

# Chain Exploration Center

## 2024-2025 Handbook



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**EXPLORE YOUR PASSIONS**

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*CEC Family Handbook 2024*



Dear Chain Exploration Center Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! The CEC staff look forward to another fun-filled, adventurous, deep-dive into learning. Our 25 acre campus affords our students unique opportunities to be actively involved in growing, cultivating, and harvesting the Chain Community Garden, exploring and investigating Silver Lake and the trail system within our woods, as well as taking learning to another level in our outdoor classroom.

A strong, collaborative caregiver/student/advisor/administrator relationship is critical and one which will only be strengthened by each partner's willingness to work together, be actively involved, and through open and honest communication. This handbook provides information and details about procedures and expectations that will help each family have a safe, positive, and meaningful school year. Please take time to read the handbook and discuss as a family so everyone is informed and up to date. If interested, a printed copy of this handbook and the policies and forms we refer to are on the Governance Council bookshelf located in the CEC Community Room. If you have questions, concerns, or want to share something positive, please call 715-258-4151 ext. 43234 or email me @ [cnaparalla@waupacaschools.org](mailto:cnaparalla@waupacaschools.org). It is important to me you feel comfortable reaching out and sharing your thoughts.

I am thrilled to have your family as a part of our Chain Exploration Center family!

*Carrie Naparalla*

Carrie Naparalla  
CEC Administrator

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COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION

# Welcome to Chain Exploration Center

## MISSION

The mission of the CEC is to be a place where children explore their passions and gain a strong educational foundation through project-based learning in a collaborative community.

## HISTORY

The CEC serves students in grades 4K through 8. The coursework is integrated into a project-based learning model and based on Wisconsin State Standards. Emphases for projects will draw from the fields of the Environment, Related Arts, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), and 21st Century Skills that will be integrated into each area.

Students are enrolled in multiage classrooms in grades 1 through 8. The CEC offers unique opportunities utilizing a 25.5-acre campus, and was created with the intention of offering an educational choice to area families. Coursework at the CEC develops personal passions, encourages 21st Century Skills, and offers community and place-based learning experiences. Advisors provide daily guided instruction of literacy and math skills to students.

## WELCOME, CAREGIVERS!

We know that you care deeply about your children. This care, and your engagement with the CEC, are treasures. It is our hope and intention to be a strong and supportive partner with you during the time that your children will be exploring and learning at our school.

In the year ahead, the CEC looks forward to:

- Fulfilling our mission to be a place where children explore their passions and gain a strong educational foundation through project-based learning in a collaborative community.
- Providing consistent and timely school/home communication. Sharing information about successes and challenges. Responding to your questions and concerns. Reaching out if we have questions or concerns. Talking with you about your students!
- Welcoming you to student project nights, performances, open houses, and special events and celebrations. (photographs and videos blurb)
- Talking with you and hosting listening sessions and community conversations with caregivers, families, community partners, and students (current and

graduates) to get your perspective on the experiences you and your children are having at the CEC.

Caregiver engagement is important to the success of our students. Here is a handful of ideas for being involved:

- Please help with the project process by sharing your knowledge and expertise, assisting with research and final product creation, and providing feedback.
- Please talk with your student about their day.
- Please talk with us. Reach out at any point to talk about successes and challenges.
- Please attend project nights, concerts, and other school -related events.
- Please attend caregiver/advisor conferences/meetings.

If you have questions on how to be actively involved, please contact your child's advisor or the school administrator.

### **CAREGIVER VOLUNTEERS**

The CEC staff welcome volunteers since much of the learning done in project-based schools is hands-on, research driven, and done in small groups or individualized. Additional volunteer opportunities are available by serving on our Governance Council, Council Committees and PTG. Please contact your child's advisor or the school administrator about how to become a volunteer. An approved [Volunteer Application](#) needs to be on file in the district office prior to beginning to volunteer.

### **EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS**

Because of our close school community, we celebrate milestones and the completion of long-term projects. Family members are invited to participate in project showcase nights, concerts, and other school events, celebrating your child's hard work as well as the work of all CEC students. Our Cultivating Connections Committee plans activities and events which promote cultural, mental, and social health. To assist with planning, a calendar of events will be sent home the summer before the start of the school year.

### **LIVE SOURCES**

The use of live sources is embedded in project-based learning methodology. Caregivers, community members, and business leaders are asked to volunteer their expertise and assist in recruiting additional live sources to aid student research.

### **PARENT TEACHER GROUP (PTG)**

Chain Exploration Center PTG operates to benefit and meet the needs of all students. Everyone is welcome to join. Meetings are held monthly. More information can be

found on our [website](#).

## **FUNDRAISING**

Chain Exploration Center, Inc., is a 501c3 organization. The Governance Council's Finance & Fundraising Committee, the CEC Student Council, and PTG host a variety of fundraising events throughout the year to support Governance Council initiatives, and to meet advisor and student needs. The Governance Council plays a large role in reaching out to the larger community to develop donor and business partnerships to help support CEC.

## **IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLIMENTS**

When you have questions, concerns, or compliments, please call on us! Charter schools utilize different approaches to learning so a student may need additional time to adjust. During this time of adjustment and learning, the following is designed to help you get your questions, answers, and concerns addressed.

### **GENERAL QUESTIONS**

Please contact the CEC secretary if you have questions about daily operations, upcoming events, and enrollment, as well as procedural questions. Mrs. Brenda Plum can be reached at 715-258-4151.

