August 10, 2016

Dear Churchill Road Parents and Guardians,

Amazingly, the start of a new school year is just a few weeks away, with the first day of school being Tuesday, September 6th! It is my pleasure to officially welcome you and your children “back to school.” I hope that everyone in the CRS community had a wonderful summer vacation. While the students have been away, the school has been a busy place. Classrooms and hallways are polished and gleaming, new supplies are arriving, and the teachers and staff have been preparing for another fantastic year. We will be ready to start!

Throughout the summer, I had the opportunity to meet with many CRS families and friends. I also had the pleasure of meeting many people new to our community and I extend a warm welcome to you. The special gifts and talents that each family brings enrich our school. It’s exciting to have you join us!

The start of every school year brings changes and reminders about certain routines. This year is no different. In order for the school year to begin in a safe and organized manner for all CRS students, it is important to be aware of the following events and procedures:

**School Hours:** The school hours are 8:35 a.m. - 3:20 p.m., Monday through Friday.

- Our arrival schedule will be:
  - 8:25 a.m.: students will be allowed to go to their classrooms.
  - 8:35 a.m.: students should be seated in their classrooms, ready to begin the school day; students arriving after 8:35 a.m. will be marked tardy.

- Our dismissal schedule will be:
  - 3:20 p.m.: All students will be dismissed.

*It is important to note these times. We expect the children to be ready to begin the school day by 8:35 a.m. daily. A timely arrival ensures that they have the opportunity to get focused and organized, thus ensuring a productive day.*
**Homeroom Assignments:** We shared the tentative class assignments for our returning students in June and those rosters have not been significantly altered. We will be posting finalized class lists, including the new kindergarten rosters, on the school’s website on the evening of Wednesday, August 31st after 5:00 p.m. The lists will be organized by grade levels and teachers. Students will be listed by first name and the first initial of their last name. If you cannot find your child's name, check in at the front office during the Open House, which is the next day.

*Please note: Rising 6th grade students missing their TDAP immunizations will be omitted from the class rosters until the documentation is submitted to the school.*

**Student Open House:** Our first event of the school year will be the Open House on Thursday, September 1st. Our kindergarten students and their families are invited to join us at 10:00 a.m. Upper grade students and their families may visit their new classrooms from 11:00 a.m. -12:00 noon. Staff will be posted throughout the hallways to direct you to your classrooms. During the Open House, you and your child will have a chance to locate your child’s classroom and meet the new teacher. In addition, plan to stop by the cafeteria to arrange for your child’s lunch card and the school health room, if you need to drop off any student medications. Also, our PTA will be hosting a reception to welcome everyone; look for informational signage the day of the Open House. For those of you that cannot make it to the Open House, staff will be posted inside the building on the first day of school to assist you and your children.

**Back to School Nights:** At 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 7th (Grades K, 1, 3 and 5) and on Thursday, September 8th (Grades 2, 4 and 6), parents and guardians will have an opportunity to hear their children’s teachers share an overview of the school year after a brief PTA meeting.

*Please note: This is a meeting for the students’ parents and guardians. If possible, your children should not attend the meeting.*

**Arrival/Pick-up during the first week of school:** If parents or guardians wish to walk their child to the classroom for the first day or two, park your vehicle on one of the neighborhood side streets and walk to the school. At dismissal, also park your car on one of the side streets and meet your child at the flag pole near the front entrance to the school. Provide the teacher with written notification that your child is being met by an adult, rather than walking home or utilizing the Kiss and Ride or the bus.

**Arrival/Dismissal--bus riders:** Hard copies of Churchill Road ES’s bus routes and approximate pick up times for the morning runs will be available in the front lobby during the September 1st Open House and throughout the first week of school. Please help your child learn his/her bus number. Staff members will be posted in the hallways in the morning to direct students to their rooms and in the afternoon to help children find their buses at the end of the day.

