



Family Handbook

2014-2015

Welcome from the Executive Director

Dear Families,

What a joy to be beginning our second school year with this amazing school community! When I began this work as a parent-founder four years ago, the Creative City I joined was still just a beautiful idea—an idea that children are independent and resilient, that they can help direct their own learning, and that creativity and play have a place in all parts of the school day.

Now, with a year under our belts and a new year ahead of us, the idea has transformed into a thriving model of child-centered, arts-integrated, place-based education. We are a school where all of our community members have a voice. Our staff has worked tirelessly over the three weeks leading up to our opening day, refining their own skills and building on last year's successes to prepare us for an even more successful second year. We're so excited to now welcome students and their families back to school.

I'm particularly excited to be beginning another year with Dr. Craig Spilman, who has been such a gift to our school. Throughout the school year, Dr. Spilman and I will be offering many opportunities to learn about our unique curricular approach, and we invite your questions and engagement.

I'm so excited to be here to serve you, our school families, and continue to do my part to make Creative City the best school any of us could ever imagine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Canino', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marisa Canino
Executive Director

Creative City Core Values

We are a community.

We connect with each other, our environment, our neighborhood, and our world.

We care.

We question.

We collaborate.

We connect.

About Creative City

Mission

Creative City Public Charter School uses Baltimore City's natural and built environments and communities as a learning foundation. Our elementary school, where teachers, students, and parents share governance and cooperate on curriculum and community decisions, builds on the inquisitive nature of children to drive the project-based, arts-integrated curriculum, developing self-directed critical thinkers.

Vision

Young people will be collaborative learners and creative thinkers who become leaders, active citizens, effective communicators, and good stewards of their environment.

Core Elements

What is place-based education?

Place-based education uses the local community and environment as a vehicle for learning core skills and exploring questions that are relevant to Baltimore and to students' lives. Place-based education increases student motivation and performance, helps students develop stronger ties to their local environment, and allows the school to make positive change in the community. Place-based education is experience-based, and in kindergarten, play-based. Students will learn about the built environment, infrastructure, residents, businesses, culture, resources, challenges and the history of the city around them.

What is arts integration?

At Creative City we weave the visual, musical and performing arts into our curriculum as a way to foster student-centered learning, reflection, and personal expression, and a way to deepen conceptual learning, encourage creative thinking, promote collaboration, and strengthen the social environment within the school.

Using the arts in all subjects is our way of delivering information and instruction, and a method of assessing student mastery. Students *observe* art to stimulate discussion on pertinent themes and *make* art to explore problems and reflect on lessons learned.

What is cooperative community?

Creative City gives young people the opportunity to be active thinkers and leaders through decision-making about their school culture and classroom. Parents, teachers, and community members all have a role in creating and supporting the school's climate and curriculum. Our Board of Directors is directly elected by all teachers and parents, and includes teachers, parents, and community member representatives. Students, teachers, and parents share the responsibility of choosing new teachers and administrators.

What is a community school?

Creative City is a community school. This means we know that families, schools, and community resources make children successful together. We will keep the lights on during evenings and weekends, making Creative City a hub of learning and enrichment for adults and older kids in our community, as well as our students. We will build upon partnerships with strong organizations in the neighborhood, bringing their knowledge and wisdom into the classroom and into our whole-family programming. The School Family Association will coordinate these efforts alongside the Executive Director. We will build on our community's assets and coordinate programs, services or resources for our students' whole families, supporting their needs, dreams and aspirations.

Governance

Creative City Leadership

Creative City is a diverse and cooperative community. This is true in the classroom and also extends to the school's leadership through a shared governance model. Creative City is led by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, elected by the membership at our Annual Meeting. Members include parents of current students, Park Heights neighborhood residents, the staff of the school, and the founding families. The Board is designed to have a majority of seats for parents, with additional seats for teachers, the Principal, the Executive Director, neighborhood residents, and community members at large. Board members are elected at our Annual Meeting each October.

The Board has contracted with Baltimore City Public Schools to operate Creative City after a rigorous 800-page application, panel interviews, and presentations to the school board. It is the Board's responsibility to hire, orient, support and evaluate the Principal (our instructional leader who supervises the staff) and Executive Director (our financial and operational leader), as well as to make policy and oversee management of the budget.

Decisions about the day-to-day operation of the school are made by the Principal and Executive Director, with significant input from school families and (whenever possible) students.

Academics

Literacy

Creative City follows a Balanced Literacy approach to its Language Arts program. That is, our instruction balances between direct and indirect instruction and between skills-based and more holistic meaning-based activities. Examples of direct instruction include our phonics lessons and our mini-lessons during Writer’s Workshop. Examples of indirect instruction include our guided reading time and teacher conference time during Writer’s Workshop. Skills are taught during word work time, center time, guided reading, and Writer’s Workshop. Making meaning is practiced during guided reading, word work time, independent reading, center work, and Writer’s Workshop. Balanced Literacy is a common approach to Language Arts for schools that wish to use a program between whole language programs and direct instruction basal reader programs. Arts integration will be one of the tools used during guided and independent reading, and in learning centers.