### **QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOUR CHILD**

Please address questions concerning your child to their advisor. Healthy, open communication between caregiver and advisor is essential for a positive educational experience. Communication with an advisor can be in person at a scheduled conference, via email or phone call (715-258-4151).

### **QUESTIONS RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL ISSUES**

Please contact the school administrator if you have questions about educational issues such as curriculum, teaching methods, discipline policies and procedures, and advisor-student relationships. Ms. Carrie Naparalla can be reached at 715-258-4151 ext. 4324

### **QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO LEGAL OR FINANCIAL ISSUES**

Please contact a member of the CEC Governance Council for questions related to legal or financial issues at the CEC. Governance Council members' email addresses are posted on our [website](#).



## **QUESTIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY EVENTS**

The CEC Finance and Fundraising Committee Chair is your contact for questions about community events that include fundraising activities. We post the list of committees and committee chairs on our [website](#).

## **DAY-TO-DAY AT THE CEC AND OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

#### **VISITORS**

For the safety of all, our doors are locked at all times. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to come and see the work our students are doing. Upon arrival at CEC, you will be asked your name and the reason for your visit. Once you enter the building, you will be asked to sign in and be given a visitor badge to wear. This procedure helps us know who is in the building at all times.

#### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Doors open	7:15 a.m.
School begins	8:00 a.m.
Dismissal	2:50 p.m.
Bus departure	2:55 p.m.

#### **WEDNESDAY EARLY DISMISSAL**

Students are dismissed at 1:50 p.m. and may either be picked up by caregivers or take the bus home as usual.

#### **DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES**

Supervision begins at 7:15 a.m. For safety purposes, caregivers should not plan to arrive and drop off any child prior to this time. Caregivers picking up students at the end of the school day should expect students to be dismissed from classrooms at 2:50 p.m. (1:50 p.m. on Wednesdays).

#### **LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY PICK-UP**

When bringing your child to school after 8:00 a.m. or when picking up your child before 2:50 p.m., please go to the office and enter your child's name on the sign-in/sign-out sheet.

#### **PARKING**

Please park in designated parking slots and utilize the circle turnaround. Park your car and come to the entryway via the crosswalk to get your child. Alternatively, you can

stay in your car and utilize the pick-up, drop-off lane. All pick-up and drop-off is in front of the building. Bus pick-up and drop-off is in the rear of the building.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

CEC students residing within the District are provided transportation. If there are changes to your child's bus schedule, please call GO Riteway at 715-258-2626 to notify them of those changes.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT RULES**

- Be on time at the designated school bus stop, help keep the bus on schedule, and sit in the assigned seat when designated by the driver.
- Stay off the road at all times while waiting for the bus. Be careful in approaching the place where the bus stops.
- Do not move toward the bus until the bus has been brought to a complete stop. Do not leave your seat while the bus is in motion or while discharging or boarding riders along the bus route.
- Remain in the bus in the event of a road emergency until instructions are given by the driver. Keep hands and head inside the bus at all times after entering and until leaving the bus. Do not throw anything out of the bus windows.
- Remember that loud talking and laughing or unnecessary confusion diverts the driver's attention and could result in a serious accident. Be absolutely quiet when approaching a railroad-crossing stop.
- Treat bus equipment as you would be expected to treat valuable furniture in your own home. Never tamper with the bus or any of its equipment. Assist in keeping the bus safe and sanitary at all times. No eating is allowed on the bus unless approved by the bus driver.
- Carry no animals on the bus or large instruments or objects, which take up a passenger seat. Keep books, packages, coats and all other objects out of the aisles.
- Be courteous to fellow pupils, and the bus driver. Help look after the safety of smaller children.
- Do not ask the driver to stop at places other than the regular bus stop; he is not permitted to do this except by proper authorization from a school official. A student must have a note from their guardian stating a busing change and a bus pass from the office if any changes are made to their regular bus stop.
- Observe safety precautions at drop off point. Where it is necessary to cross the highway, proceed to a point at least 10 feet in front of the bus on the right shoulder of the highway where traffic may be observed in both directions. Then wait for a signal from the bus driver permitting you to cross.
- Observe the same rules and regulations on other trips under school sponsorship as you observe between home and school. The teacher, in the case of field trips or in cases where transportation is used for other than the regular bus routes, shall assume the responsibility for student behavior and control in order that the driver may give full attention to driving.

- The School District of Waupaca approves the use of video cameras on the school buses for the primary purpose of reducing disciplinary problems and vandalism on the bus, thereby allowing the driver to focus on driving the bus, providing for safer transportation for our students.

## **BUS RIDER RULES**

### **BUS RIDER POLICY 8600.01**

The School District of Waupaca, in conjunction with GoRiteway, is responsible for the safety of children and the rights of others while on a school bus. The bus is an extension of the classroom where rules of conduct and consideration are present.

## **CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

It is a worthy goal that every student has a clear understanding of how their actions affect others. Conflict resolution and esteem building are integral parts of our curriculum. Students are required to take responsibility for their actions and work toward improvement with support if needed. Caregivers will be contacted to help with this plan. If at any time a student puts themselves or another student in physical danger, the student may be suspended according to the administrator's decision.

