

Columbia High School

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PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER

**August
2015**

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WELCOME BACK MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome back! School begins on **Tuesday, September 8, 2015** for all students.

Students should report to their Guide Rooms in the morning after the first bell. In your Guide Rooms you will be given your finalized class schedule for the year. Your Guide Room leader will discuss your schedule with you and explain any questions you may have. If there are any problems with your schedule your Guide Room leader will direct you to our staff who are here to assist you.

We have been working hard this summer to improve our academic

and enrichment programs to provide you with an outstanding educational experience. I have been meeting with your student council leaders throughout the summer



and have been impressed with their dedication, work ethic and ambitious plans for the 2015-16

school year.

Please don't forget we begin school at **7:10 am**. Students will be dismissed at **2:03 pm** daily.

I am hopeful that your remaining days of summer are relaxing, enjoyable and safe for you and your family. I look forward to working with you.

John P. Sawchuk
Principal, CHS
Your Partner in Education

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SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS

In order to support all of our students, and in keeping with recently issued State Education Department guidelines, Columbia High School has designated a gender-neutral restroom starting this school year. The gender-neutral restroom is a restroom available to all students who, for any reason, may feel uncomfortable using the communal restrooms.

The gender-neutral restroom is located in the west lobby of Columbia High School. The Athletic Department will also provide a gender-neutral restroom and

privacy spaces for dressing, again available to all students wishing the additional privacy afforded by those facilities.

As a school, we will continue the discussions we began last year with students and staff regarding issues of gender identity. At our CHS Open House on October 1st, I will continue to update parents on our efforts and answer any questions that you may have.

I look forward to a great school year.



CHS PARKING UPDATE

In order to better accommodate our **Senior** students ONLY, completed parking applications and fees will be accepted at Columbia High School on the following date and time prior to the opening of the new school year 2015-2016:

- **Wednesday, 08/26/15 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. in the Front Lobby.**

Applications can be obtained

in the Main Office at Columbia or can be downloaded from our website. NHS students please indicate "NHS" in the upper right hand corner of the application only if you prefer NHS Parking. Please make checks payable to "East Greenbush Central School District".

No applications or partial applications will be accepted without copies of ALL seven valid documents explained in the application and your payment being

submitted. Please be sure to obtain your own copies as there will be no copying at the school on that date.

Juniors – Sign ups for Junior students will NOT take place until after November 1st - **There will be no exceptions.**

PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO STUDENT PARKING ON THE LAST FEW DAYS OF SCHOOL - Plan Ahead!



MEET THE COACHES NIGHT

The purpose of a pre-season meeting is to introduce students and their parents and coaches to each other in a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere. It provides an opportunity to talk about season expectations, communicate specific information, encourage discussion and promote cooperative

community action.

Attendance at this meeting is **MANDATORY** for parents and students who plan to participate in any interscholastic athletic program. The meeting will introduce athletes and parents to the rules and regulations.

Fall Sports:

Monday, August 31, 2015

7:00PM

Columbia Auditorium

Winter Sports:

Monday, November 23, 2015

7:00PM

Columbia Auditorium

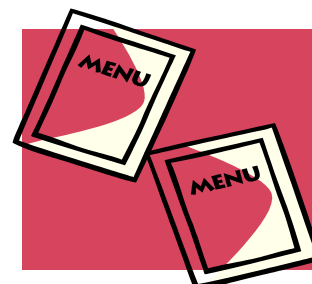
Midterm and Regents Exams

This January all of our teachers will be giving Course midterm and Regents exams.

These exams will be given between January 26-29, 2016. It is important that students are in attendance during this time frame period. In order to make up any exam you **must** present a legal excuse. Please check

your child's schedule before planning your vacation.

PLEASE NOTE: Per State Ed, cell phones are not allowed in exam rooms. Any phones not left home will be collected prior to entry to the exam room.



Please check website for menu price changes for the 2015-2016 school year.

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION

Columbia High School welcomes incoming Freshmen on **Thursday, August 27th, 2015** with our annual orientation program. This program is designed to familiarize 9th grade students with the world of high school and lay the foundation for a successful first year at Columbia.

The agenda has a full day of activities including an introduction of student leaders, staff, and administrators as well as breakout sessions, tours, and a class BBQ. The program begins at 9:00 AM in the auditorium. Speakers including Principal, John Sawchuk, and 9th grade Principal, Ed Kilmartin. Students will meet PTSO President, Mr. DeMarco, and Freshman Class Advisors, Ms. LeForestier and

WELCOME

Mr. Williams.

Following the speakers, students will be divided into groups to attend breakout sessions and will receive a tour of the building. These breakout sessions were designed by students for students to make the transition to Columbia more enjoyable. Student leaders and staff will present on the following topics: getting involved, teacher expectations, the "unwritten" rules of high school, and creating a culture of respect. The EGPD will conduct a presentation on School Safety as well as our School Resource Program.