Math

Creative City uses Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Math in Focus: Singapore Math as its math curriculum. In Singapore Math, concepts are taught through a sequence of concrete to pictorial to abstract. Concrete understanding occurs through hands-on activities using manipulatives. Manipulatives are concrete or virtual objects that, when used by students, enable them to solve mathematics problems, prove mathematical concepts, and understand mathematical ideas and operations. The use of manipulatives in a systematic, rigorous, and consistent fashion has been shown to improve a student’s ability to use a variety of ways to construct correct solutions to a problem. A hands-on, active approach to the teaching of math has also been linked to students developing a better relationship with mathematical concepts and has been identified as an effective way to reach students of all abilities. Manipulatives include physical, concrete objects as well as computer simulations and representations. Pictorial learning involves visuals that represent concepts and model solutions. The abstract, and most familiar stage, uses numbers and symbols. Singapore’s method develops a deep understanding of concepts and mastery of skills which leads to students’ success in solving complex problems. Creative City’s approach to math focuses on problem-solving, and enables teachers to integrate math lessons with projects and art concepts by bringing mathematics learning into the Research, Create, Connect framework.

Play-Based Kindergarten

Our kindergarten adheres to developmentally appropriate practices as put forth by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. “A developmentally appropriate environment encourages a child to play—to practice emerging skills, try out new ideas, and make new discoveries” (Zigler, Singer, and Bishop-Josef, p.34). We approach students as competent and capable learners while providing meaningful, hands-on experience across the curriculum with extended periods of investigation. Teachers work as facilitators to create a learning environment that offers opportunities

for experiential learning appropriate for a variety of learning styles. We meet state curriculum standards with meaningful, fun, and engaging teacher-led activities, as well as with student-directed interaction in a carefully designed classroom with centers rich in math and literacy-related materials, and opportunities to develop inquiry skill. By allowing our students to participate in self-directed and teacher-facilitated play, students develop high-level thinking skills, language skills, and empathy. Our program will have some time set aside solely for developmentally appropriate math and language arts instruction. The skills introduced will be reflected in available classroom materials and will enrich children's play. We document children's learning on an ongoing basis, and we teach children to participate in this process of reflection through writing, drawing, and communicating about their work. This kind of reflection will also be an assessment of learning that informs instruction and facilitates student growth.

Project Time

Students spend time each day involved in project work. Project themes will be related to Social Studies and Science standards; for example, themes in fifth grade may be related to colonial America. Although the themes of project time will be drawn from Science and Social Studies, Language Arts and Math content and skills will be incorporated into project time as much as possible.

Students will connect their project theme to their local cultural and natural environment. While investigating these themes, students will complete a variety of short- and long-term projects. Projects are to be arts integrated; students learn about art connected to their overarching theme and also produce works of art that reflect on each trimester's theme. Although the overarching project themes will most often be chosen in advance by teachers, students have input on the type, scope, and direction of individual projects during the trimester. Teachers also work with students to ensure that all students are able to participate in the project in meaningful ways that challenge but do not overwhelm them.

Projects follow a three-part process we call Research, Create, Connect (RCC). In the first part of the RCC process, Research, students and teachers identify a question or issue to focus on, related to the trimester's theme. Students research through brainstorming and discussing what they already know, going on relevant trips, bringing in speakers, surveying people, reading texts, looking at images, and watching media related to the theme. After exploring the issue from many angles, they are ready to refine their knowledge into a product that shares what they learned.

In the second phase (Create), students might write and illustrate a book of their findings, produce a mural that offers a solution to some challenges they explored, or create a poster that educates a target audience about the issue. The Create phase includes writing as well as using a variety of artistic media, and helps students process and analyze information.

The final phase, Connect, is when students present the product they have created with the wider community. Please see a sample Research-Create-Connect project plan on the following page.

Connect

PROJECT BASED:
Students present on the process of making a community mural and share stories at the Mural Unveiling Event where community members are invited to attend. *

ARTS INTEGRATED:
Students use grid method to transfer the design to the wall. *

ARTS INTEGRATED:
Students use colors and shapes to symbolize the stories of immigration.

Why
and How do
people
come to
Baltimore?

PLACE BASED:
Students design the immigration mural based on stories from community.

*Common
Core and
MSA
Standards

Create

PLACE BASED: Interview community elders and family members to learn about why and how they came to Baltimore. *

PLACE BASED: Research the Great Migration to Baltimore 1920-50's *

ARTS INTEGRATED:
Analyze the art of Jacob Lawrence's *Great Migration Series* *

PROJECT BASED:
Graph Baltimore's immigration rate in 1950 and graph the rate of immigration today. Compare and Contrast findings. *

Research

PLACE/PROJECT BASED:
Visit Fells Point. Research the history of the neighborhood and the seaport/immigration mural.

Creative City Curriculum Structure

Resource Classes

Creative City offers a full range of resource classes to students. Our students have Physical Education, Visual Arts and Music one to two times a week each. As our school grows, we will add more full-time resource teachers. Our resource teachers work with our classroom teachers to coordinate resource instruction, linking to classroom project work whenever possible.

