**every subject**) indicate on the form that the student is not failing, the student must bring the completed form to administration. Eighth-grade students may earn eligibility status for the eighth-grade dance and field trip. This grace period is only for students who are failing at the 4th quarter interim. Students who are failing two or more classes for the year will not be eligible. (Please see below.)

Students who have missed more than 18 days of school (chronic absenteeism) may not be eligible for the 8th-grade dance or field trip.

Parents/guardians may appeal to the principal in writing for consideration of extenuating circumstances.

Eighth-grade students who are failing two or more classes (math, ELA, science, social studies, technology, PE, health, and foreign language) **for the year** will not be eligible to attend the eighth-grade dance or field trip. The calculation used for this determination will be quarter 1 average + quarter 2 average + quarter 3 average + quarter 4 interim average \div 4 (this is for each subject, each quarter). We will round to the nearest hundredth of a point.

8th-grade Promotion Ceremony

Eighth-grade students who are failing two or more **core classes** (math, ELA, science, social studies) for the year will not be eligible to participate in the eighth-grade promotion ceremony. The calculation used for this determination will be quarter 1 average + quarter 2 average + quarter 3 average + **quarter 4 average** \div 4 (this is for each subject, each quarter). We will round to the nearest hundredth of a point.

Eighth-grade students who fail two or more core classes will be strongly recommended to attend our high school summer transition program.

Extenuating eligibility circumstances may be appealed to the principal in writing for consideration.

Standards for Acceptance to the National Junior Honor Society:

The following standards for acceptance to the National Junior Honor Society at Cohoes Middle School were approved by the faculty and administration of the middle school:

1. Students will be inducted after the third quarter of grade seven. Grade averages from sixth and the first three-quarters of seventh will count toward acceptance into the National Junior Honor Society. The students must have an overall average of 89.5% in the core academic subjects.
2. Students who are eligible scholastically will be notified and told that for further consideration for selection to the NJHS, they must complete a Student Activity Information Form.
3. A Faculty Advisory Council, consisting of nine members, annually appointed by the principal, will review the Student Activity Information Forms and vote on eligible candidates based on Leadership, Service, Character, and Citizenship. Candidates receiving a majority vote of the faculty council will be inducted into the NJHS.
4. In extenuating circumstances, the student and/or his or her parent /guardian may petition the Faculty Advisory Council to reconsider the eligibility of the student.

Student Obligations:

Students are responsible for all textbooks, Library books, and Chromebooks that are issued to them during the school year and are expected to return these items at the time of collection. In addition, they are responsible for other obligations: e.g. money owed due to school sales, damaged or missing equipment, damaged personal and school property, lost or damaged library books, and detentions assigned but not served.

Grade 8 students who have obligations may not be allowed to take part in the promotion ceremony until these obligations are completed.

ChromeBooks:

Chromebooks are assigned to students for their sole educational use only. Chromebooks are the property of the Cohoes City School District. If a student withdraws from the district, the Chromebook and its charger must be returned at the time of withdrawal or request. Students will be responsible for paying for any damages to equipment. For the complete Cohoes City Schools Chromebook handbook, please visit www.cohoes.org.

COMPUTER/ INTERNET USE

CCSD Computer/Device & Internet Acceptable Usage Agreement

These rules are intended to provide guidelines and examples of prohibited uses but do not attempt to state all required or prohibited activities by users. This agreement applies to CCSD district technology, network, and personal devices (BYOD). Failure to comply with this agreement and these rules may result in loss of computer, BYOD, internet access privileges, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

No Expectation of Privacy - CCSD retains control, custody and supervision of all computers, networks and Internet services owned or leased by the school. The school reserves the right to monitor all computer and Internet activity by students. Students have no expectations of privacy in their use of school computers, including stored files.

Computer/Electronic Device Use is a Privilege, Not a Right - Student use of computers/electronic devices, networks and Internet services is a privilege, not a right. Unacceptable use/activity may result in suspension or cancellation of privileges as well as additional disciplinary and/or legal action. The building principal shall have final authority to decide whether a student's privileges will be denied or revoked.

Acceptable Use - Student access to district computers, BYOD, networks and Internet services are provided for educational purposes and research consistent with the school's educational, curriculum and instructional goals. The same rules and expectations that govern student use of computers and electronic devices also applies to other student conduct. Students are further expected to comply with these rules and all specific instructions from the teacher or other supervising staff member/volunteer when accessing the school's computers, BYOD, networks and Internet services.

