# September Newsletter

## Welcome Back!

The new school year is underway for Osage City Middle School. We are very excited to see the students back in school and learning. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to call (785) 528-3175. Our website is also a great resource for information at www.usd420.org. We are off to a great start and hope everyone has a great school year.

With the start of a new school year comes reviewing policies for students, staff, and parents. The student handbook is also available online and is a great resource if you have questions. Here are just a few.

## Arrival Time at School

Students are allowed to enter the Middle School building at 7:35 am; classes begin at 8:00 am. Adult supervision begins at 7:35 am. Students will go to the weight room (old middle school gym) or breakfast when they enter the building. Breakfast is served between 7:35 am and 7:50 am. If your student does not ride a bus and is on school grounds before 7:35 am, they will be unsupervised.

## Absent Students

When your child is going to be absent, please notify the office at (785) 528-3175 before 9:00 am. Students should be able to access their assignments on Google Classroom. If a student is feeling well enough to work from home but not well enough to come to school, we encourage them to get as much of their work done as possible so they do not fall behind. It is the student's responsibility to check with teachers when they return to make sure they have completed anything that they may have missed.

## Office Phone Usage and Parent Calls

The office phone is primarily to be used by students for emergencies only. If students come to the office asking to use the phone, they will be sent to the appropriate teacher if it is for homework that they forgot at home. If the teacher will not let them use the phone, they will receive a late grade for that assignment. It is very important, especially at this age, for students to develop responsibility for their homework, sports uniforms, etc.

Along with this are phone calls for students. We realize emergencies do happen, so please do not hesitate to call in with any of those messages. If it is just a reminder for a student, please try to send it with a note in their planner. That way, they will be reminded throughout the day as they use their planner. One of the goals that we have for our students is to learn the responsibility of homework and know what they are to do after school. This better prepares them for high school and life in general. Thank you for your cooperation with this and for helping our students become more responsible.

## Personal Items

Students are encouraged not to bring any personal items, electronic devices, squishies, fidgets, money, or valuables, to school. These items are easily stolen and can create disciplinary problems in the classroom. USD 420 is not responsible for items lost or stolen items.

## Personal Electronic Devices / Cell Phones

Students are not allowed to use personal electronic communication devices during the school day on school property. All student devices must be powered off and securely stored in their locker during the school day. The school is not liable for lost or damaged devices, and students are encouraged to leave them at home. A personal electronic communication device is any wireless device enabling voice, text, or video communication (phone, tablet, computer, watch, headphones, etc.) not owned by the school. The school day includes time from the start of the school day until dismissal at the end of the day. Students may use a device during the school day only if required by an IEP or 504 plan, or approved by a physician and school as medically necessary. Students may use devices at after-school events, subject to school procedures and staff direction. If a student violates this policy the device will be confiscated and a parent / guardian will need to come in and pick it up from the office. Multiple violations may result in additional disciplinary action being taken.

## Eligibility Policy

The middle school will be continuing its eligibility policy. Students will be determined eligible or ineligible on a three-point system. Each week, teachers will report grades to the office. A "D" will equal one point, and an "F" will equal two points. Anytime a student earns three points, the student will be notified of their ineligible status. Parents will be notified by a note from the office on a weekly basis, which will be given to the student on Friday or the last day of the week. It is the student's responsibility to bring this sheet home and show their parents. I will also be sending an email to parents notifying them that their student is ineligible and that they should expect their student to bring this sheet home. Weekly eligibility will begin after the first three full weeks of each quarter. This policy does not change the semester eligibility for passing at least five core subjects. Weekly eligibility will begin on Friday, September 4, 2026.

## Communication

Osage City Middle School is committed to ensuring open lines of communication between the school, students, parents, and community. On occasion, a parent may have a question, concern, complaint, suggestion, or request related to a school or classroom issue, decision, policy, or practice. Many questions are easily and completely answered by communicating directly with the teacher, coach, or sponsor in charge of the class or program. The most effective communication process follows the proper chain of command when an issue needs to be brought to the school's attention. Without a clear communication process, a simple issue could become a major problem, often due to a lack of communication, knowledge, and/or information. Each situation should first be addressed at whatever level the initial issue took place, with questions moving on to the next level. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns, and we will do our best to answer them.