Assessment

We aim to provide authentic, developmentally appropriate learning experiences for all Creative City students. Our cumulative, ongoing, authentic assessments are used to inform instruction. We use the Work Sampling System as our primary mode of school-wide, ongoing assessment. The Work Sampling System utilizes systematic observation, behavioral checklists, and portfolios to provide students, educators, and families with a detailed picture of progress over time. The development of portfolios is the core of our assessment program at Creative City. We believe this is the most dynamic and accurate way of capturing our students' progress as they learn in a project-based, arts-integrated environment. Portfolios may include photographic documentation of student activities, child-chosen as well as teacher-chosen work samples, and written observations. All teachers will participate in fall, winter, and spring data collection, culminating in a trimester report and mini-portfolio to be shared with families. Our older students will be expected to participate in the selection of samples to include in their mini-portfolio as well as presenting and reflecting on their growth during end-of-trimester conferences with families and teachers.

Our students participate in state-mandated assessments – currently PARCC, which begins in the 3rd grade. Our students are also less formally assessed on an ongoing basis in literacy and math to provide teachers with the information needed to continue providing appropriately challenging curriculum.

Special Education

Creative City is an inclusion school. This means our students with special needs will participate in the general education classroom as much as possible. The Board, administrators, and teachers will view the school's success through the lens of how well it serves *every* student who enters the school. We will use a variety of strategies to ensure that our students with special needs are successful in a full inclusion environment, including maximizing our Core Elements, applying principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), using a tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) model, and ensuring sufficient staffing to address individual needs.

Homework

Well-designed homework, at the right time in a child's development, can have significant impact on his/her learning. Homework can reinforce skills, inspire out-of-school exploration and learning, teach the basics of responsibility, and help to instill the discipline of learning. Therefore, we take a thoughtful and developmental approach to homework at Creative City Public Charter School.

Primary homework for all students is to read at home with a family member/caregiver for 30 minutes each night. Talk to your child's teacher for ideas on how to make reading at home a rich experience for you and your family. Additional homework will be chosen thoughtfully by teachers to extend skills being taught and to connect with trimester projects.

We encourage families to support their child(ren)'s learning by providing them with a quiet and supportive atmosphere in which to complete homework. Some students, especially in the younger grades, may need more family support with the understanding and completion of homework. As students get older, we encourage families to allow their students to be as independent as possible in managing and completing homework. If you work with your child on homework, please be sure it is truly their work that is being returned the next day.

At Creative City Public Charter School, we believe that homework in kindergarten should reflect what research tells us about how children in this age group learn best. Therefore, in general, students in these grades will receive less frequent homework and minimal "traditional" homework worksheets. Research points to improved skills or motivation as a result of other types of homework at this age. At times, you may be asked to read together and discuss the story, to go for a walk and record what you see, or to pursue a specific activity related to project work in the classroom or your child's interests. All these will be more valuable forms of home learning in kindergarten.

In first and second grade, students will have a combination of "traditional" assignments, project extensions, and skill reinforcement activities with the goal of bridging home and school together and to share the themes, subjects, and skills that students are learning.

Policies

Coming and Going at Creative City

School Calendar

In the 2014-2015 school year, Creative City's school calendar will be the same as Baltimore City Schools. We will have the same professional development days, holidays, and start and end dates as other Baltimore City Schools. Within that schedule, our school operates on a trimester rather than quarterly academic schedule, so report card dates will be different than most other schools. Our detailed school calendar will be released to families on or before Back to School Night.

Hours of School

School doors open at 8:00 am, with a daily Morning Assembly at 8:15 am. Dismissal begins at 2:50 pm and school ends at 3:00 pm.

Every Wednesday, school ends at 1:00 pm to allow for collaborative staff planning and development.

FRIENDLY REMINDER FOR FAMILIES NOT ENROLLED IN BEFORE & AFTERCARE:

There is no supervision for students before 8:00 am and there is no supervision for students after 3:05 pm. For the safety of your child, please do not bring your child to school prior to 8:00 am, and pick up your child promptly. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and support with our entry and dismissal procedures.

Before- and After-Care

Smart Steps, a child care provider based in Park Heights since 2003, will offer before- and after-care to Creative City families on site at school. Activities include art, Zumba, African dance and drumming, martial arts, sports, STEM, sign language, reading, snacks and supper, and trips. Smart Steps' mission is to build relationships with families, educators, and communities in order to foster an environment that breeds academic achievement, cultural enrichment, and self-esteem development in children. To learn more, visit Smart Steps at www.smartstepschilddrenscnters.com or call **410-367-6100**.

Smart Steps Hours:

Before Care: 7:00 am to 8:00 am

After Care: 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Extended Care Wednesdays: 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Arrival

Students will enter the building each morning beginning at 8:00 am from the cafeteria doors, at the rear of the building on Towanda Avenue. We begin our day with Morning Assembly, during which we eat breakfast as a community. We encourage families who are able to stay for breakfast, and join their child's class and teacher in this important community time.

At 8:30 am, teachers will walk their students from the cafeteria to their classrooms. Family members are welcome to walk their children to their classrooms. If family members would like to stay past 8:40 am, we ask that they sign in at the office and receive a visitor's pass.

