



**Cape May County**

**SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Parent/Student Handbook  
2023 – 2024**

# LETTER FROM THE INTERIM ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome Back! As the Interim Assistant Superintendent, I look forward to working with you, your children, and our staff during the upcoming school year.

This Student/Parent Handbook is prepared and published by the Cape May County Special Services School District and its Board of Education to assist in the success of your child in our schools. It is to inform you of those items mandated by the state, to provide a single source for answers to frequently asked questions, to acquaint new students and their parents/guardians with the customs and regulations of the school, and to remind returning students of their responsibilities and privileges. The handbook, a yearly calendar, and our website, [www.cmcspecialservices.org](http://www.cmcspecialservices.org), will answer most of your questions. If you need additional information, please contact the school Director.

Upon my arrival, I have observed the commitment of the Board of Education, administration, and staff, as evidenced by the services being provided on a daily basis. This commitment is in line with the district's vision statement, outlining the following beliefs:

We believe that our schools should teach Social Skills, Academics, Functional Life Skills and Job/Vocational skills appropriate to each child's age and ability level, resulting in a full life and recognition of his or her value in society.

We believe that a successful student is able to meet his/her fullest potential in Social Skills, Academics, Functional Life Skills, and Vocational Skills and be prepared to function as independently as possible as a productive member of the community.

We believe that an excellent school educates the whole child, provides a safe, secure, environment, embraces the community, and respects students, staff and families.

We believe that an effective instructional/therapeutic program is one in which there is a positive caring environment where students feel safe and secure, expectations are clear and consistent, and students are engaged in their learning.

We believe that a good school administrator is one who challenges, guides, supports and collaborates with staff in a respectful, non-judgmental manner, to provide an effective, high-quality instructional program.

We believe that an effective school faculty is one that shares the district vision and promotes the district mission within a supportive, professional, and collaborative school community.

In the interest of providing a positive learning experience for everyone, I encourage you to spend a few moments going over this handbook with your child to make sure that both of you understand what is expected in the coming year. Wishing you a wonderful school year!



Thomas A. Baruffi, Ed.D.  
Interim Assistant Superintendent

# CAPE MAY COUNTY SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ocean Academy • Cape May County High School

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## MEMORANDUM

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TO: All Parents and Students of the CMC Special Services School District  
FROM: Kathleen Allen, Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
RE: Affirmative Action Officer/Public Agency Compliance Officer

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This is to inform you that the Affirmative Action Officer/Title IX Coordinator for the district is:

Julia Fairfield, Supervisor of OA/CMCHS  
CMC Special Services School District  
148 Crest Haven Road  
(Mailing address – 4 Moore Road, DN-704)  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210  
609-465-2720 ext. 5500

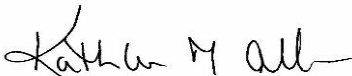
Authorized for the school in July 2023, by the Cape May County Special Services School District Board of Education.

This is to inform you that the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the district is:

Kathleen M. Allen  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
Board of Education Office  
CMC Special Services School District  
148 Crest Haven Road  
(Mailing address – 4 Moore Road, DN-704)  
Cape May Court House, NJ 08210  
609-465-2720 ext. 2211

This also informs you that all Affirmative Action documents pertaining to personnel, programs, and purchases are located in the Board of Education Office, 148 Crest Haven Road, Cape May Court House, NJ 08210.

Authorized for the school in July 2023, by the Cape May County Special Services School District Board of Education.



Kathleen M. Allen  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

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# Cape May County Special Services School District

## Ocean Academy • CMC High School

Month	Day	Activities August 2023 – June 2024	Days In Session
August	29	New Hire Training	
August	30-31	Convocation/Professional Development – All Staff	
September	1	Schools Closed for 10 month Staff	19
September	4	Schools Closed – Labor Day	
September	5	First Day of School	
September	20	Back to School Night	
October	9	Schools Closed – Columbus Day	21
November	9-10	Schools Closed – NJEA Convention	18
November	22	Student Early Dismissal	
November	23-24	Schools Closed – Thanksgiving Break	
December	22	Student Early Dismissal/	16
December	25-29	Schools Closed – Winter Break	
January	1	Schools Closed – Winter Break	21
January	2	Schools Reopens	
January	15	Schools Closed – Recognition of Martin Luther King Jr.	
February	16, 19	Schools Closed – Presidents’ Weekend	19
March	15	Schools Closed for Students/Staff Professional Day	19
March	28	Student Early Dismissal	
March	29	Schools Closed – Spring Break	
April	1-5	Schools Closed – Spring Break	17
April	8	Schools Reopen	
May	27	Schools Closed – Memorial Day	22
June	12	Last Day of School for Students	8
June	13	Last Day of School for 10 Month Staff	

Total Student Days in Session for 10-month School Year (September 2023 - June 2024) 180

In the event of an unscheduled school closing the calendar will be adjusted to conform to a 180 day school year.

