



Steger School District 194
Columbia Central School • 94 West Richton Road • Steger, Illinois 60475
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Bruce Nieminski
Principal

Thomas Aguirre
Associate Principal

Adam Schoff
Dean of Students

August 18, 2021

Dear Columbia Central Parents/Guardians:

Welcome Back to School!

On behalf of the staff of Columbia Central, I want to take a moment to welcome you all to the 2021-2022 school year. It would be an understatement to say that we have all been on a roller coaster ride the past 18 months.

We have all persevered through remote and hybrid learning, and we are now ready to welcome our students back into the building for a full day of in-person instruction. Our staff is hard at work getting our building and classrooms ready for students to have a safe and successful school year starting on the first day of school - Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

For the start of the school year, we will be adhering to the Governor's mandate that all students, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks when inside our schools. Students will not wear masks while eating or while they are outside. Masks must be worn on all buses.

The first days of school for dropping off and picking up students are always a little busy. Please be patient as everyone learns the routines and procedures.

As always, our primary concern is the safety of the more than 650 students and 75 staff members as they arrive and depart from Columbia Central each day. In addition to these procedures, we ask that you drive safely on and around the school grounds and neighborhood streets.

A.M. Drop Off:

The doors to Columbia Central open each morning at **7:40 a.m.** ***Staff is on duty each morning at 7:30 a.m.*** All Columbia Central students must be in their assigned homeroom by **7:50 a.m. for attendance.** It is very important for all students to arrive on time to their homerooms. Students who arrive at their homerooms after 7:50 a.m. are marked tardy. Cars dropping students off at school must enter off of Columbia Avenue to the east of our Campus; do not drop students off in the parking areas. Students arriving at Columbia Central after 7:50 a.m. should enter the building via the Main Entrance.

Columbia Central students should be dropped off behind the building (across from Mike Sarek Park) in the area painted with a **YELLOW** curb. Traffic will back up at the first corner, so please **pull forward** until you are behind the building to allow traffic to move westward. The speed limit on school grounds is 5 mph. Students taking the bus may only ride their assigned bus.

For Arrival:

- **5th and 6th** grade students will enter and depart the building through the ***East Entrance*** doors, and go immediately to their lockers before Homeroom begins.

- **7th and 8th** grade students will enter and depart the building through the **West Entrance** doors and go immediately to their lockers before Homeroom begins.
- All students in Homerooms 120 and 201 will enter and depart through the **West Entrance** doors, and go immediately to their lockers before Homeroom begins.
- All students in room 135 will enter and depart through the **East Entrance** doors, and go immediately to their lockers before Homeroom begins.
- **Morning Band and Choir Students** will enter through the Main Entrance before 7:15 a.m. The Main Entrance on Richton Road is closed to car drop-offs at 7:15 a.m. Please be aware of staff entering the building as they cross through the North parking lot before 7:15 a.m.
- **Breakfast** - The cafeteria opens at 7:30 a.m. for students who want to eat breakfast at school. Enter through the South door to the cafeteria behind the school. Students must finish breakfast in time to reach Homeroom by 7:50 p.m. Student ID's are required for all cafeteria services.

Students walking to school should arrive on campus at the Main Entrance where the crossing guard is stationed and proceed to their designated entrance (see above) or cafeteria for breakfast. Always use sidewalks and follow the directions of the stationed crossing guard at the main Entrance to Columbia Central.

Students who ride the bus to school will be dropped off at the yellow sidewalk behind the building at approximately 7:30 a.m. and then go to their designated entrance (see above) or cafeteria for breakfast. A student ID is required to ride the bus and only school buses will enter the campus off of Richton Road at Halsted Blvd. after 7:15 a.m.

Please remember students who are driven to school will be dropped off behind the building. These students will then go to their designated entrance. Note: After dropping off your students at the **YELLOW** curb behind the building, please exit the Columbia campus on Park Avenue (northbound) to Richton Road. Please observe all posted speed limits on campus (**5 mph**) and stop signs when dropping off your students. Always yield to students and staff. Remember, ***state law forbids the use of Cellphones in school parking lots.*** Remind your students to walk on the sidewalk. Students entering at the West Entrance must use the sidewalks. They are never required to walk on the wet grass or snow west of Columbia Central – use the sidewalks.

When picked-up by bus, 5th grade students will take the seats in the **front** of the bus, followed by the older students, with 8th grade students seated in the last rows. Bus drivers have been instructed to load their bus in this way. Bus riders must remain seated while on the bus and follow all directions from the driver.

For Dismissal:

Students are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on Wednesday). For students staying after school for sports or other activities, Columbia Central provides a daily activity bus that leaves school at 3:45 p.m. Students who wish to ride the activity bus must have their ID. This bus is for students in afterschool activities only, and there is no charge for the activity bus.

- Students will ride their assigned bus route home and exit through the same door that they entered at in the morning. Buses will depart at 2:40 p.m.
- Students who walk home will exit through the Main Entrance on the North side of the building. They are reminded to go straight home. Students who walk home to the West must walk on the North sidewalk of Richton Road. Students who walk east must also stay on the North sidewalk of Richton Road. Please do not pick up students on Richton Road.
- Students who are picked-up by car will all exit through the East Entrance. These students must use the marked crosswalk or be picked up at curbside. Parents should enter Columbia's main parking lot and park along the curb. Once you have your child you can then exit off campus to the east and on to Columbia Avenue away from the school buses. Please wait in your car for your child.
- Bike Riders are responsible for the security of their bike. Be sure to lock your bike securely to the bike rack.

Thank you for your understanding and assistance. The safety of our students and staff is only possible if we all work together and follow the above procedures.

COLUMBIA CENTRAL OPEN HOUSE
Tuesday, August 24, 2021

This year's Columbia Central's Open House will be held on Tuesday, August 24, 2021. To promote the health and safety of all participants our Open House will be offered in two sessions. Session one will be for grades 5 and 7, and session two will be for grades 6 and 8.

Times and building entry points are as follow:

Grade 5 - 6:00 p.m. - 6:40 p.m. Enter the building using the East Activity Door entrance.

Grade 7 - 6:00 p.m. - 6:40 p.m. Enter the building using the Main Entrance located at the front of the building.

Grade 6 - 6:50 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Enter the building using the Main Entrance located at the front of the building.

Grade 8 - 6:50 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Enter the building using the East Activity Door entrance.

Staff members will be on hand to help direct you to your child's teachers and classrooms. Student schedules will be provided for any families that need one. We encourage families to bring their classroom supplies to drop off at their child's homeroom.

At 6:40 p.m. an announcement will be made over the intercom informing you that Open House has ended. We ask that you quickly exit the building so that we may prepare for the second session.

As a reminder, in adherence to the Governor's mandate on masking in schools, **all students, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks when inside our schools. Visitors will not be permitted to attend Open House if they do not wear a mask.**

We thank you in advance for your cooperation and look forward to a very successful school year!

Sincerely,

Bruce Nieminski

Bruce Nieminski
Principal
Columbia Central School

Tom Aguirre

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Associate Principal
Columbia Central School

To ensure all students, staff, and stakeholders learn and grow together as a community