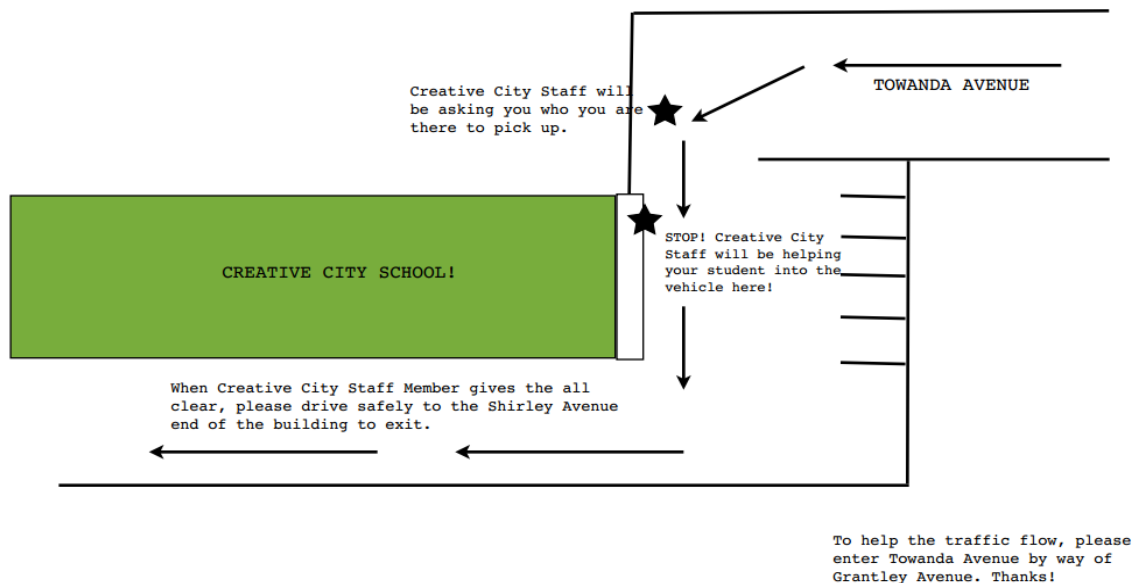
Students arriving after 8:30 am will be marked late and must enter the school through the front doors. Students who arrive after 8:30 am are required to stop in the main office to obtain a late pass to be admitted to class.

Dismissal

All students will be dismissed from the cafeteria located at the back of the school building beginning at 2:50 pm. Students being picked up by car will be walked to their car by a staff member (see protocol as follows). Students being dismissed as walkers must be picked up by an adult who will come in to the cafeteria.

Adults coming to pick students up must be listed on each child's authorized pick-up list. Students that are not picked up by 3:05 pm will be taken to the main office and families will be contacted. We are not staffed to supervise students after 3:05 pm.

Dismissal by Car. Families who are picking students up by car will do so by way of Towanda Avenue in the rear of the building. Cars are to line up along the school sidewalk and Towanda Avenue. At dismissal, staff will support families with door-to-car-door service. Student names and grade will be given to Creative City support staff stationed outside the cafeteria door and then a staff member will retrieve the student from the cafeteria. Drivers must remain in cars to ensure that the line moves quickly and efficiently. If drivers wish to park and walk in, they must do so in a place that will not impede cars driving through the car pick-up line.



Family members wishing to conference with teachers should not plan to have in-depth conversations during dismissal, but should arrange a conference at a mutually convenient time. Before school and after school conferences are welcomed when scheduled in advance. Advance scheduling will ensure that parents/guardians have their teacher's full attention during the conference.

Emergency Dismissal Procedures

In the event of an emergency, BCPSS or Creative City Public Charter School may need to close. Creative City will follow the same inclement weather procedures as the rest of the school district. An announcement will be made via radio, T.V., and, when possible, phone calls. It is **IMPERATIVE** that families keep current phone numbers and emergency contact information on file in the office.

All families are required to complete an **emergency card at registration and/or during the first week of school**. It is **IMPERATIVE** that emergency cards be updated immediately if you have moved, your phone number has changed, or if any of the information on the card has changed.

Tardiness

School doors open at 8:00am. **In order to be marked present and on time, CHILDREN MUST BE IN SCHOOL AND WITH THEIR CLASSES BY 8:29 am.** We begin each day with breakfast as a community, Morning Assembly, and morning meeting. Each of these activities sets the tone for the day and allows students to successfully learn, work, and play together throughout the day. Please give your child the opportunity to have a good start to the day by getting them to school on time. A student arriving at school at 8:30 am or later is required to obtain a late pass from the office and will be marked tardy for that day. Failure to obtain a late pass may result in a student being marked absent for the day. Repeated tardiness will require a meeting with the classroom teacher and/or Principal to discuss how to get the child to school on time. All students need to begin the day on time and ready to learn.

Early Pick-up

In the event that a parent needs to pick a student up early from school, the parent is asked to ***provide a notice in advance indicating the date and time of the early dismissal and the reason for the early dismissal.*** These notes must be turned in to the student's teacher and subsequently sent to the main office to file in a documentation binder along with the early dismissal log.