**Calendar Approved by the Board of Education on February 28, 2023  
Revised April 25, 2023**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Alan I. Gould, President**

**Christopher Kobik, Vice President**

Casey Halverson, Member

Kenneth Merson, Member

Nancy Ramundo – Member

Lauren Reed, Member

Dr. Judith DeStefano-Anen, Executive County Superintendent

Amy L. Houck-Elco, Esq., Solicitor

**INTERIM ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

Phone: 609-465-2720 ext. 2201 • FAX: 609-465-8220

**Dr. Thomas Baruffi, Interim Assistant Superintendent**

E-mail: [tbaruffi@cmcspecialservices.org](mailto:tbaruffi@cmcspecialservices.org)

**BUSINESS OFFICE**

Phone: 609-465-2720 ext. 2212 • FAX: 609-465-8220

**Kathleen M. Allen, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary**

E-mail: [kallen@cmcspecialservices.org](mailto:kallen@cmcspecialservices.org)

**RELATED SERVICES**

Phone: 609-465-2720 ext. 4402 • FAX: 609-465-8039

**Jonathan Price, Director**

E-mail: [jprice@cmcspecialservices.org](mailto:jprice@cmcspecialservices.org)

**OCEAN ACADEMY/ CAPE MAY COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL**

Phone: 609-465-2720 ext. 8801 • FAX: 609-465-9314

**Valerie Bowers, Director of OA/CMCHS**

E-mail: [ybowers@cmcspecialservices.org](mailto:ybowers@cmcspecialservices.org)

Phone: 609-465-2720 ext. 5500 • FAX: 609-463-9314

**Julia Fairfield, Supervisor of OA/CMCHS**

E-mail: [jfairfield@cmcspecialservices.org](mailto:jfairfield@cmcspecialservices.org)

**FOOD SERVICES**

609-465-2720 ext. 6619

**Nutri-Serve Food Management, Inc.**

E-mail: [esp@nsfm.com](mailto:esp@nsfm.com)

**TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

Phone: 609-465-2720 ext. 7731 / 1985 • FAX: 609-465-8220

**Sharen Dever, Transportation Coordinator**

E-mail: [sdever@cmcspecialservices.org](mailto:sdever@cmcspecialservices.org)

# **DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOLS AND PROGRAMS**

## **District Overview**

The District provides special education and related services for school-aged, 3-21 year old students in Ocean Academy and the Cape May County High School. Students may be enrolled in our schools at any time throughout the school year. Programming is determined by the Individual Education Program (IEP) developed for each student and is available for children with the following classifications: Preschool Disabled, Cognitive Severe Disabilities, Multiple Disabilities, Auditory Impaired, Autistic Spectrum Disorders, and Behavior Disabilities. Related Services including Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Nursing, and Counseling are provided, as prescribed in the IEP, to students enrolled in our schools and through the Itinerant Services Program to students in local districts. Professional staff members are certified by the state of New Jersey. Parents have the right to inquire about the teachers' Highly Qualified status by contacting the school Director.

## **Cape May County High School**

The Cape May County High School provides individualized programs for students with disabilities from ages 14 through 21 in a specialized setting. Courses offered meet New Jersey state requirements for graduation, with core content academic area and vocational training provided as per individual student needs. Emphasis is placed on instruction in and practice of social skills needed to successfully function in the home, community, and workplace. It is the goal of the Cape May County High School to empower students to acquire the academic and workplace readiness skills needed to lead productive and meaningful lives.

## **Ocean Academy**

Ocean Academy provides programs for children 3-13 years old. Preschool Disabled classes for 3-5 year olds participate in curriculum focusing on pre-readiness experiences, language development, physical, sensory, and perceptual motor integration, social skills and school adjustment. Instructional staff in K – 8<sup>th</sup> grades delivers core curriculum content at the kindergarten pre-readiness, primary readiness, and elementary levels. There is a sensory integration program for students diagnosed within the Autistic/PDD spectrum with an emphasis on building relationships and reciprocal communication. An eclectic, integrated approach fluidly incorporates a total communication approach (sign language, augmentative communication, PECS, assistive technology, etc.), DIR/Floortime, Applied Behavioral Analysis, and structured Social Skills instruction.

## **Related Services**

The Related Services Department offers our students many evaluative and remedial services. It is designed to enhance our students' abilities to reach their educational and personal goals and includes: Autism Consultation Services; Psychiatric Consultation; School Nursing; Educational Counseling; Social Casework; Speech Language Therapy; Physical Therapy; Occupational Therapy; Parent Programs;



Individual Counseling; Group Counseling; Neurological Consultation; and Psychological Consultation; Psychiatric Nurse Case Management

The Occupational, Physical, and Speech Therapy Department serves children with special needs when the unique physical, sensory, perceptual, speech and language needs of these children interfere with their total educational performance. The therapists use an integrated approach working with various disciplines toward the child's educational goals. Service delivery may be in the classroom or therapy room.

## **DISTRICT GUIDELINES**

### **Acceptable Use Policy**

Cape May County Special Services School District has an ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTER NETWORK(S)/COMPUTERS AND RESOURCES Policy #2361, which applies to all computer network and internet use in our district. You may view this policy on the district website under District → District Policies, or by calling the school for a copy at 609-465-2720 ext. 2203. All students are required to abide by the rules regarding acceptable use.

### **Anti-Hazing Policy**

A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Hazing is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. The Board of Education prohibits acts of hazing and has adopted Policy #5541 against hazing in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:37-32.2. The provisions of this Policy apply to high school(s); middle school(s); and/or elementary school(s) in the school district. You may view Policy #5541 Anti-Hazing, on the district website under District → District Policies, or by calling the school for a copy at 609-465-2720 ext. 2203.