## **BUS RIDER DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

### **BUS RIDER DISCIPLINE POLICY 8600.01**

The School District of Waupaca generally utilizes a progressive discipline policy when school bus rules are not followed. Discipline procedures may simply involve a call to the caregiver from the driver or a meeting with the student, caregiver, and administrator to go over proper bus riding behavior. However, depending on the severity of the rule broken or incident involved, administration may immediately suspend a student from riding the bus. The school board may expel a student from school and/or transportation privileges for extreme misbehavior in accordance with state law and board policy.

## **CHILD'S RELEASE FROM SCHOOL**

Students are only released to those individuals listed in Infinite Campus. Students are not released to other relatives or family friends without written authorization or verbal verification from the caregiver.

## **EMERGENCY RELEASE FORM**

In case of an emergency, your child will only be released to those people listed in Infinite Campus. Proof of identification will be required. Those NOT listed in Infinite Campus can only pick up the child with a written and signed note from the child's caregiver. CEC staff may call the caregiver of the child for confirmation. Information in Infinite Campus, especially Emergency Priorities and phone numbers should be

updated at the beginning of each school year.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY 5200**

The school attendance policy in the School District of Waupaca was created with the intent to demonstrate commitment to student success in school. Enforcement of attendance policies and truancy procedures shall be a shared responsibility between schools, students, caregivers, service agencies, law enforcement officials, and the community. Student attendance records are kept electronically in Infinite Campus and follow students throughout their school careers. This data is also reported to US Civil Rights authorities.

The CEC encourages educational outings and family trips that encourage learning and exploration of new places and cultures. Homework packets for family trips or extended absences should be requested at least 48 hours in advance. At the advisor's discretion, work might be made up upon return rather than during the absence.

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCE: an absence which the school district approves:**

- personal illness
- emergency in the family
- medical appointments
- death in the family/funeral
- religious holiday
- court and/or legal appearances
- approved school activities
- special circumstances approved in advance if possible

#### **PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCE: an absence for reasons other than the above will be considered unexcused with the following exception. Caregivers may:**

*PRE-EXCUSE their child for any reason for up to **ten** (10) days per year. This means that any absence for reasons other than the above may be excused providing there is a WRITTEN PRE-ARRANGED FORM. (Forms may be picked up in the CEC office prior to the date of absence). If it is not PRE-ARRANGED, the absence will be considered unexcused.*

**TRUANT:** a pupil who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of any day on which school is held during a semester.

**HABITUAL TRUANT:** a pupil who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five days on which school is held during a Semester.

## **TRUANCY, UNEXCUSED ABSENCE AND TARDY**

Students who are absent from school without an acceptable excuse as authorized within the District's Attendance Policy will be considered truant and shall be dealt with in accordance with state law and established District procedures. These procedures shall be in line with recommendations of the Waupaca County truancy committee, the District's truancy plan, and state law requirements.

A student who misses part of a school day (part or all of one or more classes) shall be considered tardy and may be subject to the same conditions and dispositions as a truancy. This includes students who over-sleep or miss the bus. Unexcused absences from school can result in disciplinary measures being taken by the school ranging from school detentions to school suspensions.

## **SCHOOL MEALS**

### **GENERAL NUTRITION GUIDELINES**

We ask that lunches and snacks be packed with thought given to the health and growing needs of children. CEC participates in the federal free and reduced lunch program. For school meal menus and a free/reduced meal application, please visit the [district website](#).

### **BREAKFAST**

The school district provides a breakfast program for all students. Breakfast is served from 7:40a.m.-8:00 a.m.

### **LUNCH**

Lunch is offered through the district. Families can choose the days they wish for their child to participate.

### **SPECIAL DIETARY ISSUES AND ALLERGIES**

If your child has special dietary issues, please make these known to the health aide, and your child's advisor. Food allergies should be reported to the health aide as soon as the allergies are identified.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES**

In case of an accident or emergency requiring a physician or hospitalization, we will immediately attempt to contact the person listed as Emergency Priority 1 in Infinite

Campus. If we are unable to reach that person, we will attempt to contact the persons listed as Emergency Priority 2, 3, 4 in Infinite Campus until someone is reached. If immediate action is required, the school may call 911 while continuing attempts to reach the persons listed in Infinite Campus.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

### **Health and Safety Policy 5310.01 and 5341**

The CEC will rely upon District nursing staff and trained staff to provide the necessary resources. The CEC abides by all local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding health and safety standards. School nursing services are provided by a full-time health aide in conjunction with the oversight of a District RN.

### **HEALTH/SICKNESS**

Keeping each student as healthy as possible is the goal of School Health Services. The school health aide is available to oversee the health needs of students during school hours. Information obtained from the caregiver, physician, and dentist at initial registration will be used to begin a permanent health record. Pertinent information is then added as the student's school life progresses. This information is confidential.

Screening programs in areas of hearing and vision are carried out by Health Services personnel and trained volunteers. Caregivers are promptly notified of any abnormal findings.

The School Nurse and Health Aide are always available to help with health problems of your child as they affect his/her school life. Please feel free to contact them for assistance.

### **WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME**

#### **When to Keep Your Child at Home Policy 5340 and 8450**

Please be mindful of others with impaired immune systems when determining whether your child is too sick to attend school. Students should not come to school if they have any of the following:

- **A fever of 100 or greater.** (Your child should not return to school until they are fever free without the use of fever reducers such as Tylenol.)
- **A rash** that has not been determined to be related to an allergy or other non-contagious condition.
- **A cough** that is productive, or has gone on for a few days.
- **Green drainage** from their nose.
- **Eyes that are mattering** and crusted shut in the morning, or any discharge that has not been diagnosed by your Doctor as an allergy.

