



Welcome to Casa!

Families are an integral part of our school community, and we want your journey here to be an enjoyable one. Parents want to navigate the basic information efficiently so that they can devote their energies to what's most important – the child. This packet is a summary of information to help you do just that. Additional resources can be found on the school's primary information hub, its website: www.cemcs.org. We invite you to visit the website frequently.

Getting Started

Classroom assignments are sent via e-mail, approximately one week before the first day of school. That communication also serves as your invitation to “meet the teacher”, which is usually held one weekday prior to the first day of school. Dates can be confirmed on the school's online calendar. At this event, you will receive carpool tags and instructions, information specific to your child's classroom routine, and requests to sign up for various things that your child's class will need. Your child's **attendance** at school is vital to their success and to our funding. Public charter school funding greatly depends on each student's attendance, especially during the first 20 school days.

You may notice that some students have a box of **school supplies** already in the classroom during “Meet the Teacher.” This is a service offered each year, which allows students to order basic school supplies for the following year. Those families who have boxes waiting for them were at Casa during the last school year and ordered those boxes at the end of the previous school year. You'll have that option at the end of this year; it is not required and is only offered as an option for convenience. Note that this is separate from the funds for consumable supplies that the school requests.

Carpool and dismissal take time at the beginning of each school year, and understandably so. Little ones are learning how to identify a brand-new process (along with their parents), and new students are adjusting to the school. Refer to the carpool map and instructions (provided via e-mail). Some parents even do a “test drive” of the carpool route prior to the first day of school. There are specific doors for morning carpool drop-off, afternoon carpool pick-up, and morning/afternoon walk-ups. Before and After School Care has a separate process – see the website for more information if applicable. Please be sure your carpool tag is easily visible, refrain from cell phone use, and remain in your vehicle. Someone will bring your child to you and will help with the vehicle door, if needed. Safety is the priority and is the basis for policies related to dismissal. View the entire policy online at the following address, or request a hard copy from the front office: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Carpool-Letter-to-Parents-May-2018.docx-Google-Docs.pdf>

Early Release: The end of the school day is a busy time in the classroom and in the front office. For safe and efficient operations, students will not be released to parents from the classroom or the front office between 2:15 and 3:20. View the entire policy online at the

following address, or request a hard copy from the front office: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEM-Policy-2.2.1-Early-Release-Revision-September-2016.pdf>

Late Pickup: Children need to remain safe and supervised if left at school after hours. Children who are not picked up by 3:20 will remain in the front office until 3:30. All remaining children will be sent to the Aftercare program at 3:45. Fees may apply; please view the entire policy online at the following address, or request a hard copy from the front office: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEM-Policy-2.1.1-Late-Pickup-Revised-September-2016.pdf>

The **Attendance Policy** can be found online at the following address, or you may request a hard copy from the front office: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEM-Policy-3.3.2-Attendance-Policy-Revised-September-20161.pdf>

Uniforms are required from the first day of school. The uniform policy explains additional requirements and color combinations, which may vary by grade level. Uniform swaps are held several times throughout the school year (see the calendar), so you may want to wait before purchasing many uniform sets. You do not have to donate in order to obtain uniforms. View the entire policy online at the following address, or request a hard copy from the front office: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEM-policy-2.2-Dress-Code-Revised-May-20121.pdf>

Lunch options are to either bring it ready-to-eat from home; or to order from the My Hot Lunchbox program. The latter allows you to order online, and delivers a meal to your child, in his or her classroom, at lunchtime. Please remember to check the school's policy on healthy choices, along with some suggestions, when packing your child's lunch.

More information regarding these processes and school policies can be found on the website, under *Student Life*.

Getting Involved

Donating classroom materials and financial support begin right away! As early as "Meet the Teacher", you'll have the opportunity to choose items to donate for the classrooms, including art and music, and to pay the consumable materials fee for each student. Teachers also greatly appreciate your donations of time, whether by signing up for reading, recess, or general help. Spending time in the classroom will begin some weeks after the year has begun; this allows students and teachers to settle into their routine first. Any volunteer work that involves interacting with the children requires a background check. The school offers a process for background checks and will send reminders at the beginning of the year. View the entire policy online at the following address, or request a hard copy from the front office: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CEM-policy-02.14-Volunteer-Background-Check-May-20141.pdf>

Every parent is a member of the Parent Faculty Association (PFA). The PFA has its own board and committees and supports the school in many ways, including: fundraising, event planning, and social networking activities for families. With so many initiatives, you're bound to find something particularly exciting to you. Get to know other families, gain helpful tips as a parent of Casa, and join the fun! Learn more by visiting: <http://www.cemcs.org/get-involved/volunteer/pfa/>

Have you wondered where others are getting those awesome shirts with the school's name on them? They are custom t-shirts, designed annually by our own middle grade students! It will be announced during the year when the new ones are available for sale – these may be worn on Fridays as part of the uniform. Meanwhile, check out the order form for PFA Gear online, or stop by the front desk. PFA Gear includes sweatshirts, lanyards, water bottles, and more. Purchases support the school, and the clothing items can be worn as a part of the Casa uniform!

The Board of Directors for the school meets monthly and works with the school administration to guide the overall growth and development of Casa. There are various committees of the Board that also meet monthly. The meetings are open to the public; committee meetings offer a workshop-style format for some of the Board's goals. Learn more by visiting: <http://www.cemcs.org/get-involved/volunteer/boardcommittees/>

Details on volunteer opportunities, and whom to contact, can be found on the website, under *Get Involved*.

The complete *Parent-Student Handbook* can be viewed online, at: <http://www.cemcs.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2017-2018-Parent-Student-Handbook.pdf>

Other Important Links

Policies, Procedures and Governing Documents (including the Student Handbook)
<http://www.cemcs.org/student-life/school-policies-and-procedures/>

Casa Calendar (*subscribe to the calendar and elect to receive alerts and reminders!*)

<http://www.cemcs.org/student-life/calendar/>

Childcare Programs (Before & After School Care)

<http://www.cemcs.org/what-we-do/before-and-after-school/>

Questions? We're all here to help. School administration may likely have been your first contact with Casa; that includes staff in the main office. They can help with your general questions about school operations: cemcs@cemcs.org or 919-855-9811. Of course, your child's teachers will be your primary communicators for your child's progress and activities; feel free to reach out to your child's teachers via e-mail or set an appointment to speak with them. Many have also found it helpful to simply strike up a conversation with other parents. Whomever you reach out to, on behalf of us all, welcome to our "Casa"!

Thank you for entrusting your child's education to us.