### **Arrival / Departure Procedures**

Parents/Guardians who transport their child(ren) to school must follow the following procedures upon arrival:

- Parents/Guardians must park in the lot closest to the GEB Wing which is located off of Crest Haven Road via Driveway #3 by the Board Office entrance.
- Parents/Guardians must sign-in their child at the parent drop off/pick up station located by the Board Office Entrance.
- Students will be escorted to their classroom by CMCSSTD Staff.
- After 9:00am Parents/Guardians must go to the GEB Wing Main Office to sign in your child(ren) and Parents will wait in Room 201 with their child.

To ensure the safety of students, parents/guardians, bus drivers and staff, who will be transporting their child(ren) from school at the close of the school day must follow the following procedures:

- Parents/Guardians must be parked by 2:00 pm in the lot closest to the GEB Wing.

- Parents/Guardians must sign-out their child at the parent drop off/pick up station located by the Board Office signifying the release of the student to the parent/guardian. Students will be escorted by staff to the parent pick-up station.

## **Attendance**

The Cape May County Schools for Special Services Board of Education believes that the educational process requires continuous, uninterrupted school attendance for all students. The Board of Education recognizes the responsibility of parents/guardians to see that students attend school regularly. All students are expected to be in school each day.

In December 2012, Governor Christie signed **Tabitha's Law** which requires parents or guardians to notify the school if their child will be absent from school. If the Director or designee determines that the child is absent without a valid excuse and if the reason is unknown to school personnel, then the Director or designee will immediately attempt to contact/notify the parent and determine the reason for the absence. In our school the designee could be the school secretary, a case manager or teacher.

There are three (3) types of absences, excused, unexcused counting toward truancy, and unexcused not counting toward truancy as determined by N.J.S.A. 18A:38.

**Excused Absence** is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of the day for the observance of a religious holiday pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16, for Take Your Child to Work Day, or any other absence as determined to be excused by the New Jersey Department of Education.

**Unexcused Absence that does not count toward truancy** is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the reasons listed below:

- The student's illness is supported by a written letter from the parent upon the student's return to school;
- The students required attendance in court;
- Where appropriate, when consistent with the IEP, the Individual with Disabilities Act, accommodations plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
- The student's suspension from school;
- Family illness or death supported by a written letter from the parent upon student's return to school;
- Visits to post-secondary institutions;
- Interviews with prospective employer or with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;
- Examinations for a driver's license;
- Necessary or unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be schedule at a time other than a school day

**Unexcused Absence that does count toward truancy** would be for any other reason not listed above.

The Director is required to inform sending school districts regarding all absences and unacceptable attendance patterns. Parents will receive phone calls regarding all

unexcused absences. Sending school district's policies determine loss of credit for high school students and continued enrollment at Cape May County High School or Ocean Academy. Please refer to the Board of Education Policy #5200 on Attendance which can be found on the district website District → District Policies.

## **Bus**

While the law requires the sending school district to furnish transportation, it does not relieve the parents of students from the responsibility of supervision. Once a student boards the bus, and only at that time, does he/she become the responsibility of the school district. Such responsibility shall end when the student is delivered to the regular bus stop at the close of the school day. In view of the fact that a bus is an extension of the classroom, the Board of Education shall require students to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. In cases when a student does not conduct him/herself properly on a bus, the Director will invoke the discipline code. It is necessary for a report to be filled out by the bus driver. **Students who become serious discipline problems on the school bus may have their riding privileges suspended by the Director. In such cases, the parent/guardian of the student involved and the sending district will be notified to determine an alternate transportation method.**

## **Care of School Property**

Students should not mark school furniture, walls, ceiling, floor, or equipment with pen, paint, or any other instrument. Anyone willfully destroying school property through vandalism, arson, or larceny or who creates a hazard to the safety of our students will be referred to the proper law enforcement agency and will be monetarily responsible for all damages in addition to facing school disciplinary action.

## **Complaint Resolution**

Many times complaints are a result of miscommunication. A question, concern, comment, or complaint should first be addressed to the child's teacher who may be able to clarify the facts. If the complaint is not resolved at that level, the school Director may be contacted. Most issues should be resolved at the school level but if they are not, the Assistant Superintendent's office may be contacted.

## **Crisis / Evacuation Drills**

In the event of a crisis situation in the building, crisis management procedures are in place. Crisis drills will be held once a month. Students are expected to follow all of the crisis procedures and obey the directions of the staff members in charge at their location. Silence is imperative so students are not permitted to use cell phones during a crisis drill. In the case of a true emergency, parents would be notified as soon as possible using the phone notification system.

An evacuation plan is posted in each room. When the alarm sounds, students should leave the room through the proper exit quietly and quickly. Students must stay with their classes and no one is to return to the building until the signal is given. Tampering with fire alarms and fire extinguishers is an illegal act and will be treated accordingly.

## Diapers and Wipes

Diapers and wipes are the responsibility of the parent/guardian. An adequate supply should be marked with our child's name on them and sent to the classroom. The teacher will let you know when supplies for your child are getting low.

## District and State Testing

Students participate as appropriate in the New Jersey Statewide Assessment System, which includes the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA), and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) as determined by their IEP. Testing accommodations for statewide assessment are made according to individual student needs as listed in the IEP. Further information on district and state testing is available by contacting the school Director.