- **A sore throat** with swollen tonsils and white or pus spots in their throat or on the tonsils. Anyone with a strep infection must complete a full 24 hours of an antibiotic before they are allowed to return to school.
- **Vomiting or diarrhea.** If your child vomits or has diarrhea, please keep them home until they are vomit/diarrhea free for 24 hours.
- **If your child has been seen by a physician** and is taking antibiotics, they will usually need to be kept home for a full 24-hour treatment before returning to school.

Should a child become ill during the school day, they will be brought to the health office. Arrangements will be made for care and an emergency contact will be called to pick your child up if needed. If the child is hurt on school grounds or in class, it should be reported at once to the adult in charge.

If your child is diagnosed as having a communicable illness, CDC recommends having a doctor's note, granting permission for the child to return to school, on file in the office upon the child's return to school. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the child being asked to leave school until such a note is produced if staff suspects that the child is still contagious. Working caregivers are encouraged to arrange for back up care for their child ahead of time in case of sudden onset of illness.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

### **Medication Policy 5330**

Students needing medication during the school day must report to the health office. An adult must deliver all prescriptions or over the counter medications to the health office. The medication must be in a **current prescription bottle with the name of the student, type of medication and instructions for dispensing** of the medicine. "Physician's and Parents requests for Giving Medication at School" forms must be completed and on file in the health office. Forms are available at each school's health office. The CEC health assistant will dispense medication. Students who receive a prescription for antibiotics due to a contagious infection must not come to school at least 24 hours after first dose.

Routine items such as ice packs and bandages may be dispensed to children without parental permission. We do not give cough drops and do not recommend you send them to school.

## **STUDENT IMMUNIZATIONS**

### **Immunization Policy 5320**

All students admitted to the district's schools must present immunization records as required by law. Except as otherwise provided, immunization is required for measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, hepatitis B, chicken pox and polio.

A student may be waived from the immunization requirement when the student's caregiver submits a written statement objecting to the immunization for reasons of health, religion, or personal conviction.

### **SUNSCREEN AND BUG SPRAY**

Students will work outdoors many days at the CEC, especially long hours on field days. Please be mindful of personal sun and insect protection for your child. Sunscreen is not provided by the CEC.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

All personal items, such as toys, games, electronic devices, etc. are best to remain at home unless needed for a project. Inappropriate items will be held in the office and may be picked up at the end of the day.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

During the course of the school year, students frequently misplace personal items like jackets, hats, gloves, etc. It is much easier to return these things if your child's name is marked on all of their personal items. Items that are not claimed at the end of the year will be donated.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

The CEC recognizes that first-hand experiences provided by field trips are an effective and worthwhile means of learning. No student shall be denied the privilege of participating in a field trip or school-sponsored trip because of financial inability to pay the fee. The CEC model of learning requires research into chosen topics and may require more field experiences than in a traditional school. At registration, parents are asked to provide permission for all field trips.

### **OUTDOOR RULES**

- Stay within the school boundaries.
- Children may explore in the outdoor classrooms with adult supervision only.
- Shoes must be worn outdoors at all times.

While outside children are under the supervision of advisors and/or advisor assistants. Weather permitting, all students will be expected to go outside for fresh air and exercise. It is the caregivers responsibility to make sure their children have dressed appropriately for the weather. Jackets are recommended if the temperature is below 50 degrees. Boots, jackets, snow pants, hats, and mittens are required in the winter. Boots must be worn whenever snow, slush, or mud is on the ground. Outside time may be



limited during extremely cold weather.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES: RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING**

It is the goal of CEC to preserve the natural environment that is the home of our program. We promote citizenship and stewardship of our resources and work to reduce and reuse them whenever possible. For this goal, we have a recycling and composting program. Food scraps are composted for the garden. In addition, students will be in charge of recycling paper and other products used in the school.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

### **DAILY SCHEDULE**

Students receive instruction in English Language Arts and Mathematics in the morning. The afternoon serves as integrated project time. Art, Music, and Fitness also take place in the afternoon.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

CEC students may participate in all co-curricular activities offered at Waupaca Learning Center and Waupaca Middle School After school transportation to WLC and WMS is available.

### **ACTIVITY FEE**

An activity fee of \$20.00 is collected from each student. The money is used for student project supplies.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS**

We are proud to tell the story of the work we do each day. Photographs and videos of students participating in educational activities, concerts, events, and project nights will be posted on the CEC website and Facebook and Instagram pages. In addition, photographs and videos may be used in marketing materials, the school yearbook, local cable news stations and newspapers. Your permission to use your child's photos is given annually, during the registration process. **Caregivers may revoke any or all permissions by submitting a written request** to the school secretary or administrator.

### **POSTING OF MATERIALS**

#### **Distribution/Posting of Non-School Related Materials Policy 9700.20**

If you would like to share a poster or announcement please submit it to the CEC office for review and approval by the school administrator. No items will be sent home with all students, but if approved, your event will be posted on the current happenings board, and in the Community Room.

## **NONSECTARIAN**

The CEC is a public school that is non-sectarian in its practices, programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations.