In addition, students will receive their *tentative* class schedule, locker information, and a "Freshmen Survival Guide" with important information such as a school map, bus schedules, and frequently asked questions.

The beginning of Freshman year is an important, exciting, and sometimes anxious time for students and parents. Over the past 15 years, the Freshman orientation program has become an important part of reducing this anxiety and making the transition to high school both smooth and successful for our students. We look forward to continuing this tradition with the Class of 2019 and make their school year a great one!

FLU SEASON INFORMATION

With the opening of school, families and community members should take steps to minimize the spread of the flu virus.

Anyone with influenza-like illness should stay home and not attend school or go into the community, except to seek medical care for at least 7 days, and not before they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

All persons should practice basic flu prevention measures such as covering the mouth when coughing or sneezing, washing hands, and so on.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Respect Yourself and Others: Review the dress code in your student handbook. If you are not following it, you will be asked to change or be sent home. Keep your hands to yourself and respect others' personal space.

Eating in the Cafeteria is a Privilege: Any food throwing, vandalism or not following directions of our staff will result in your removal from the cafeteria or possible suspension from school.

Safe and Drug Free Environment: Do not bring drugs into our school. It will result in your removal from our learning environment. East Greenbush Central School District has a no-smoking policy.

Safety Drills: Follow directions during drills and limit all conversations so that people can hear instructions in case of an emergency. Assemble where you are told to go so that emergency personnel can gain access to the building if needed.

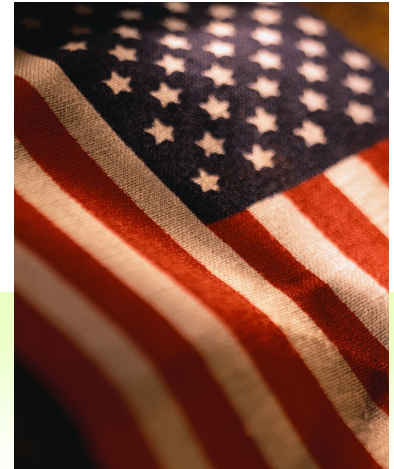
Positive Behavior: Be patient as you travel to classes, stay to the right in the halls and don't run, for everyone's safety. You must have a hall pass to travel in the building. If you do not have a hall pass, you will be sent back to your original location.

Every Day Attendance: Your daily class attendance is critical to your academic success and it is tied directly to your class credit. You need to understand our policy. Tardiness will result in after-school detention.

Cooperation: If staff members ask for your reasonable cooperation, give it to them. There is no excuse not to give your full cooperation. You will be held accountable for your actions.

Take Care of Each Other: If you hear things that are of a concern to you, let a staff member know right away (We can keep your name anonymous).

Respect: Be sensitive to others! We are a school made up of different people and personalities. That's what makes your time at Columbia High School such a great experience. You need to understand that inappropriate words and names can hurt and will not be tolerated and can result in your being removed from our learning community.



CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices are not to be used or displayed during the school day (7:10 am—2:03 pm). Cell phones should be turned off and not in view during all instructional periods, including Guide Rooms and study halls. Teachers have the right to confiscate items from offenders as necessary.

Students are not to use or display any communication devices, including cell phones, during test-

ing: quizzes, tests, Regents exams, etc. **Students observed using any prohibited communication device during testing will receive a "Zero".**

Students that refuse to relinquish prohibited electronic devices will not be permitted to take the exam.

Students are not allowed to take unauthorized pictures of fellow

students or staff members. Students found in violation of this policy will face suspension.



CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES/CLUBS

(May be subject to change depending on enrollment)

We encourage all of you to take an active part in your CHS community. Joining a club can enrich your high school experience. Below is a list of some of the opportunities available. See web page (EGCSD.ORG) for complete details. Listen during morning announcements for meeting time and date information:

Amnesty International
Art Club
Audio Visual Club
Chamber Singers / Chamber Orchestra
Chorus / Orchestra

Columbia Plays (Fall and Spring)
Columbian Yearbook
Concert Band
Devils Advocate
Ethnic Student Coalition
Future Business Leaders of America
Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)
German Club
Interact
Jazz Ensemble
Key Club
Labyrinth
Leaders of Tomorrow Leading Today
Life Group (Faith Club)

Masterminds
Mock Trial Team
Model Congress
National Honor Society
Peer Leadership
Science Olympiad
Ski Club
Student Council
Students Against Destructive Decisions
Symphonic Band/Wind Ensemble
Technology Club



TOBACCO POLICY



Columbia has been declared a smoke-free campus by the Board of Education. The policy incorporates federal and state laws which prohibit smoking on school grounds by anyone. Any

student who is in possession of, or uses tobacco products such as cigarettes or chewing tobacco on school property will be subject to discipline consequences.



MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

MEDICATION MAY BE ADMINISTERED ONLY IF IT IS ACCOMPANIED BY:

- The written order of your physician specifying diagnosis, medication, (possible side effects), dosage, frequency and the time element for administering this medication,

AND

- The written request of the parent, requesting that school personnel administer the medication as ordered,

AND

- The family must provide the medication in the original bottle, tube or container that

clearly indicates date, name of child and physician, dosage and frequency.



STUDENT IDENTIFICATION BADGES



Columbia High has a Student Identification Badge procedure in place. Students are issued an identification (ID) badge with a picture and a lanyard/clip indicating they are a student at Columbia. All students are required to have their lanyard and school ID badge whenever they are on school grounds. This procedure ensures that Columbia High School is in the forefront of safety and helps create a positive and respectful learning environment.

During the first week of school new badges will be issued to all students during Guide Room.

Students use their student identification badges to gain access to the high school, enter the library and courtyard, and must be worn to gain entrance to dances and proms. If you lose your badge, please contact your Assistant Principal's office.

SUGGESTED BASIC SCHOOL SUPPLY LIST

Because class dynamics may vary significantly, please note that students at the High School level will receive a separate supply list from each classroom teacher on the first day of classes.

Below is a suggested basic list of supplies for those who wish to purchase items in advance:

Spiral bound notebooks

Pencil case

Pocket folders (pockets in the bottom)

Student Planner/Agenda

Composition notebooks

Calculator (please refer to letter from Math or Science teacher, if applicable, regarding scientific calculator)

Pens / Pencils

Highlighter pens

Sneakers and Clothing specifically for Gym

Loose-leaf paper

Lock for gym locker (**strongly recommended**)

Flash drives

Backpack



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER (August through December 2015)

- Freshman Orientation: Thursday, Aug. 27 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
- CHS Photo Days: Friday, Sep. 18 & Monday, Sep. 21
- Clubs White Card Meeting: Monday, Sep. 28, 6:00 PM
- Grade 10 Information Meeting: Thursday, Oct. 1 5:00 pm
- CHS Open House: Thursday, Oct. 1 5:30-8:00 pm
- CHS Homecoming Weekend: Friday and Saturday, Oct. 9 & 10
- College Information Night: Thursday, Oct. 22, 6:00 pm
- Half-Day Professional Development: Friday, Oct. 23
- Emergency Go-Home Early Drill: Friday, Nov. 6
- Parent-Teacher Conference: Thursday, Nov. 19, starting 6:00 pm

- Board of Ed. Meetings: (see school calendar for location): Sep. 9 / Oct. 14, 28 / Nov. 18 / Dec. 9
- School Recesses: Sep. 23, Oct. 12 / Nov. 11, 25, 26, 27 / Dec 24 to Jan 1
- PTSO—Varies each month — see District Calendar for dates

Be sure to check the CHS web page (EGCSD.org) under your student's "Class of" section for specific additional important dates pertaining to your child's grade.



MUSIC AND THE ARTS EVENTS

The following exciting events are just some that are being planned for the 2015-16 school year at CHS:

- 11/14/15 Once Upon A Stage
- 11/20/15 Columbia Idol
- 12/17&21/15 CHS Holiday Concerts
- 2/4/16 DW Choral Festival
- 2/10-11/16 DW Instrument Fest.
- 3/4-5/16 CHS Spring Musical
- 3/22/16 Pops Concert #1
- 3/29/16 Pops Concert #2
- 5/5/16 DW String Festival
- 5/12/16 District-Wide Art & Music Festival @ CHS
- 6/7/16 Spring Concert #1
- 6/9/16 Spring Concert #2



ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

Parents play a key role in maintaining good attendance in school. Educational research strongly emphasizes that good attendance is one of the dominant factors in determining a student's academic success.

Good attendance also includes being to school on time. We have been working hard to discourage the

number of students who are tardy to school; in many cases, the lateness results in the student missing instructional time.

Students should arrive at school no later than 7:05 a.m. The late bell rings at 7:10 a.m. Students who are habitually late to school will receive disciplinary consequences.

In addition to tardiness to school, daily absences are monitored closely.

If an absence occurs, a note from home should follow within 24 hours to avoid an unexcused absence on their records.



Thank you to Parents/Guardians for submitting your child's absence notes on a timely basis. Please note that processing the absence excuses may take **at least a week or more** before the results appear on the Parent Portal. Thank you for your understanding.

Columbia High School has a direct Absence Call-In phone line that is available 24 hours a day and is checked daily prior to absentee phone calls made home to Parents/Guardians.

(518) 207-2002





WORKING PAPERS AND TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS

Please note that requests for Working Papers and High School Transcripts are now available on-line. To access the forms, please go to the main page of the East Greenbush Central School's district web site at EGCSD.org / Quick Links / Forms / Other

~ Students can print the forms out at home and have their parent/guardian sign them. They should then bring the completed forms to the Guidance office. **IMPORTANT:** Working paper requests must be accompanied with a copy of the student's last physical.

WELCOME BACK