## Dress Code

Pupils should wear clothing that is appropriate for their age and for school. Pupils are expected to come to school wearing neat, appropriate and suitable attire that does not distract others and is not offensive. Clothing that is appropriate for the beach, pool, or health club is not appropriate for school. Examples of inappropriate attire include, but are not limited to, garments that reveal under garments, midriffs, or buttocks. Pants must be able to stay up without being hand held. The length of skirts, dresses, and shorts should be appropriate for school. The straps of tank tops should be at least two inches wide. Spaghetti straps, halter-tops, short shorts, hats, headbands, sunglasses, ski goggles, and bandanas are not appropriate for school.

Pupils may not wear clothing and/or accessories that have any associations with substances, violence, or gangs. Clothing that is offensive to any national ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, or gender group is not appropriate for school. Clothing that has any obscene writing or promotes suggestive, indecent, or unacceptable school behavior whether stated or implied will not be permitted. Shoes/sneakers are required to be worn at all times. Discretion should be used regarding the appropriateness and/or safety of certain types of shoes. **FLIP FLOPS ARE PROHIBITED and sandals are discouraged.** Students wearing inappropriate clothing will be required to change.

## Early Dismissal for Individual Students

### **Ocean Academy / CMC High School**

In the event a parent/guardian requests that a student be released from school early, a signed request from the parent/guardian stating the time and reason for early release with the phone number of the parent/guardian must be in the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing by 8:45 a.m. All requests are subject to the attendance policy and will be verified. The student must be signed out by the parent/guardian in the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing, and if returning that day, signed back in. If a family member other than the parent/guardian will be picking the student up, that person must be at least 18 years of age and their name must be on the note from the parent/guardian. Valid state issued identification will be requested before releasing the student. Students must not leave the building without proper authorization.

**Parents/guardians must sign in and wait in the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing when picking up students. No student can be picked up or dismissed from any other school entrance.**

### **Emergency School Closings**

In the event of an emergency closing prior to the start of the school day, students will be notified by an automated phone notification system and announcements will be made on the following TV stations, and websites along with the district website:

- WPVI-TV ABC 6 or [www.6abc.com](http://www.6abc.com)
- WCAU NBC 10 or [www.nbc10.com](http://www.nbc10.com)

In the event of an emergency closing during the regular school day, you will be notified by the automated phone notification system. If a parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact number will be used.

**Parents/guardians: Please ensure that your phone number(s) and emergency contact information is current and updated as changes occur.**

### **Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying**

The Board of Education prohibits acts of Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying of a pupil. The Board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity, and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment consistent with the Code of Pupil Conduct.

Consequences and appropriate remedial action for a pupil or staff member who commits one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or termination of pupils placement, as set forth in the Board approved Code of Pupil conduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. You may view Policy #5512 on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying on the district website under District → District Policies, or by calling the school for a copy at 609-465-2720 ext. 2203.

### **Insurance Statement**

Parents/guardians are advised that the school district does not provide insurance coverage for lost or damaged personal property or equipment. Should such damage or loss occur, it is recommended that parents/guardians contact their personal insurance carrier.

### **Legal Custody**

A record shall be kept indicating the legal custodian of each pupil. Such custodian shall be responsible for informing the Board of Education of any change in the pupil's guardianship. If one parent/guardian has been awarded custody of the pupil in a divorce settlement, the other parent/guardian shall present to the Director a letter permitting that person to accompany the child to or from school. The Director must take such steps as deemed necessary to ensure that the child is released only to the proper adult guardian.

## **School Meal Program**

Breakfast at school is encouraged and our district serves Breakfast After the Bell. Our school day starts at 8:45AM. Breakfast After the Bell is served in the classrooms and is conducted from 8:55AM to 9:25AM at both Ocean Academy and CMC High School. Forms are sent home in August for families to apply for free or reduced meals. For students who do not qualify for free or reduced meals a calendar will be sent home with the costs for each particular month for both breakfast and lunch. Please use this as your guide to what you should send in by the first of each month if you choose to have your child purchase lunch and/or breakfast. School Lunch Menus are also available on the district website under Parents → School Lunch. District Policy #8550 “Unpaid Meal Charges/Outstanding Food Service Charges” can be found on the district website under District → District Policies.

## **School Nurse**

- Ocean Academy, 609-465-2720 ext. 4414 or 4415
- CMC High School, 609-465-2720 ext. 4423 or 4424

A nurse is available in the Health Office for cases of school related injury or illness during school hours. A student whose illness necessitates his/her leaving school must have that fact recorded in both the Health Office and the School Office. Other emergencies that necessitate a parent/guardian picking up their child during the school day must be handled through the School Office.

A written request MUST be signed by the parent/guardian (no verbal requests will be honored) and given to the School Office for school records. Signing out without proper authorization will be considered leaving school without permission regardless of who provides the transportation and will result in implementation of the discipline code. Students are not permitted to take any medication in school except under the nurse’s supervision. A parent/guardian must send the original prescription bottle to school indicating the accurate dosage and a prescription dated for the current year. Please see the Medication section on page 18.

## **School Trips and Teacher Permission Forms**

Eligible pupils wishing to participate in any authorized school trip must secure their parent/guardian’s signature on the parent permission form before they may participate. Eligibility will be determined by compliance with school rules and regulations. Teachers act as chaperones on all trips and their instructions must be complied with at all times. Unauthorized conduct and misuse of privileges are reported to the Director’s Office by the teacher in charge.