## **ADMISSION/ENROLLMENT**

The CEC will abide by all federal and state nondiscrimination standards. The School District of Waupaca's official non-discrimination and equal access to education policy (PO 2260) applies in all CEC operations. The CEC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, sex, (including transgender status, change of sex or gender identity), or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability ("Protected Classes") in any of its student program and activities.

Enrollment is voluntary and there is no tuition. CEC is open to all district students. Open enrollment students may also attend the school in accordance with state law and district policies. A CEC application is required as part of the student admissions process. Additionally, if the student has never attended the School District of Waupaca, district registration is also required.

Prior to families beginning at Chain Exploration Center, all caregivers will attend an orientation meeting. This meeting will provide caregivers with an overview of the educational environment and opportunities for your student(s) at CEC.

If a student is attending CEC but the family finds project-based learning is not the right fit for them, please let us know. We would be happy to meet with you to offer help as you determine the best placement for your student. If a child leaves the CEC during the year for another school, he or she may not re-enter the CEC until the next school year and must follow the enrollment process in place for new students at that time.

## **LOTTERY**

**LOTTERY:** If the number of applications exceeds the seats available at any grade level, then, per Wisconsin Statute § 118.40(3)(g), priority will first be given to continuing students and then to siblings of enrolled students and to the children of founding and current CECGC members and of CEC employees (provided that such children of CECGC members and CEC employees constitute no more than ten percent (10%) of CEC's total enrollment). Next, if seats are still available, a lottery shall be conducted by representatives of CEC for each grade level that is oversubscribed. The lottery shall be a part of the school record and shall be a random selection of students at each grade level that is oversubscribed to ensure even distribution throughout the grade levels, to the

extent possible.

**WAITING LIST:** Those students not accepted via the lottery will be placed on a priority waiting list in the order they were drawn. Families will be contacted in the order established by the lottery, or if no lottery is necessary, in the order applications are received, if and when there are openings. Each year the waiting list will expire on January 1 and a new waiting list will be created in accordance with the process provided above.

**ACCEPTANCE:** Parents/guardians of students selected through the lottery will have thirty (30) days to sign and return a letter of commitment confirming that the pupil will attend religious holiday

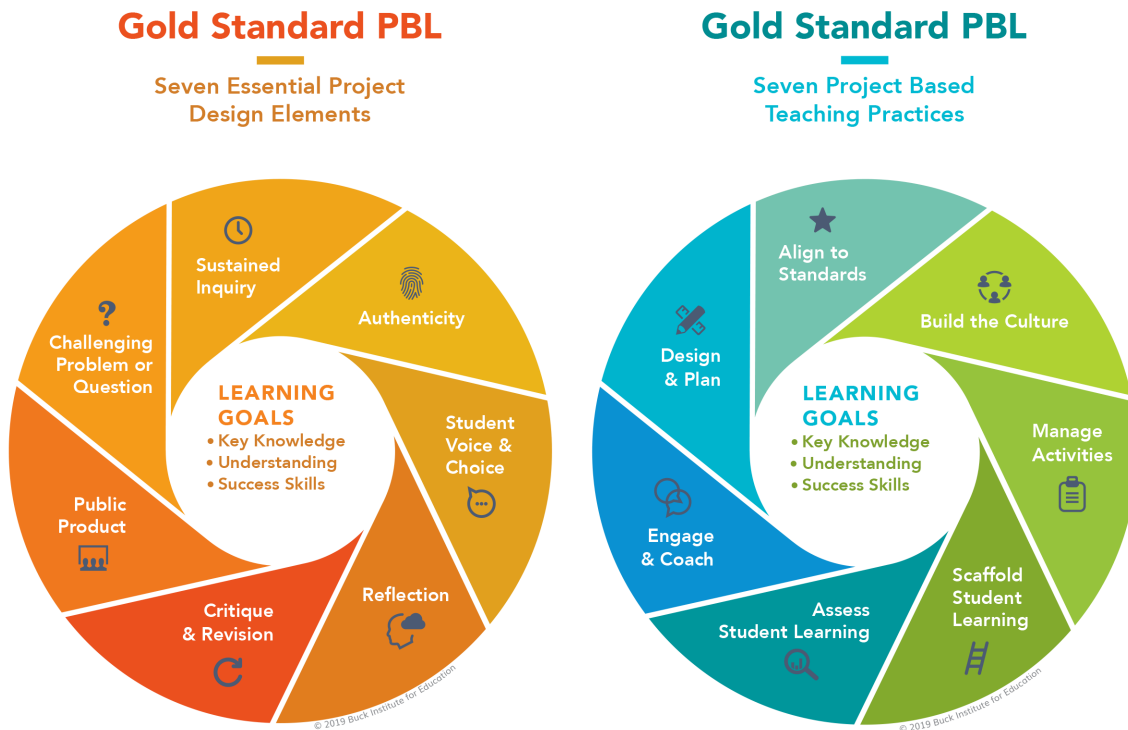
CEC. If the letter is not returned within thirty (30) days, the enrollment space for such student shall be offered to the next student on the waiting list created through the lottery process.

## PROJECT-BASED LEARNING (PBL) METHODOLOGY

### PBL, TEACHER-LED PBL VS. STUDENT-LED PBL

The PBL model at CEC is based on the Buck Institute of Education Gold Standard Project Design. Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic and engaging question, problem, or challenge.