Prohibited Use - The user is responsible for his/her actions and activities involving CCSD computers, BYOD, networks and Internet services and for his/her computer files, passwords and accounts. Examples of unacceptable uses that are expressly prohibited include but are not limited to the following:

Accessing Inappropriate Materials - Accessing, submitting, posting, publishing, forwarding, downloading, scanning or displaying materials that are obscene, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate;

Illegal Activities - Using the school's computers, resources, networks and Internet services for any illegal activity or activity that violates other policies, procedures and/or school rules. This includes any instance in which cyberbullying causes a substantial disruption of the work of the school or impinges on the rights of other students; the person committing the act shall be subject to school disciplinary procedures.

Violating Copyrights - Copying or downloading copyrighted materials without the owner's permission.

Plagiarism - Representing as one's own work any, materials obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, etc.). When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher and Web site must be identified.

Copying Software - Copying or downloading software without the express authorization of the system administrator.

Non-School-Related Uses - Using the computers, networks and Internet services for non-school-related purposes such as private financial gain, commercial, advertising or solicitation purposes, e-mail or for any other personal use;

Misuse of Passwords/Unauthorized Access - Sharing passwords, using other users' passwords without permission and/or accessing other users' accounts;

Malicious Use/Vandalism - Any malicious use, disruption or harm to the school's computers, others BYOD, networks and Internet services, will not be tolerated.

Compensation for Losses, Costs and/or Damages - The student and/or the student's parent/guardian shall be responsible for compensating CCSD for any losses, costs or damages incurred by the school related to violations of policy and/or these rules, including investigation of any violations.

CCSD Assumes No Responsibility for Unauthorized Charges, Costs or Illegal Use - The school assumes no responsibility for any unauthorized charges made by students including but not limited to credit card charges, long distance telephone charges, equipment and line costs, or for any illegal use of its computers such as a copyright violation.

Student Security - A student shall not reveal his/her full name, address or telephone number on the Internet/CCSD network without prior permission from a supervising teacher. Students should never meet people they have contacted through the Internet. Students should inform their supervising teacher if they access information or messages that are dangerous, inappropriate or make them uncomfortable in any way.

System Security- The security of the school's computers, networks and Internet services is a high priority. Any user who identifies a security problem must notify the system administrator. The user shall not demonstrate the problem to others. Any user who attempts or causes a breach of system security shall have his/her privileges revoked and may be subject to additional disciplinary and/or legal action. Students who engage in unacceptable use may lose access to the District's technology system and may be subject to further disciplinary actions including revocation of computer use and additional consequences as deemed appropriate. Parents, please discuss these rules with your student to ensure he or she understands them.

Physical Education (PE):

The New York State Education Department, Bureau of Physical Education, interprets the physical education mandate concerning the successful completion of physical education as follows:

1. A student must be present.
2. A student must participate in physical education for each year that he/she is in school.

Students will be expected to dress appropriately for physical education classes as directed by their instructors. Physical education teachers may ask students to remove piercings or jewelry as they may interfere with student safety during class. Students must tie their sneakers as directed to prevent injury. Crocs may not be worn for PE. Failure to dress appropriately, remove jewelry, or participate properly will result in reduction in grades and/or disciplinary action.

Student-athletes must fully participate in PE class on the day of a practice or contest in order to participate in those athletic practices or contests.

Middle School Dances:

Middle school dances are for students attending Cohoes Middle School (grades 6, 7, and 8). As with other activities, school rules must be followed. Insubordinate students will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the CMS Code of Conduct. These actions will be determined by the severity of the misconduct and the student's prior record of misconduct. The discipline will be assigned at the discretion of the building administrators.

1. **Students who are ineligible due to academics, behavior, or attendance issues may NOT attend dances.**

2. School dances start at the announced time. The doors open at that time. No student will be admitted to a dance 30 minutes after the beginning of the dance unless accompanied to the door by a parent. All students must remain until the conclusion of the dance. If students leave for any reason, they may not be readmitted.
3. Students are to have their transportation arrangements for going home made in advance of their arrival at the dance. Parents are encouraged to drive their children home from these functions and be ready to pick them up at the designated time. Students will not be allowed to use the telephone during the dance unless an emergency situation arises.
4. No students are permitted to go to their lockers during the dance.
5. School dress code is in effect and will be enforced.
6. Pushing, shoving, wrestling, or conduct of that nature is not allowed.
7. Behaviors offensive to chaperones, other students, and administrators will not be permitted.
8. Food and beverage containers will be deposited in the receptacles provided and not deposited on the floor or thrown through the air. No food or beverages can be brought into the dance.
9. Students who do not follow these rules will be warned and referred to the building administrator for appropriate disciplinary action. Parents will be contacted if their child needs to be removed from the dance.