We understand that early dismissals will sometimes be needed. Please limit your early dismissals to the fewest needed so that your child does not miss valuable classroom time. Students that are chronically late and/or are regularly picked up early may be referred to Student Support Services to identify ways in which the school may support the family in ensuring that students are in school each day, for the entire instructional day. Parents must come to the **MAIN OFFICE** for early dismissals and an office staff will call for the student to report to the office.

Absences

If your child must be absent, please contact the office at 443-642-3600. Your child must return with a note for his/her teacher stating the date(s) and reason for the absence. All absences unaccompanied by a note will be marked as unexcused.

Regular attendance is vital to your child's school experience. Frequent absences threaten a child's sense of connection in the community, disrupt the consistency of a student's learning, and/or force the child to simultaneously catch up on missed material while learning new material. When a child is excessively absent or tardy the school will contact the family to discuss ways to improve attendance.

Inclement Weather Policy

Creative City Public Charter School follows the Baltimore City School System's Inclement Weather Policy. For information about school closings, delays, and early dismissals, please check your local television and radio station.

Daily Life at Creative City

Recess, Weather, and Clothing

We believe that children are better learners when they have time for play every day. All students at Creative City are expected to go outside for recess every day. If a child is well enough to be in school, we believe s/he is well enough to go outside. Exceptions are made only with a written note from home or if a student needs to complete work for a teacher.

In addition to recess, in a typical day at school, Creative City students will engage in outdoor play, art-making, and other types of sensory and hands-on experiences. All of this is important work during our students' time at school! We suggest that families take this into account when choosing their child's school clothes.

We strongly recommend “play clothes” and not “dress clothes.” In our active and exploratory learning environment, clothing will sometimes get dirty.

- Your child should come to school in clothes that are comfortable for active learning and play, and which may get dirty.
- We recommend durable clothing that can hold up to lots of outdoor activity.
- Please choose shoes that are safe / suited for climbing and running, and which may get dirty. (For instance, flip flops, crocs, or dress shoes can make it difficult for children to fully participate in environments like our Outdoor Classroom. Sneakers or other sturdy rubber-soled shoes will be ideal.)

We have recess outside whenever possible, unless it is actively raining, below freezing, or other extreme weather. Students should always dress appropriately for the weather, especially in the colder months, with the assumption that they will go outside during the school day. ***Families who need assistance with winter coats, hats, or mittens should contact our main office and we will be happy to help!***

Creative City students will be asked to follow Baltimore City Public School Systems Dress Code Policy, as noted below.

Dress Code

We adhere to Baltimore City Public School System's dress code policy, which encompasses several guidelines/restrictions:

1. The style of clothes that a student wears may not endanger him, her, or other students.
2. The style of clothes worn may not disrupt the daily school routine.
3. Students may be required to wear certain types of clothing, usually for safety reasons, while participating in classes such as physical education, shop, chemistry, etc., or in curricular and extracurricular classes or activities such as band, choir, dance, drama, and theater.

We do not require school uniforms, but understand that uniform-type attire is sometimes preferred by families. For those who prefer uniform-type attire, we recommend clothing choices that reflect school spirit with our school colors – GREEN and BLUE – and we specifically suggest items that will be easy to find, affordable, durable, and comfortable for active learning and play. Creative City t-shirts are available for sale in our main office, at cost.

Clothing Suggestions for families who prefer uniform-type attire:

- Dark bottoms (black or navy blue) which may include pants, shorts, skirts, or jumpers.
- Shirts that are any shade of blue or green - plain polo / collared shirts or plain t-shirts, long- or short-sleeved.

Breakfast and Lunch

Breakfast

We are thrilled to be able to offer free universal breakfast for all of our students, no sign-up or qualification required! We will begin each day together in the cafeteria eating breakfast as a community. Interested families are warmly invited to join us in this important community-building time. **Breakfast is served from 8:00 am to 8:20 am.** Even if your child will not be eating breakfast at Creative City, we require students' attendance at our Morning Assembly, which begins at 8:15 am.

Lunch

Creative City offers a school lunch program, available to all students. Every family *must* complete a Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) form included in your welcome packet. Please fill this out even if you do not plan to have your student eat a meal that Creative City provides. Receiving this information in a timely manner from ALL families is crucial to our ability to serve eligible students with a free lunch, (and is also the way we will be able to access other resources next year, such as more fruits and veggies, locally-grown foods, and even a salad bar).

The price for a regular school lunch is set at \$3.10 per student per meal. Families who do not qualify for a free or reduced lunch plan may pay for their child to eat lunch provided by Creative City, either every day, or once in a while. Families who wish to opt out of school meals altogether are welcome to send students with a packed lunch.

Menus for both breakfast and lunch will be posted in the school and published monthly online at www.baltimorecityschools.org.

Birthdays/Celebrations

Birthdays are special occasions for young children. Please check with your child's teacher if you would like to bring in a special snack to share with the class.

To maintain our school culture of inclusiveness, if you plan on distributing invitations to a celebration, please make sure that everyone receives an invitation. If you are planning to distribute invitations selectively, please do so outside of school grounds – through the mail, e-mail, etc.