## PowerSchool

PowerSchool is a database that will allow you to see your student's grades in real-time. PowerSchool has made it easier and quicker to retrieve and report grades. All parents have the ability to access their student's grades online. Through the enrollment process, you have received your username and password for your parent account. If you forget your username and password, please contact the office, and we can send it out to you again or reset your password. PowerSchool is not only a tool for students and parents, but it is also a tool for our teachers. Teachers may make notes if an assignment is late, missing, or if a student did not complete an assignment. They can also put in a description, comment, or other information about an assignment. As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

## Cross Country / Volleyball / Football / Cheerleading

Fall Sports practices are underway, and games are getting ready to start. If you have any questions or concerns about this year's schedule or practice times, it would be best if you call or email the coaches directly. The Volleyball coach is Jamie Keeffe, the Football coach is Travis Bilyeu, the Cross Country coach is James Bellinger, and the Cheerleading sponsor is Renee Brenner. You may reach any of them at school from 7:45 am - 3:40 pm.

## Attendance, Absences, Make-Up Work

Irregular attendance is often followed by failing grades or dropping out of school completely in later years. Only illness or a serious emergency at home should keep a student away from school. To be absent for reasons such as a mild headache, shopping, relatives visiting, or other appointments is compromising one's education.

When a student is absent, his parents should telephone the school at (785) 528-3175 between the hours of 7:30 am and 3:30 pm before he/she returns to school, preferably on the date of the absence. If a telephone is not available, a note from the parents will be accepted. Students returning to school before their parents verify the reason for their absence may be admitted to school on that day, but will receive an unexcused absence until the parents notify the school by phone or note. Having a parent call the school regarding any absence merely furnishes assurance that the parents know about it.

Once a student reaches 10 excused absences, a parent/guardian letter will be sent home, detailing the number of absences, providing possible resources by the school, and reminding the parents/guardians of the school's attendance policy. **After the 10th absence, documentation must be provided for all other absences**. If no documentation is given to the middle school office staff, the absences will be unexcused and truancy papers may be filed with the Osage County Attorney and the Department of Children and Families.

**Middle School students must be in attendance at school no less than one half day in order to participate in any school-sponsored activity or practice that day. Building administration will have discretion when certain situations arise.**

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain make-up assignments from teachers when the student is absent from school.

*The following are considered excused absences:*

- Personal Illness – When a student is absent three or more consecutive days, a doctor's note will be required for the student to re-enter school. The doctor's note must include the date of the visit and the date the student may return to school.
- Appointments - Appointments for medical or dental treatments, examinations, or recuperation. A student should **not** miss a full day of school for a routine medical/dental appointment.
- A family crisis - This includes a serious illness or death in the family.
- Obligatory religious observances.
- Participation in a district-approved or school-sponsored activity – field trips.
- Funeral – Parents must call or provide a written note prior to the student attending the funeral. If no note is provided, the student may not be excused by the school.
- Absences that are pre-arranged by the parents/guardians and approved by the principal.
- Students of active duty military personnel may have additional excused absences at the discretion of the principal for visitations related to leave or deployment.

All absences that do not fit into one of the above categories would be considered unexcused absences. Examples of unexcused absences are the following: oversleeping, car problems, shopping, hair appointments, photo sessions, lost pet/death of a pet, and birthday celebrations. According to the Kansas Truancy Law 72-113, whenever a child is required to attend school and such child is inexcusably absent either three (3) consecutive days or five (5) or more days in any semester, or seven (7) or more days in a school year, such child shall be considered to be not attending school. At that time, the principal will notify the Osage County Attorney and the Department of Children and Families.

If there is an absence of three or more consecutive days or if the child has had a contagious disease, he/she should be seen by a physician, and a note to readmit should accompany the student back to school, or the student should report directly to the school nurse for a permit to re-enter school.

A student serving a period of suspension or expulsion from the district shall not be considered inexcusably absent.

Students who are absent from school without their parents' knowledge are subject to immediate suspension from school, and they may be readmitted only after a satisfactory conference between school officials, parents, and the student.