Middle School Student Dress Code:

Students often dress as they see others dress on television or at the mall. Being fashionable, however, is not always the same as being appropriate for school. Young adolescents often do not see how their appearance is perceived by their peers and by adults. We emphasize to all students that school is a place where students are engaged in the **business of learning** and that they need to dress in a manner that promotes self-respect and the respect of others.

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. Students and their parents have the primary responsibility for acceptable student dress and appearance. Teachers and all other district personnel should exemplify and reinforce acceptable student dress and help students develop an understanding of appropriate appearance in the school setting.

A student's dress, grooming, and appearance, including hair style/color, jewelry, make-up, and nails, shall:

- A. Be safe and appropriate, and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process. A student's attire shall not be excessively baggy. Coats are not to be worn in school. Students must keep coats and jackets in their lockers during the school day.
- B. Recognize that extremely brief garments such as tube tops, net tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, plunging necklines (front and/or back), and see-through garments are not appropriate. Shorts and skirts must completely cover a student's buttocks and should not be excessively brief. Pajamas are not allowed. A student's attire will ensure their midriff is completely covered while standing. Garments that expose the navel at any time are not permitted.
- C. Ensure that undergarments are completely covered with outer clothing.
- D. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is a safety hazard (including slippers) will not be allowed. Heelys are not allowed at any time.
- E. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of actual or perceived race, color, weight, religion or religious practice, creed, national origin, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, sex, or disability.
- F. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities. This includes prohibition on gang symbols, signs, colors, or other related apparel. Images of guns or other weapons are not appropriate for school.
- G. Not include the wearing of hats, displaying of hats, or wearing hoods in the middle school except for a medical or religious purpose.
- H. Coats, sunglasses, and headphones are not to be worn or displayed in school.
- I. Proper, safe footwear must be worn during technology class and physical education to prevent possible injuries.

Each Building Principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for informing all students and their parents of the student dress code at the beginning of the school year and any revisions to the dress code made during the school year.

Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item, and if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to disciplinary consequences, up to, and including out-of-school suspension.

Electronic Devices:

Students are not to engage in inappropriate use of electronic devices during the school day; including, but not limited to, cell phones, smart watches, tablets, cameras, radios, iPods, and other electronic music players.

Mobile phones and headphones (including ear pods) are to be turned off and are to remain out of sight at all times. **No pictures, video, live streaming, or audio recordings are to be taken during school time using any device.** Music devices, MP3 players, video game players, tablets, etc. need to stay in lockers or backpacks and may not be used in classrooms or hallways. CMS is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Cyberbullying using electronic devices, including mobile phones, Chromebooks, computers, gaming systems, or other communication apps on any device is prohibited. Students who do not comply with the CMS electronic device policy may be subject to disciplinary action and the electronic device may be confiscated. A parent or guardian will be called to pick up the confiscated item.

Test Taking:

Students are required to follow all directions given by teachers during testing situations. There is to be NO communication (verbal, nonverbal, or electronic) during a test. If a teacher or supervising staff person determines that communication did occur, or if a student disrupted or jeopardize the integrity of the testing environment, a student may receive a grade of zero for the examination and disciplinary consequences. All students may be asked to turn over electronic communication devices during all assessments.

Reporting Violations:

All students are expected to promptly report violations of the code of conduct to a teacher, guidance counselor, the Building Principal or his/her designee. Any student observing a student possessing a weapon, alcohol or illegal substance on school property or at a school function shall report this information immediately to a teacher, the Principal, the Principal's designee or the Superintendent of Schools. Any student observing a student being harassed, bullied and/or discriminated against by another student or a staff member shall report this information either orally or in writing, immediately to a teacher, the Principal, the Principal's designee, the Superintendent of Schools or the Dignity Act Coordinator.

For the 2024 – 2025 school year, the **Cohoes Middle School Dignity Act Coordinator is Deanna Kelly – CMS Assistant Principal.** Mrs. Kelly can be reached in person within the CMS Office, 237-4131 x2224, or dkelly@cohoes.org.

COHOES MIDDLE SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

	Breakfast	7:30am	-	8:07am
	PERIOD 1	8:10am	-	8:59am
	PERIOD 2	9:02am	-	9:49am
	PERIOD 3	9:52am	-	10:39am
LUNCH 6	PERIOD 4	10:42am	-	11:06am
	PERIOD 5	11:06am	-	11:29am
LUNCH 7	PERIOD 6	11:32am	-	11:56am
	PERIOD 7	11:56am	-	12:19pm
LUNCH 8	PERIOD 8	12:22pm	-	12:46pm
	PERIOD 9	12:46pm	-	1:09pm
	PERIOD 10	1:12pm	-	1:59pm
	PERIOD 11	2:02pm	-	2:49pm