Dear Cockeysville Middle School student and family:

We have a few short weeks until the beginning of the 2022-23 academic year and we cannot wait to welcome back our Cockeysville Middle School Cougars to our building. We are excited to return to a sense of normalcy this school year as we strive to cultivate your child’s skills, motivate them to be the best version of themselves, so they can succeed at CMS and beyond.

This school year we are striving to make sure our families have a Cougar Connection to our building. To this end, we will continue to focus on ensuring our communication to you is timely, clear, and transparent. We post all information to our social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), as well as our CMS website (http://cockeysvillems.bcps.org). I also send out a weekly bulleted update and a lengthier monthly Cougar Connect newsletter via School Messenger to your email. Please make sure you have “opted in” to communications for BCPS and that you have the best email address on file with us at school.

In addition to our regular posts and communications to make sure you know all that goes on at Cockeysville, we will be using your child’s Advisory period this year to ensure your child has a “point person” at school. Your child’s Advisory teacher should be reaching out to you within the first couple weeks of school to introduce themselves and let you know the easiest way to reach them. This person is your Cockeysville Cougar Connection to our building, and you should reach out to them for any support you need, and they will make sure you get to the right person. We hope this helps all our families feel connected to our Cougar community.

This school year it is important that we focus on the use of social media, cellphones, and AirPods. These are the largest disruptions to our school learning environment. While many families like their child to have a cell phone at school for safety purposes, that does not discount the fact that many students abuse this privilege and are significantly distracted by their phone on a consistent basis. I have attached an infographic with some cell phone facts that illustrate this not just on a national level, but in our own school community. The difference in performance on exams and in GPA between students who have at least 1 cell phone violation – which means they were likely given multiple warnings prior to receiving a referral – and just the average of all students in the building is quite a contrast. Distracted students perform below average in the classroom and on exams right here at CMS. For some further reading, and some apps that help you block or limit your child’s cellphone access, please visit our website under the parent tab for a list of resources in helping limit your child’s phone from becoming a reason they are not successful in school.

AirPods are also a significant distraction to the learning environment and extremely difficult to monitor due to their small size. **Neither AirPods nor cell phones are permitted to be used at any point during the school day.** Students may use any non-Bluetooth headphones that can plug into their BCPS Chromebook. Students who have their cell phone or AirPods out will receive a violation from their teacher and will receive progressive consequences that include lunch detention, after school detention, ALC, and required parent conferences. If your child’s phone or AirPods present a significant distraction, or they refuse to put it away or lock it in their locker, you may be asked to come get the item and conference with an administrator and your child.

In today’s school environment, the social media presence looms large for students. Middle school is when many students, on average, begin significantly accessing social media as they receive cell phones for the first time. No matter the platform students are using – TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. – it is much like being in the Wild West with no sheriff. While Cockeysville Middle School will make every effort to mediate conflict in school and address any potential cyberbullying that arises online, we need our families to be aware that our resources in this area are severely limited and we have no authority over any of these media companies to force them to remove posts or intervene in any way. The only way we can ensure that social media does not disrupt the school environment is by, as a community, ensuring we are monitoring our own children’s access to social media and their behavior while online. Please make sure you are monitoring your child’s social media accounts.

In addition to social media and technology, we would also like to update our families as to some other school information:

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Expectations
- Cougars should always exercise good judgement – they should be Respectful, Organized, Attentive and Responsible.
- Dress should be appropriate for school. All our Cougar students should be dressed for success.
- Full behavioral expectations will be outlined during Behavior Handbook Presentations during the first week of school in Advisory.

Transportation Information
- Students who reside at least 1.5 miles from school are entitled to bus transportation. Bus information will be sent to families via email as soon as it becomes available.
- For the first week, plan on being at the stop 10 minutes before the listed pick-up time.

Technology
- Check Your Tech before you return to CMS. If your child’s BCPS device is not working, or they do not know their password, please call the Help Desk at 443-809-4672 for support. The start of the year is a busy time for our technology team, please take care of any technology issues as soon as possible.
- **Please ensure you continue to monitor your child’s cell phone, internet, and social media use.** Let’s work together to help make our Cougars good digital citizens.
- **Cell Phones should be off and away throughout the day.** If students need to make a phone call, or parents need to reach their student, they may utilize the Main Office phones. Students may use their BCPS-issued device for all academic needs.

Safety and Drop Off/Pick Up Information
- All adults **MUST** provide photo identification whenever you enter CMS. Only adults on a child’s approved emergency contact list may sign a child out from school unless you call and specifically give us written permission to release your child to another person.
- School doors open at 7:30 AM. No students will be allowed into the building until this time. Please plan your drop-off accordingly. Students should be in their seats, ready to learn by 8:00 AM.
- Families may no longer drop off in our bus loop due to safety concerns. All drop-offs should occur on Greenside Drive at the location where students can safely cross with the crossing guard.
- School dismisses at 2:45 PM. Walkers should not linger on campus at the end of the day so that we can safely get our bus and car riders to their appropriate bus or vehicle. If your student is staying after for an after-school activity, it is expected that his or her family arrange for someone to pick them up promptly when their event has finished.

Lastly, our annual **Back to School Night** will occur on **Wednesday, August 24th from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.** Please pay close attention to information on social media and via School Messenger for more information! Thank you all for investing in your child’s education for the upcoming year. We look forward to meeting you and your continued collaboration and involvement with your child’s success. With your support, we will continue to carry on the proud tradition of excellence that our Cockeysville Middle School community expects. See all of you in the August!

See You Soon Cougars,

Adam Carney
Principal
Cockeysville Middle School

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