Creative City does not generally celebrate holidays in any formal way, although discussion of special cultural and family traditions in class is encouraged. Some classes may share in celebration activities, but each teacher makes these decisions independently. Check with your child's teacher.

Staying Healthy at Creative City

Illness

Children who are ill should not be sent to school until they are able to participate fully in the program and are no longer contagious. Illnesses such as the flu, strep throat, stomach viruses, ringworm, conjunctivitis (“pink eye”), lice, and childhood illnesses (i.e. chickenpox) spread quickly through the classroom. Our students will stay much healthier if families will take a responsible attitude toward this problem by keeping their children home as soon as symptoms appear, and until they are gone. Please wait 24 hours after a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting ceases before sending your child back to school. When your child has to be absent due to an illness,

please notify the office before 8:00 am, leaving a message if necessary.

At the discretion of the administration, a doctor's note may be required after a child has been absent for highly contagious conditions such as conjunctivitis or ringworm.

Physical Conditions

If your child has a chronic condition such as asthma, headaches, seizures, or diabetes, please make sure this information is on file with the emergency card in the office. Include a list of medications the child takes regularly and any warning signs or emergency procedures. If your child's condition requires him/her to miss school on a regular basis, please inform the school nurse. In an extended absence your child may be referred to programs offered by Baltimore City Public Schools so that he/she can minimize the loss of instruction and school work.

Medication

Students who have prescription medications that must be taken during the day must have the proper documentation completed before having the medicine administered in school. Medicine is only to be administered by a school nurse. *Teachers are not permitted to administer medications to students, and students may not take their own medicines without the nurse.*

Prescription medication must be kept in the original bottle that reflects the current dosage requirements. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered and should not be brought to school. *It is the parents' responsibility to give their children medications in a timely fashion. Please inform your child's teacher and the school nurse of any changes in medications.*

Restrictions from Activities

If a child needs to be restricted from certain activities, please provide the school nurse with a note from your child's physician describing the situation, restrictions, and duration.

Keeping Safe at Creative City

School Climate

Students at Creative City Public Charter School are expected to abide by the Baltimore City Public Schools' Code of Conduct, which is guided by the following five principles:

- 1) My words, actions, and attitudes demonstrate respect for myself and others at all times.
- 2) I seek to correct harm I have caused to others in the school community.
- 3) I demonstrate pride in myself, in my future, and in my school by arriving on time, dressed

appropriately, and prepared to focus on my studies.

- 4) I always seek the most peaceful means of resolving conflict, and obtain the assistance of teachers, administrators, or school staff when I am unable to resolve conflicts on my own.
- 5) I take pride in promoting a safe and clean learning environment at my school.

When students do not abide by the Code of Conduct, our staff implements a series of steps to help guide students back to appropriate school behavior. Teachers and staff at Creative City are trained in the Mariposa approach, which is a model for increasing children's social and emotional competence and resilience so that instances of disruptive behavior can be redirected or diffused. Use of Mariposa our staff's first tool for redirecting a child who exhibits disruptive behavior.

Teachers may also utilize other steps to redirect disruptive behavior, including but not limited to:

- One on one support
- Preferential seating
- Simple verbal prompts
- In-classroom academic break(s)

Should these steps prove ineffective, the teacher may opt to provide the student with an out-of-class academic break, accompanied by Student Support Staff personnel or another available staff member. Children will be provided with short-term learning tasks or assignments and may take their break in the classroom of another grade-level team member or in a quiet & supervised area of the staff member's choosing. If a child is removed from the classroom, the teacher will contact the child's parent or guardian before the beginning of the following school day. Parents/guardians will be encouraged to come to Creative City to observe their child in the classroom setting once the child has returned.

If the child continues to exhibit disruptive behavior, the teacher will request a parent conference. A weekly behavior progress form will be initiated as well to keep the parent informed about the child's behavior following the conference. Other support resources may be accessed as needed.

If the child continues to exhibit disruptive behavior, the teacher will initiate a third contact with parents/guardians and will engage an administrator and/or the school social worker or school psychologist for support. Formal communication from the Principal will occur with behaviors that remain chronic or severe. We will aim to engage the parent or guardian as our partner throughout the process of resolving any issue.

Cell Phones

Cell phones must remain in backpacks and turned off or completely silent during the school day. Our general policy is "We see or hear a cell phone, we take it."

- 1st time: The cell phone is confiscated and can be retrieved by the student at the end of the day.
- 2nd time: The cell phone is confiscated and returned at a family/teacher meeting.
- 3rd time: The cell phone is confiscated and the student must store their cell phone in the

school office for the remainder of the trimester.

Toys and Personal Items

As a school, we promote active and engaged play. At recess and during down times, we believe that children learn most by playing with each other, socializing, imagining, cooperating, competing, laughing, and talking. Toys and electronic items can impede this valuable time and play. In addition, toys, electronic equipment, money, and other items from home are often lost, damaged, or cause other problems.

Please do not allow your child to bring these items to school when they are not part of the planned school activities or without prior teacher approval.

Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

The Maryland Penal Code requires all "child care custodians" (teachers, teacher's assistants, the school nurse, coaches, administrators, and staff members) to report known or suspected incidents of child abuse. As required, any suspected abuse will be reported to a child protective services agency immediately. Any families needing resources or support in preventing child abuse or reporting child abuse that they are aware of can ask staff for referrals.