Students at CEC will begin PBL instruction through a teacher-led model. PBL requires learners to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, collaborators, and communicators. To answer a driving question and create high-quality work, students need to do much more than remember information. They need to use higher-order thinking skills and learn to work as a team. As students become more confident in their research and time management skills, a release of control leads to student-led passion projects. The Gold Standard PBL model aligns with the **High Quality PBL Framework**. This framework describes what students should be doing, learning, and experiencing in a good project. For additional information about the project-based learning and the Buck Institute for Education, visit [PBLWorks.org](https://PBLWorks.org).



## **MULTIAGE**

A multiage setting allows students to collaborate and learn with peers of different ages and abilities, thus creating a family-like atmosphere within the classroom. Students participating in multiage classrooms develop a greater sense of community as older children have the opportunity to serve as mentors and take leadership roles.

## **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

A small school environment and multiage structure increases student satisfaction, encourages student voice, and develops a sense of community within the school and beyond. CEC students grow their community awareness and involvement through project work, student government involvement, passion projects, and participation in Youth Connections and service learning projects.

## **DISCIPLINE PHILOSOPHY**

CEC follows the district's use of PBIS: Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports through the explicit teaching of behavioral expectations, CEC staff are dedicated to a positive discipline approach in which the ultimate goal is that children develop self-discipline, mutual respect, a sense of responsibility for their actions, and an intrinsic desire to make things right. CEC is committed to creating a safe and nurturing environment for every child. We are equally committed to helping our children grow into healthy, happy, responsible adults. The Waupaca Way reflects staff and student commitment to building this environment.

## **ADVISORS**

CEC advisors maintain high expectations for all students. Small class sizes, book buddies, project and portfolio pals, and team teaching efforts all help advisors get to know all the students and develop relationships which last throughout a child's time at CEC. Standards aligned learning targets guide high quality, rigorous teaching and assessment. Advisors utilize Early Release Wednesday time to work collaboratively to plan, share, and revise lessons to best meet the needs of their students.

## **21ST CENTURY SKILLS**

CEC fosters a learning environment that pulls together community, technology, and interpersonal relationships to build student understanding. Through a focus on exploration, student choice, authentic application of learning, and individualized instruction (key components of project-based learning), students will develop the following success skills that will carry them boldly into the future:

- Communication and Presentation: Technology, Presentation, Written Communication, Speaking, and Listening

- Creativity: Exploration/Curiosity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking: Research, Judgment, and Reflection
- Citizenship: Collaboration, Initiative, and Community Service

## **FITNESS**

Fitness is a unique blend of physical activity and physical fitness that emphasizes a cooperative approach to physical fitness, while de-emphasizing competition. Student learning focuses on physical activity with health and wellness as a lifelong goal. Students learn tools and skills for growing a healthy mindset while encouraging their classmates to persist, no matter their ability level.

## **ART**

A contemporary approach to teaching art with less focus on the final product and an increased focus on the process. Instruction guides students through the design process and presentation/critique phase while fostering an environment of exploration, creative risk-taking, and responding appropriately to intellectual feedback.

## **SUZUKI**

Chain Exploration Center's Governance Council will enter into a contract with the Aber Suzuki Center at UWSP to provide Suzuki Method instrument instruction to students. Students at CEC have a choice between cello, bass, viola, and violin. Instruction is required in grades 3 through 5 and an elective in subsequent years.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

CEC regularly seeks out mutually beneficial opportunities to engage people of diverse backgrounds and experience. We have three specific goals related to intentional community engagement:

1. To support the mission of CEC by exposing students to a wide range of community activities or fields of expertise with the intention of increasing knowledge for success in the future.
2. To graduate citizens of the community who have a sense of belonging through increased social interactions and service learning opportunities.
3. To increase family participation and engagement through CEC hosted events, project work, and recognize school staff and opportunities as resources for support.

## **STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

Starting in Kindergarten, CEC students will participate in district testing three times

during each school year. Testing data is used by advisors to guide instructional planning. Starting in grade 3, CEC students are required to participate in state testing. Results of this test contribute to our state report card score.

### **REPORT CARDS**

Families receive student report cards at semester and the end of the school year. This [Determining Final \(Semester\) Grades Document](#) will help you learn more about how semester grades are determined. If you have questions about your child's grades, please contact your child's advisor.

### **ADVISOR CONFERENCES**

Student/Caregiver/Advisor conferences are scheduled twice each year but can be held anytime a caregiver or advisor feels the need to meet to discuss the student's academic or social/emotional development. Please do not hesitate to reach out to an advisor via email or phone call to request a conference.

### **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Students with special educational needs are evaluated and an Individualized Educational Plan is created. CEC staff work with district personnel such as a school psychologist, speech and language clinician, physical and occupational therapists, and special education advisors to create this plan. All students with disabilities undergo the same application process for admission as any other student applying to the school.

### **RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)/MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)**

Response to Intervention is an educational model that promotes early identification of students who may be at risk for learning or need challenge above grade level. Its design may include a tier system that provides appropriate learning experiences for all students and identifies students at risk in specific areas, both academic and behaviorally. Students benefit when their current level of skills and abilities are aligned with instructional and curricular choices provided within the classroom. When a mismatch occurs, student learning and outcomes are altered as needed. Some students require a more challenging curriculum or more support. The core features of RTI include the following:

- High-quality research-based classroom instruction
- Student assessment with classroom focus
- Universal screening of academics and behavior
- Continuous progress monitoring of students
- Implementation of appropriate research-based interventions
- Progress monitoring during interventions (effectiveness)
- Implementing programs, assessment, and progress monitoring tools with fidelity.