## **Tardiness**

When pupils enter school after the assigned starting time, they must sign in at the school office in order to obtain a pass to enter their class. Tardiness is included in the attendance policy.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **Affiliation Agreements**

The district frequently enters into affiliation agreements with colleges and universities to place student teachers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers, and speech/language therapists in our district schools so that they may complete their undergraduate requirements. This benefits both our district and those undergraduate students who participate in this program. For further information, you may phone the Related Services Department at 609-465-2720 extension 4402.

## **CMC Special Services School District Rules/Expectations**

Students attending the Cape May County High School are to comply with the following rules:

- Be in assigned classroom at the assigned time
- Use appropriate language in classrooms and hallways
- Inappropriate physical contact with other students or staff members is not permitted
- Keep hats off inside the building
- Open containers and beverages are not permitted in the hallways
- Be Safe; Be Respectful; Be Kind; Be Responsible
- All students are required to follow the Student Code of Conduct

## **CMC Special Services School District Non-Smoking Rules**

**It is illegal to smoke anywhere on school grounds! Parents and visitors must also comply with this State Law on our school grounds.**

- All items found in the possession of a student i.e. cigarettes, electronic smoking devices and/or smoking paraphernalia (lighters, matches, etc.), will be confiscated and will not be returned to the student. Refusal to turn over the items will result in a suspension.
- If any student is caught smoking on school grounds, he/she will face consequences.

***PLEASE NOTE: Calling the police and pressing charges for violating New Jersey State Law is an option with each offense. PLEASE KEEP OUR SCHOOL SAFE BY FOLLOWING THESE RULES!***

## **CMCSSSD Education Foundation**

The Education Foundation is an independent, non-profit entity created to provide support for innovative and exemplary special programs and projects that would directly benefit the students of the Cape May County Special Services School District. The Foundation has funded a lift system, pool accessible wheel chairs, a wheelchair accessible playground, numerous mini-grants to educational staff for classroom programs, a fully equipped sensory room in Ocean Academy, assistive technology equipment, specialized physical/occupational therapy equipment, a student/staff weight room, 12-passenger vans, and new acoustical tiles for the gymnasium to

improve the sound quality. The Foundation’s primary fund-raiser is the annual Auction/Dinner held each fall.

### **Community Aquatic Program**

The Community Aquatic Program provides classes and recreational swimming experiences to meet the interests and needs of the residents of Cape May County. Information regarding the program can be found on the district website, under Aquatics → Aquatic Program or by contacting the Community Aquatic Planner at 609-465-2820 ext. 3303.

### **Crisis Management**

In the event of an emergency, the school district has a crisis management team on site. The team members can communicate with each other to ensure efficient handling of any emergency situation. In addition, the Board of Education has approved a School Safety and Security Plan, which is followed in the event of an emergency.

Staff and students are trained and participate in evacuation and other drills on a regularly scheduled basis. Security drills are held monthly.

### ***Examples of Safe Schools Practices at CMCSSTD***

- Visitors must be admitted to the building via a voice and video security system;
- All visitors must enter the school at the main entrance, show valid state issued identification, log in with the school secretary, and obtain a visitors badge;
- All employees are required to wear an identification badge;
- Parents are required to notify the school when their child is absent. If no call is received, every attempt is made to call the home; and
- Individual and group counseling is available to students to assist them in dealing with difficult issues.

### **Deaf Student’s Bill of Rights**

S-2044 (P.L.2021, c.204) establishes the “Deaf Student’s Bill of Rights,” recognizing that students who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind have the same rights and potential as other students. This bill requires that school districts provide such students with the following:

- Screening and assessment of hearing and vision capabilities, and communication and language needs, at the earliest possible age and the continuation of screening and evaluation services throughout a student’s education.
- Early intervention to support the acquisition of solid language bases.
- Information for parents concerning all placement considerations and options available, which will provide opportunities for parents and guardians to fully participate in the development and implementation of their child’s education plan.
- Opportunities to learn advocacy skills, including self-advocacy.
- Opportunities to meet and associate with their peers in the school environment and during school-sponsored activities.
- Direct instruction.
- A communication plan in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a plan prepared pursuant to section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.



- Placement that is best suited to the child’s individual needs including social, emotional, communication, and cultural needs, with consideration for the child’s age, degree and type of hearing loss, academic level, and mode of communication.
- Full communication access to all programs in their educational settings.
- Information for parents on the medical, ethical, cultural, and linguistic issues of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind.

### **District Website – [www.cmcspecialservices.org](http://www.cmcspecialservices.org)**

Our district maintains a website that gives current information about activities and events throughout our schools. The district website has a calendar of events, teacher contact information, family and community resources, information about all school departments and personnel, and press releases about our students and schools.

Policies and Regulations may be accessed through the district website under District → District Policies.

We are excited to announce the opening of our new Parent Portal! Parents and Guardians will have the opportunity to access their child’s school-related data, contact information, and school calendar through the portal. Please note that many additional features will be added throughout the upcoming months. A link to the Parent Portal can be found on the district website under Menu.

### **Education Records**

#### **Notification of Rights under FERPA for Elementary and Secondary Schools:**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school Director a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
- The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the school Director, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. Records generated through the sending district can only be amended by the sending districts. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
- The right to privacy of personally identifiable information in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, Supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student’s enrollment or transfer.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the School to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20222.