Before and After School

Afterschool Enrichment Clubs

Afterschool clubs and instructional assistance that occurs beyond regular school hours must be cleared by the administrative staff and must receive parental permission for each student's participation. Following the activity/club, it is the responsibility of the adult leading the club to escort the children to the front door to ensure that they are picked up and/or clear the premises.

After-Hours Events

Student and adult conduct at after-hours events has important effects for our school culture. It reinforces a sense of respect when inside the school – a tone that carries over into our daily work. Therefore, the school's basic policies regarding student behavior – no running, shouting, climbing, or going outdoors without an adult – remain in effect.

However, staff members are off-duty after hours. Parents are responsible for supervising their children at all times. These include evening events, committee meetings, family-teacher conferences, and all activities at the school. In the event that a student's behavior becomes dangerous or

distracting during an event, the families will be asked to remove the child and reestablish order before returning to the event.

Visiting Creative City

Visitors are welcome to visit/volunteer at Creative City. All visitors, volunteers, and family members must first sign in with the office and receive a visitor's pass. If you are visiting a classroom, please check in with the office first.

We deeply value families' engagement in our children's learning. There are many opportunities for you to visit the classroom and the school – events, art celebrations, classroom activities, family-teacher conferences. Yet, we also value the intense work and the teaching and learning culture of each individual classroom. We will always defer to our teachers about how classroom volunteers will be used. If classroom volunteering is not a good fit for some reason, we have many other ways that parents and family members can help in our school! Volunteers who will be in close contact with students must go through a background check with Baltimore City Schools.

Parking

If visiting the school during the day, family members may park in the back parking lot as well as on Towanda Avenue. Please do not park in the front lot on Shirley Avenue, which is reserved for staff parking. Our lower asphalt (accessible by Towanda Avenue to the south of the school) is also reserved for our parents and visitors.

Communication at Creative City

Contact Us

If you have questions, concerns, or need help, please contact us at the school office. Please let the school secretary Ms. Worrell know how we can help you, or with whom you need to speak. Office hours are from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm each day. We can be contacted by:

Phone: 443-642-3600

Fax: 410-466-6207

E-mail: CLWorrell@bcps.k12.md.us

Contacting You

It is very important that we have up-to-date contact information for you in our files. Please be sure that you complete an Emergency Card at registration and/or during the first week of school. If your contact information changes, please let us know immediately.

Creative City Website

The Creative City website often has updated information or general school literature (like this handbook!). The website can be found at www.creativecityschool.org.

Monday Mailer

A strong partnership between families and the school ultimately benefits the child. Therefore, we will make every effort to communicate news, upcoming events, and what is happening at school. As part of our dynamic school and curriculum, a lot happens on a daily and weekly basis. Therefore, we ask you to make every effort to stay informed about your child's school and education.

Our main form of communication between school and home is the Monday Mailer, which will be sent home with your child each Monday afternoon. Monday Mailers will contain a weekly newsletter with important information and events, important notices, and communications from the larger Creative City community. Please make it a habit to ask your child for the Monday Mailer each week. In the mailer there may be time-sensitive and valuable information regarding your child, the school, and the community. Read the Monday Mailer, respond to any requests for signing or returning forms, and if you have any questions please contact the school office. Unless we hear from you, we will assume that all information communicated through the Monday Mailer has been read and understood.

Report Cards and Family Conferences

Progress reports will be distributed to families in October, January and May. Parents or guardians are to sign and return the second page of the report, indicating that they have received and read it.

Report cards will be distributed each trimester. Families will be kept abreast of a student's ongoing progress throughout the year through in-class student portfolios, displays of student work, and sending student work home regularly with students to share with their families. Notifications will be sent to families regarding family-teacher conferences, the dates and times will be posted on the school calendar, posted on the website and also in school newsletters. Individual invitations will also be sent to families as reminders and to encourage families to sign up to participate in these very important conferences.

Communication with Teachers

Teachers are accessible to families throughout the school year. It is important to arrange a time that is mutually convenient rather than consulting the teacher spontaneously or during class time, or dismissal. Before-school and afterschool conferences are welcomed and can be scheduled directly with your child's teacher. Teachers may also feel the need to meet with you; please make yourself available.

Enrollment and Transfers

Please check the website or call the school for current information. Siblings of enrolled students have preference in the admissions process but must submit an application to be considered. If you decide to permanently leave Creative City, please notify our office in writing so that we have time to prepare the necessary paperwork. Please provide us with your child's last day of attendance, name of the new school, and your new address and/or temporary contact.

Volunteering at Creative City

Volunteers are essential to our work at Creative City! We need your help to keep Creative City running smoothly, serving our children and our mission. There are many ways to volunteer with Creative City, both in and outside of the classroom and in and outside of the school building. Please see Marisa Canino, our Executive Director, for more information about these various volunteer opportunities.

Volunteering on the Board or with a Committee

Every parent or guardian of Creative City students is eligible to run for vacant seats on the Creative City Board. Your welcome packet includes information on how to apply for a seat on the Board of Directors, and the commitment involved.