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED**

CEC students receive interventions as necessary but will not receive separate Gifted and Talented services from the district because project-based learning naturally differentiates curriculum for all learners.



## **POLICIES**

### **TELEPHONE/CELL PHONES**

#### **Student Use and Possession of Personal Communication Devices Policy 5136**

Use of the school telephone by students is limited to emergency calls and school business only.

Students are allowed to bring cell phones to school for use in an emergency or if advisors have planned activities using cell phones for instruction. Cell phones shall be kept in lockers at all other times. If a student brings a cell phone to school, it is their responsibility in the case of damage or loss. Possession of a cell phone by a student is a privilege which may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy or otherwise engages in misuse of this privilege.

Students shall not use electronic communication devices:

- A. To engage in bullying or harassment.
- B. To communicate test answers, photograph tests, or engage in any other conduct that constitutes or facilitates academic dishonesty.
- C. To take, disseminate, transfer, or share any images, recordings, or other content that is obscene, lewd, illegal, sexually-explicit, or otherwise inappropriate for the school setting.
- D. In areas where other people have a reasonable expectation of privacy, including all locker rooms, bathrooms, or other changing areas (except in an emergency).
- E. To create, communicate, share, or post recordings or images of any other student or staff member without permission from that student or staff member (except in an emergency)
- F. In violation of the District's rules surrounding students' acceptable use of technology.

[\*\*STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY: 5200\*\*](#)

[\*\*HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES: 5310.01 AND 5341\*\*](#)

[\*\*IMMUNIZATION POLICY: 5320\*\*](#)

[\*\*MEDICATION POLICY: 5330\*\*](#)

[\*\*WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME: POLICIES 5340 AND 8450\*\*](#)

## **DRESS CODE**

### **Dress Code Policy 5511**

It is the policy of our school district to encourage appropriate dress for students. We feel that school is a place for respect and expect children will dress accordingly.

- A. Students shall dress appropriately for the school environment. Student attire that causes, or is likely to cause, a material interference with school operations or a substantial disruption to the school environment will not be permitted. School staff shall consider the link between the potential disruption or interference and the student's attire at issue when making decisions under this provision.
- B. No student shall be permitted to wear any clothing that depicts, promotes or advertises alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco or nicotine products, criminal activity that would threaten any person's health, safety or property (including the unlawful possession or use of any weapon), criminal gang affiliation/activity, profanity, pornography, or violence that would constitute a violation of law or school rules.
- C. Students shall wear protective clothing and/or safety equipment when working in science labs, tech education, family and consumer education, school cafeterias, and other program areas as required to comply with health and safety codes and regulations.
- D. Clothing and/or accessories that cause excessive maintenance problems or cause injury to anyone or damage to property may not be worn.
- E. Students participating in activities or events representing the school before the public shall be expected to dress appropriately so as not to detract from the group or the occasion.

Because much of our time at CEC is spent outdoors it is imperative that students are dressed for all kinds of weather. In winter this means snow pants and boots, warm jackets, hats, scarves, and mittens. Rubber boots are required as part of the school supply list. It is a good idea to mark clothing with children's names and send an extra set of clothing and socks for wet outdoor activities.

## **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY**

### **Bullying and Harassment Policy 5517.01**

The school strives to nurture the emotional well-being of its whole community. All students are expected to refrain from any comments, attitudes, bullying, physical touching, or attentions that are unwanted by or upsetting to another person. The CEC will follow the anti-bullying and harassment policy of the District, 5517.01. CEC does

not allow harassment, bullying, and intimidation of pupils on school property or during school-sponsored events.

## **STUDENT ATOD POLICY (ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUGS)**

### **Student Alcohol and Other Drug Policy 5530**

Students of the School District of Waupaca are hereby notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, and possession of or use of a controlled substance or the use of alcohol on school district property, including all district-owned vehicles, is prohibited at all times. These same provisions shall be in effect at school-sponsored events or extra-curricular activities while off school premises. Compliance with this policy is mandatory. Failure to abide by this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion from school. Such disciplinary action shall be done in accordance with state law and established procedures. Violations of this policy may also result in referral to law enforcement officials for prosecution under specific state or local laws. The use of tobacco products on premises owned or rented by, or under the control of, the School District of Waupaca is prohibited.

## **STUDENT LOCKERS**

### **Search and Seizure- Policy 5771**

School District of Waupaca Board Policy specifies the Board retains ownership and possessor control of all school lockers and school officials may conduct locker searches without notice.

## **DANGEROUS ITEMS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

### **Dangerous Weapons and/or Look alike Weapons: Policy 5772**

It is district policy that no person is allowed to have dangerous weapons and/or look-alike weapons on school property, on school buses or at any school related event. A look-alike weapon is defined as a toy gun, water gun, a non-working replica of a weapon, cap gun, popper, war souvenir or any other object which could reasonably be mistaken for an actual weapon regardless of whether it is manufactured for that purpose. Students found transporting a “dangerous weapon” or “look-alike weapon” on a district operated bus or vehicle will immediately be suspended from riding that bus for 3 days. Violation of this policy could result in suspension and/or expulsion from school.