## **Extracurricular Activities**

We encourage our students to participate in the activities offered. In addition, we will do everything we can to facilitate the participation of our students in team and club activities in the various sending districts. Any student interested should see the school Director. Parents are required to pick their students up promptly when after school activities are completed.

## **Immunizations**

All immunization shots and records must be kept up to date or your child may be excluded from school as per New Jersey State mandate. **Please notify the school nurse if your child receives any additional immunizations during the year.**

## **Injury / Illness**

Any student health/medical needs should be communicated directly to the school nurse. Please comply with the following procedures when your child has an injury or illness:

- If a child is found to have an elevated temperature by the school nurse, the child may be sent home and is to remain home for **at least 24 hours** or one full day until the temperature is normal.
- Following any illness requiring your child to be out of school, you **must** send a note including the type of illness, whether your child was seen by a doctor, and a list of any medication that was prescribed.
- Following any injury, medical procedure, or surgery, a written doctor’s note permitting return to school is **required**. The note must include the type of injury, procedure or limitations on activities the student will have in school.

- A child injured during the school day is covered under a school insurance policy. **This coverage is only secondary to your insurance policy.** An insurance form will be provided to you and it is your responsibility to complete and mail the form to the insurance provider.
- Any student with an open wound must have the wound covered while at school.
- No student with an open, draining wound will be permitted in the pool or therapy pool.
- If a student is found to have head lice or nits, he/she will be sent home to be treated. The student may not return to school until his/her lice and nits are no longer present. Upon returning to school parent/guardian must bring student to the school nurse to be checked before student is admitted to class.

## **Media Center**

The district’s Media Center provides access to a comprehensive inventory of literature and multimedia materials integrated across curricular content areas, for the use of students, staff members, and the community.

## **Medication**

All correspondence to the nurse should be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the nurse, and marked confidential. The following guidelines will be followed if your child will be taking medication in school:

- Any prescribed medications needed during the school day can be administered by the school nurse, under our school doctor’s direction.
- No medication will be given without a new prescription from your child’s doctor dated for the current school year. Please ask your doctor to write “FILE COPY” on the prescription. If you have recently sent in medication for your child without an updated prescription, contact your child’s doctor immediately for a new prescription.
- For legal as well as safety concerns, all medications must be in the original container stating your child’s name, medication, and dosage in order for the school nurse to administer any medication to your child.
- If your child is unable to swallow medication with water, you will be responsible for providing applesauce, pudding, etc.
- If you have any questions or to notify the school nurse of any changes in your child’s medication, please call 609-465-2720 and dial the extension for the appropriate school:
  - ▶ Ocean Academy – extension 4414 or 4415
  - ▶ Cape May County High School – extension 4423 or 4424

## **Medical Screening**

During the school year, your child will have various health screenings. New Jersey State Law requires these screenings for all children attending public schools. They will include weight, height, blood pressure, vision, hearing, and scoliosis of the spine. Screenings will be administered either by the school nurse or by the school physician. When screenings are completed, you will be notified of any significant findings.

## **Personal Items / Technology**

Students should not bring large amounts of money or valuables to school. The school will not bear responsibility for personal items lost or stolen, including iPods, iPads, cell phones, etc.

As a district, we support the use of technology as an instructional tool, and district provided technology may be used within the parameters of the Acceptable Use Policy. However, personal technology that interferes or disrupts the educational process is not permitted. Cell phones, iPads, iPods and any other technological devices brought from home must be locked and secured in an approved area or given to a staff member upon request. If an instructional activity requires the use of one of these technological devices, permission may be given by the Director or designee. In accordance with district policy personal technology devices may not be connected to the district network.

## **Safety**

In an effort to provide the safest possible learning environment for our students and staff, all entrances into the buildings are locked and are accessible by staff card key or by ringing the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing entrance and identifying yourself to be buzzed in.

In addition, visitors are asked to comply with the following:

- All visitors **MUST** report to the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing;
- All visitors **MUST** show identification before receiving a visitor pass; and
- All visitors **MUST** display the above visitor pass when in the building.

Regarding pick-up of children:

- Parents/Guardians **must** call ahead to pick up child(ren)
- Parents/guardians must sign in at the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing
- When a non-parent/guardian is picking up a student, the parent/guardian **must** notify the school office **in writing** of who will be picking up the student from school. The non-parent/guardian must be at least 18 years of age and will be required to show identification before the child(ren) will be permitted to leave.
- Students may only be picked up at the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing. No student will be released through any other entrance/exit.

## **Student Code of Conduct**

The Cape May County Special Services Code of Conduct is based on the following pillars of character which are the core of our Social Skills Program: Caring, Citizenship, Fairness, Respect, Responsibility, and Trustworthiness.