In addition, all family and community members are encouraged to serve on one of the seven Creative City Committees designed to address the various needs of the school: the Finance Committee; the Teaching and Learning Committee; the Facilities Committee; the School Family Association; the Outreach and Partnerships Committee; the Climate, Culture and Attendance Committee, and the Governance Committee. You do not need to be an elected member of the Board of Directors to serve on a committee.

The **Finance Committee** will be responsible for developing and reviewing procedures to provide adequate fiscal controls, ensuring that the CCPCSF is in good financial health, and working with the Executive Director on developing fundraising strategies and assisting in their execution. The Treasurer will serve on the Finance Committee, and at least one other member should have finance and fundraising expertise.

The **Teaching and Learning Committee** is tasked with ensuring that our students are reaching and exceeding our learning goals, that the core curriculum is being executed as envisioned, that teachers and students are receiving the support they need as feedback on the curriculum is given and received, and that our school is the best learning environment possible for our students.

The **Facilities Committee** will be responsible for addressing issues arising with respect to the school building, the grounds, and surrounding areas. Of particular concern to the Facilities Committee will be the school's relationship with the Towanda Recreation Center, our move towards purchasing the school and its grounds within the next five years, and assessing and strategizing as to construction and other physical structure development goals. This committee will oversee the construction of Creative City Farm and Natural Playspace.

The **School Family Association** will focus its work on ensuring that all interested stakeholders are involved in the development of the school. It will encourage the participation of parents, students, and community members and partners to improve the school and make it the best possible

place to educate our children. It will work towards improving family involvement and addressing family concerns.

The **Outreach and Partnership Committee** will center its work on reaching out to both the Park Heights community and the greater Baltimore City community to encourage enrollment and participation in the work of the school. The committee will endeavor to build partnerships with organizations within Baltimore City to facilitate the impact that our students and school can have on our neighborhoods and to increase the possibilities for enriching the learning experiences of our students.

The **Climate, Culture and Attendance Committee** will work to create a positive, safe school environment, planning prevention activities and addressing any policy issues related to student behavior.

The **Governance Committee** recruits, orients, and equips members of the Board of Directors, and coordinates the Annual Meeting, in addition to coordinating any bylaws-related issues.

Family Liaisons

Family Liaisons are a crucial link between teachers and families; they help to match class needs with family volunteers. They also help to support good communication between the teacher and families. Each classroom will have two Family Liaisons. If you are interested in serving in this role, please see your child's teacher.

Volunteering with a Class

We are committed to making our education responsive to each child at Creative City. Classroom volunteers help us to meet this goal by working with small groups, assisting with projects, working one-on-one with students, and helping to prepare materials.

Volunteers who will be in close contact with students must undergo a background check. These checks are required by the district to protect your children. The results are kept completely confidential, and are only used to screen out people who may pose a danger to children. (In other words, please do not assume that any past mistakes will keep you from being able to volunteer at Creative City!) Please see Marisa Canino, our Executive Director, for more information.

Other ways to volunteer

There are many different ways to volunteer, too numerous to mention. Here are a few options:

- Assist with the cafeteria during breakfast and/or lunch
- Assist with dismissal
- Be a guest presenter or guest artist

- Read to children
- Do art or math games with students
- Chaperone field trips and neighborhood walks
- Collect supplies for projects
- Build and maintain Creative City Farm and Natural Playground

If you see a need, please speak to your child's teacher or our Executive Director. We welcome your involvement!

Volunteer Log Book

Please sign in the volunteer log book when you come inside the school so we can track the valuable contributions you are bringing to our school.

Contact Us at Creative City

Administrative Staff

Dr. Spilman	Principal	CESpilman@bcps.k12.md.us
Ms. Canino	Executive Director	MCanino@bcps.k12.md.us
Ms. Worrell	School Secretary	CLWorrell@bcps.k12.md.us

Instructional Staff

	TEACHER	ROOM	STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF
Kindergarten	Ms. Birkmaier	105	Ms. Brown
	Mrs. Smith	107	Ms. Whitlock
	Ms. Ross	109	
1 st Grade	Ms. Hawkins	103	Ms. Nowlin
	Mr. Appel	102	
	Ms. Meyer-Seymour	106	Ms. Rooney
	Mrs. Mongan	108	
2 nd Grade	Ms. Gordy	209	Ms. Crisp
	Ms. Brown	210	Ms. Matthews
3 rd Grade	Ms. Carver	208	
Physical Education	Mr. Smith	Café	
Music	Mr. Soto	204	
Arts Integration Specialist	Ms. Bradford	111	
Reading/Curriculum Specialist	Ms. Lewis	201	
Special Educator/IEP Chair	Mr. Peterson	Main office	

Related Services Staff

POSITION	STAFF	ROOM
IEP Chair and Related Services team leader	Mr. Peterson	Main office
Social Worker	Ms. O'Connell	211
School Psychologist	Ms. Cunningham	200
School Health Aide	Ms. Wiggins	Health suite
Mental Health Clinician	Ms. Leach	200
Speech Clinician	Ms. Bander	200
Occupational Therapist	Ms. Katzenstein	200