## **SURVEILLANCE CAMERA**

### **Facility Security Policy 7440**

We have surveillance cameras recording 24 hours a day in the front lobby, hallways, and entrance doors. Observation of the monitor is not continuous, but it is recording at

all times.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY NETWORK AND INTERNET**

### **Student Technology Acceptable Use and Safety Policy 7540.03**

The use of technology owned or leased by the School District of Waupaca is subject to the terms of these guidelines. Access to technology is a privilege, not a right. The District reserves the right to monitor, access, and disclose the messages and files contained, stored, or transmitted using District equipment. Students shall have no expectation of privacy when using District equipment or accounts. Examples of unacceptable use include, but are not limited to:

- General school rules for behavior and communications apply to the use of technology, including those regarding sexual harassment. Technology should not be used to transmit jokes or other comments that may be discriminatory, harassing, or offensive to others or material that defames an individual.
- The use of technology to perform acts of bullying or cyberbullying is strictly prohibited.
- The use of technology to record, upload, or broadcast images or videos without proper authorization is prohibited.
- Students shall not disclose the personal information of students, staff, or others without authorization.
- The use of technology to access and/or distribute objectionable material is prohibited. Prohibited material includes, but is not limited to that which is pornographic, material harmful to minors, and/or obscene.
- The use of technology for illegal activity is prohibited.
- Students shall not seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users, or misrepresent themselves on the networks without authorization.
- Technology shall not be used in any manner that disrupts the use of systems by others. Hardware or software shall not be destroyed, modified, or abused in any way without authorization.
- Students shall not use technology to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to internal or external systems.
- Students shall maintain the privacy of their account information and shall not allow others to access their accounts unless otherwise required for educational purposes or otherwise required by law.
- Students shall comply with all copyright laws and guidelines with respect to copying material in digital format and intellectual property.
- Social media venues are very public. What you contribute leaves a digital footprint forever, usually even after it is deleted. How you represent yourself online is an extension of yourself. Do not misrepresent yourself by using someone else's identity. Do not post anything that you would not want friends, enemies, caregivers, teachers, prospective colleges and universities, or future employers to see. Make sure what you post promotes a positive image to the

world. Cyberbullying is not tolerated.

- It is illegal to video record and/or take pictures in bathrooms or locker rooms.

The District's Acceptable Use Policy is available from the school administrator upon request.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER/VIRTUAL/ON-DEMAND LEARNING DAYS**

### **Emergency School Closing Policy 8220.01**

The District Administrator, or an administrative-level designee in the temporary absence or unavailability of the District Administrator, shall make decisions regarding school closings, delayed starts, early releases, and any program or activity cancellations due to inclement weather or due to other health or safety concerns. Information will be announced through radio stations and TV Stations and Infinite Campus.

Students will be expected to learn from home. We ask caregivers to support students in their learning and connect with advisors as needed during any remote learning days. Advisors will have learning expectations and activities on their Schoology pages by 7:30 a.m. and will be available to assist students during regular school hours.

- On-Demand means at your own pace, but learning tasks get completed before the following day.
- EC & 4K: Recommendations will be shared with caregivers, but there is no hours requirement.
- Grades K-4: Heavy focus on reading, writing, & math. Whatever specials (art, music, or PE) a student was scheduled for will continue. Students should be engaged in school work for about 3 hours.
- Grades 5-8: Learning continues, which means assignment and activities may count towards a student's grade. Students should log into every class for the day's Schoology page and complete the posted expectations. Students should be engaged in school work for about 3.5 - 4 hours.

## **STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL (SRP)/ SCHOOL SAFETY**

### **School Safety Policy 8420**

Efforts to ensure safety and security are ongoing. Based on current research and in an effort to coordinate emergency services with schools across the county, the district has adopted the Standard Response Protocol. The SRP is a fast and clear way to communicate in the event of an emergency.

In case of a school-wide emergency, the school will follow the district's Standard Response Protocol. Should the school have to be evacuated due to an emergency situation, everyone will proceed to our designated alternate safe location. Parents will be contacted via Infinite Campus, cell or home phone to inform you of the situation as

soon as possible. It is essential you keep the office informed of any changes in your contact information.

In case of a lockdown situation, all persons on the property will be escorted to a safe location inside the building and all entries and exits will be locked. NO ONE is allowed to enter or leave the building until it has been deemed safe and announced as such either by the School Administrator or Emergency Personnel in charge of the situation.

Lockdown drills are conducted each year.

**BUS RIDER RULES: POLICY 8600.01**

**BUS RIDER DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES: POLICY 8600.01**

**CONFLICTS AND GRIEVANCES**

**PUBLIC REQUESTS, SUGGESTIONS OR COMPLAINTS: POLICY 9130**

CEC encourages conflict resolution that starts with direct communication with the involved parties. If the issue or concern is not resolved, the district has provided a [Chain of Command list](#) designed to help you find the best people to start with( including the CEC Governance Council ) when you have a question, concern or suggestion.

Our website, [www.chainexplorationcenter.org](http://www.chainexplorationcenter.org) provides easy email access and also has a [suggestion box](#).

**COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION**

I have reviewed this handbook and understand the information in the CEC 2024-2025 handbook and agree to follow and uphold the guidelines for our school.

\_\_\_\_\_Advisor signature    Date\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_Student Signature    Date\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_Caregiver signature    Date\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_Governance Council Signature    Date\_\_\_\_\_