### **Statement of Student Responsibilities**

Students enrolled in the CMCSSD have the following responsibilities:

- Responsibility to attend school on a regular basis and to be on time
- Responsibility to complete all work as assigned
- Responsibility to obey school rules and state and federal laws
- Responsibility to respect the rights of others
- Responsibility for your own actions
- Responsibility to use appropriate language

- Responsibility to respect school and personal property
- Responsibility to abide by the dress code

### **Statement of Student Rights**

Students enrolled in CMCSSSD have the following rights:

- The right to a free, appropriate, public education
- The right to due process of the law
- The right to equal protection
- The right to be free from discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- The right to attend a safe and drug-free school

### **Statement of School Rules**

Pupils shall:

- Be respectful to all teachers;
- Demonstrate respect to self by coming to school consistently and not being truant; by not smoking on school property; by not possessing, using or distributing a substance in violation of Policy # 5530;
- Demonstrate respect to others by not using, threatening or inciting physical force against anyone on school property; using force of any kind; using foul, abusive language, engaging in any type of harassment intimidation or bullying; possessing or using weapons or any implement intended to harm others; conveying information about other pupils or staff members known to be false; acting recklessly as to endanger the safety of others; procuring the property of others through threat or intimidation; falsifying an excuse or any school document;
- Demonstrate respect to property and not steal, damage or deface the property of other students, staff members or the district; smoke, create litter, or vandalize property; enter school premises or any specific portion of the premises without permission and without authority; sound or cause to be sounded a false alarm for fire, bomb, or another condition or circumstance hazardous to others; and
- Demonstrate good citizenship, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness and caring by maintaining order and limiting disruptions on school premises; refrain from illegal gambling, setting fires, cheating, insubordination, possessing or exploding firecrackers or other explosive devices on school property; joining secret societies prohibited by law, or violating codes of conduct adopted for organizations of pupils; and by refraining from engaging in any other activity expressly prohibited by a school staff member in authority.

### **Consequences and Remedial Measures**

The following disciplinary measures may be applied as appropriate to the pupil's violation of school rules. The measures are sequential and are organized in order of severity.

- Admonishment
- Temporary Removal from Classroom
- Deprivation of Privileges
- Detention (transportation will be the responsibility of the parent)
- In-School Suspension
- Out of School Suspension
- Termination of Placement from Cape May County Special Services School District

The following remedial measures may be taken to aid in correcting pupil conduct:

- Restitution and Restoration
- Counseling
- Parent Conferences

**Suspected illegal actions will be reported to the police for investigation.**

### **Substance Abuse Policy Statement**

The Board of Education recognizes alcohol and other drug dependency as an illness and a major health and behavior problem and recognizes that unless schools and their students are drug and alcohol free, optimum conditions for learning do not exist. The Board of Education, by adopting this policy, which was developed through administration and staff participation, directs the Assistant Superintendent and staff to place into effect procedures for this policy. The Board pledges not only to meet, but to exceed State and Federal mandates for an alcohol and drug free district by providing the best programs possible for enforcement, intervention, and prevention of drug and alcohol abuse.

Students are prohibited from possessing, consuming or distributing drugs and alcohol in any form while at school, on school grounds, attending a school related function on or off campus, and traveling to and from school. Students are further prohibited from smoking cigarettes, e-cigarettes or using tobacco products in any form in school buildings and on school grounds.

Students may be subject to medical examination, suspension, and other disciplinary sanctions established by this policy. Students and their parents/guardians are advised that New Jersey laws may require additional penalties beyond school sanctions for drug-related offenses on and off school grounds. A summary of these laws and the penalties will be provided to students and their parents/guardians annually.

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the parent will be called and arrangements will be made to have the student tested. A student may not return to school until the testing is complete and a doctor has verified that the student may return to school.

The Cape May County Special Services School District will make every effort to prevent student involvement with drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful behavioral-health matters by providing age appropriate education programs and supportive counseling. Parents and staff will receive detailed information about the procedures and consequences, legal and health related, of the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

The Board of Education further directs the Assistant Superintendent or his/her designee to conduct an annual review of the Policy and Procedures, and to report on the effectiveness to the Board of Education.

In establishing this policy, the Board of Education further directs the Assistant Superintendent to have programs and procedures developed and implemented for the purpose of assisting students who experience problematic drug or alcohol use. It is the Board's intention to use the disciplinary sanctions of this policy as a means of

helping students recover from the debilitating effects of alcohol and drug abuse. It is in this spirit that the development and enforcement of the policy is intended.

The school Director has further information on the implementation of this policy in each of our schools.

## **Suspension**

Students who indulge in disruptive behavior may be suspended. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Continued and willful disobedience
- Open defiance of the authority of any teacher or person having authority over him/her
- Actions that constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other pupils
- Physical assault upon another pupil
- Taking, or attempting to take, personal property or money from another pupil whether by force or fear
- Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, substantial damage to school property
- Taking part in any unauthorized occupancy of a district facility and refusing to leave promptly when directed to do so by a person in authority
- Inciting other students to truancy
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Bringing drugs or alcohol to school
- Making verbal threats to staff and other students

Pupils who commit assault upon a teacher, administrator, board member or other employees of the Board of Education acting in the performance of their duties or in a situation where their authority to so act is apparent, may be suspended from school consistent with procedural due process.

The Assistant Superintendent, in consultation with the Board attorney, shall develop regulations to assure due process to all students before a suspension is imposed and shall include:

- Informing the student of the charges against him/her
- Giving the student a chance to reply to the charges

When the Director imposes a suspension they must report it to the Assistant Superintendent, who will in turn report it to the Board of Education. No suspension may continue beyond the second regular meeting of the Board following the suspension without Board of Education action. No suspension may be continued beyond 25 days without Board of Education action.