**Arrival/Dismissal--car riders:** The Kiss and Ride lot is located near the gym. Children can be dropped off between 8:25-8:35 a.m. Pick up begins at 3:20 p.m. The student drop off/pick up occurs along the sidewalk next to the building. The children enter or exit the building through the
gym door entrance. School staff will be present to direct traffic and assist the children. Many Churchill Road families drive their children to school and we have a significant volume of traffic at Kiss and Ride during arrival and departure times. In order to maintain a safe and efficient procedure, please think “right”:

- As you approach the Kiss and Ride lot on Churchill Road, keep your car as close to the right hand curb as possible so that on-going traffic can pass.
- Always use your right turn signal when entering the Kiss and Ride lot so that pedestrians, cars, student patrols and school staff know your intentions.
- Always turn right when entering the Kiss and Ride lot.
- Travel counter clockwise around the lot by bearing right.
- When you reach the designated drop off/pick up area, have your children enter or exit the car on the right hand side.
- Exit the Kiss and Ride lot by turning right onto Churchill Road.

*Raymond Avenue will be closed to left hand turns during student arrival and dismissal times. Drivers will need to proceed west on Churchill Road and turn on Thrasher Street or Balls Hill Road. Please drive with patience and care on all of our community streets. We have many families walking to and from school every day and it’s the responsibility of each of us to ensure safe passage for everyone.

Arrival/Dismissal—walkers: Students that walk to school may enter or exit the building through the gym entrance, front entrance, or the cafeteria entrance. For safety reasons, students that walk to school should not arrive before 8:25 a.m. because there is no adult supervision available before that time. At 8:25 a.m., all children will be directed to their classrooms.

At dismissal, children that walk home will be escorted to the front entrance of the building by one of their grade-level teachers. Parents can plan to meet their children at 3:20 p.m., near the main entrance at the end of the school day.

Your cooperation in following both arrival/departure times and procedures is necessary to facilitate a smooth transition at the beginning and end of the school day!

Student “Go Home” Notes: Churchill Road School will not be coordinating “Go Home” notes during the month of September. This means that children will not be allowed to have friends ride the school bus home with them at the end of the day during the month of September. This is necessary so that, in cooperation with the FCPS Transportation Office, we can determine which students use the bus, walk or drive to school and in turn, the children can learn the appropriate routines. This will ensure the safety of all of our children.

*The Go Home Notes process requires manual verification of the Go Home Notes each morning. Please consider volunteering to help with this important role at least one day a week. This is a job that can be completed from the comfort of your home. Please contact us at gohomenotes@churchillroadpta.org so that we can discuss what is involved.
Make sure your contact information is up-to-date for “Keep In Touch”: Our school system provides an email notification system called Keep In Touch (“KIT”). All school emergency information and most of our school notices are sent out via the KIT system. If you have not done so, check to make sure your information is up-to-date and that your computer settings allow receipt of these important messages. Go to http://www.fcps.edu/kit/ and follow the simple instructions. This communication system is secure and is the primary means for communicating important school and school system information to FCPS families. Starting the first week of school, we will be sending KIT messages every Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Look for these notices so that you are kept up-to-date with our school’s events.

The Churchill Chatter: Our school newsletter, The Churchill Chatter, is our primary means of sharing information about school and PTA programs with the school community. The Churchill Chatter newsletter is posted on the school’s website every Wednesday, by 4:00 p.m. There will be KIT reminders sent out every Wednesday with a direct link to The Churchill Chatter. Make sure to read the newsletter every week to stay informed of school events and news.

VIP (Very Important Papers) Folders: Every Wednesday, bright yellow VIP folders are sent home with the children. They contain student work and important school notices. During the first week of school, the PTA provides the family of every student with an extensive amount of information for the new school year. There will be many forms to complete and return to school, as well as important informational documents. Please take time to carefully review all of the folder contents.

Join the PTA: The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is the organization that specifically supports our teachers and children and represents the best interests of our children at both the local and state levels. Everyone is strongly urged to join this important organization. The PTA’s website is http://www.churchillroadpta.org/ and is a great source of information.

The start of the new school year is always a special time. No matter what age you are, there is always a sense of new beginnings and great possibilities with the advent of a new school year. Our community’s ongoing commitment to the children’s instructional program and our strong sense of “family” make Churchill Road ES a special place for everyone. I am proud to be the principal of our school and am looking forward to working with you. I hope that you and your children enjoy the last few days of summer and join me in enthusiastically welcoming the start of the new academic year. I look forward to seeing you at the Open House as we initiate the 2016-2017 school year.

Sincerely,

Donald J. Hutzel, Principal
Churchill Road Elementary School