## **Visitors**

The school policy is to accept only those visitors who have legitimate school business. **ALL VISITORS MUST ENTER AT THE GEORGE E. BAILEY WING ENTRANCE. For school security and safety reasons all parents and visitors must register in the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing, show valid state issued identification, log in with the school secretary, receive a building pass, and wait in the office until the secretary notifies the staff member**

**you are here to see. STUDENTS MAY NOT BRING VISITORS TO SCHOOL.** All parents/guardians and visitors are expected to return their building pass to the Main Office in the George E. Bailey Wing, log out with the school secretary, and leave promptly when their business is completed.

## **UNIQUE PROGRAMS**

### **Community Based Instruction**

The community-based program is designed to give students an opportunity to experience working in the community in conjunction with learning academic skills. Students selected for the program have a supportive or competitive employment goal in their Transition Plan within their IEP. Recommendations from the case managers and teachers are necessary along with assessment data on the student’s vocational job performance, personal/social behavior skills and their levels of independence in the community. Commonly referred to as “classrooms without walls”, students work side by side with community mentors performing basic entry job skills. In this setting, students learn basic work ethic skills, personal/social skills, effective communication skills, and functional math and reading skills. These students are between the ages of 18-21, have met their graduation requirements, and need more supports in a work-place setting to be successful. A certified teacher and aide are on site to add the extra support necessary for success. The students are at their work place setting every day, all day and are transported by their district’s transportation so they do not enter our school building...hence the “classroom without walls”. Community based sites include the Crestview Nursing Home, Congress Hall, Atlantic Cape Community College, Acme, and ShopRite.

After success in these supportive sites, students then have an opportunity to be placed in an independent work site. In these sites, students work side by side with a community mentor and are supported by the School to Work teacher who visits once a day to assist and assess the students’ success. Independent work sites are based on the students’ needs, interests and proximity to their home. These independent work sites are usually considered prior to Graduation and in congruence with the student’s transition plan.

### **CMCSSD Food Bank**

District students operate our county food bank throughout the year, for use by all of our families. Using generous donations from staff members and community organizations, as well as funding from FEMA, food baskets are provided to needy families from Cape May County Special Services School District and the community at large.

### **Outdoor Experiential Education (OXE)**

Through a variety of outdoor and indoor activities in the community (hikes, camping trips, community recreation activities, service projects, etc.,) OXE builds self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-awareness. Problem solving skills, recreation participation skills, a strong environmental ethic, and an experiential base for educational programs



are also developed in each student. The OXE teacher works collaboratively with the classroom teacher to ensure cross-curricular activities.

### **Pet Therapy**

A Pet Therapy Program is incorporated into our program as one of the many services we provide for staff and students. Trained therapy dogs will come in to "work" with us from time to time with their co-worker teacher/owner, providing the unconditional love, affection, and acceptance that only these special "guests" can bring. Research has shown that therapy dogs in schools can help build strong social emotional skills in students. A therapy dog's presence has also been shown to reduce anxiety, help students work through anger management concerns, reduce bullying tendencies, and address other personal and social issues that students deal with.

### **Psychiatric Nurse Case Management**

The Cape May County Special Services School District has partnered with the Center for Family Guidance (CFG) to provide psychiatric medication monitoring and management services. As students age their bodies adjust over time, and medications may not be as effective after years or months of use. In cases where medication needs to be adjusted, our students now have access to a professional who can monitor and assess the effectiveness of their current medications and make adjustments as needed. Throughout the school year we will work closely with the Advanced Practice Nurse from CFG who will be available to support our students and their individual needs

### **Restaurant Occupations / Back Porch Café**

The Restaurant Occupations program develops career awareness, practical skills and experience in the food services industry along with appropriate work behaviors and attitudes. Students are prepared for entry-level employment in restaurants and other food services settings, with concentration on six basic areas: food preparation, cooking, serving, stocking and sanitation, safety, and inventory.

Students develop specific skills in food set-up and preparation in our restaurant such as sandwich making, slicing and weighing, taking phone and counter orders, setting up and operating a bagel cart, maintaining inventory and stocking shelves, cashiering and bagging at the check-out counter, and custodial skills necessary for maintaining the restaurant.

Other skills introduced include table setting, bussing, dishwashing, as well as reading, researching, and preparing recipes. Students work in a realistic work setting and gain practical experience through this vocational program.

### **Social Skills Development / Character Education**

The Social Skills Development/Character Education program is based on the five competencies as outlined in the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Social Emotional Learning Framework. Those competencies are: Self Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making, Relationship Skills, and Social Awareness. The CASEL framework includes a systemic approach that highlights the importance of an equitable learning environment and allows for practices to be generalized across key settings of classrooms, schools, families, and

communities in order to enhance our students’ social and emotional needs as well as their academic learning. Our Social Skills/Character Education program is taught and reinforced in the following two ways: direct instruction in a separate class to provide selected students who have the cognitive and language skills necessary to actively participate in the curriculum; and the skills are reinforced through use of common language embedded in the daily routines and lessons in all of our classes. The goal of the program is to create a safe and caring classroom and school environment. Students and staff members share in learning and practicing effective social emotional skills that help them interact effectively with one another in school, the community, the workplace, and throughout their lives. Teachers are trained in the program and incorporate the common language and skills into their routines.

**Substance Awareness Activities and Counseling**

Activities occur throughout the school year, including special guests and events. In addition, counseling is provided by our district Substance Abuse Counselor who will promote wellness and focus the students’ attention on positive alternatives to alcohol and drug use.