Kansas House Bill #2109 regarding school attendance provides the following:

1. It permits law enforcement officers to temporarily detain and take into custody any child not attending school without a valid excuse during hours when school is in session. The child must be delivered to school where the child is enrolled, to any location designated by the school to address truancy issues, or to the parent or other custodian. A designated school employee must notify the child's parent of this occurrence, either orally or in writing.
2. The definition of the term "unexcused absence" for purposes of determining violations of the compulsory attendance law is changed from three consecutive days or five or more school days in any semester to three consecutive days, five or more days in any semester, or seven or more school days in any school year.

## After School Study Hall / Tutoring

The After School Tutoring / Study Hall program runs Monday through Thursday from 3:30 - 4:30 pm starting on Tuesday, September 8th, 2026, in the Middle School Conference Room across from the Office. Each day, we will have a certified staff member available to help students with any homework or questions they may have. This would also be a great opportunity for students who do not like to do their homework at home, may not have the help they need, or may not have internet access, the opportunity to complete their work here at school. There will be no After School Study Hall / Tutoring on Early Dismissal days.

This program is completely voluntary, and students are not required to attend. Teachers and administration may suggest a student attend due to poor grades, missing assignments, missing several days, or if they are struggling in a certain area. Students who do attend this program need to be working and using this time, and if they are not will be asked to leave the program.

We hope this program allows our students another opportunity to be successful and helps them if needed. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us here at school.

## Middle School Site Council

The Middle School Site Council is looking for some volunteers to serve on our council. The council will discuss topics of improvement and make recommendations accordingly to the building principal and/or superintendent of schools. Site Council is also a very important part of the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation process and making decisions to help improve our school. If you would like to be a member of the Middle School Site Council, please notify the Middle School Office.

## Dates to Remember at the Middle School

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| September 2 | Early Dismissal 12:30 pm |
| September 3 | Volleyball @ Lyndon 4:30 pm |
| | Football @ Lyndon 6:30 pm |
| September 5 | Cross Country @ Silver Lake 9:30 am |
| September 7 | No School - Labor Day |
| September 8 | Spirit Spreader Clinic @ Rossville |
| September 9 | Board of Education Meeting 6:30 pm |
| September 10 | Cross Country @ Lyndon (Melvern Lake) 4:00 pm |
| | Volleyball @ Cair Paravel 4:30 pm |
| | Football @ Pittsburg 6:30 pm |
| September 17 | Fall Sports Pictures 1:15 pm |
| | Pep Rally in the Middle School Gym 3:00 pm |
| | Cross Country @ North Lyon County (The Orchard) 4:00 pm |
| | Volleyball vs. Wabaunsee (Alma) 4:30 pm |
| | Football vs. Wabaunsee (Alma) 6:30 pm |
| September 23 | AimsWeb Testing - 6th, 7th , and 8th Grade (Math and ELA) |
| September 24 | Pep Rally in the Middle School Gym 3:00 pm |
| | Cross Country @ West Franklin (Camp Chippewa) 4:00 pm |
| | Volleyball vs. Council Grove 4:30 pm |
| | Football vs. Council Grove 6:30 pm |
| October 1 | Cross Country @ Council Grove 4:00 pm |
| | Volleyball @ West Franklin 4:30 pm |
| | Football @ West Franklin 6:30 pm |

## A Note from the Middle School Principal

When picking up students during the school day, please notify the office in advance so that we can have them ready to go on time. This also allows us the opportunity to make sure they have everything they need for the day and keeps them from missing valuable class time.

We ask that all visitors check in at the appropriate office. This will help us make sure that we have a record of who is in and out of the building, as well as making it safer for our students.

If you have any questions about any middle school issue, please feel free to call me here at school (785) 528-3175 or email me at triemann@usd420.org.

Mr. Riemann

# COUNSELOR NEWSLETTER

AUGUST

## Welcome

Hi parents/guardians! We feel the school year is off to a great start! My name is Carly Chisham and I will be your student's middle school counselor. This will be my fourth year as middle school counselor! My contact information is listed below. I will be working to build relationships with each and every one of our students, and I am excited to get the school year going!

You can always find more resources for parents and students throughout the school year located on my counselor website:
https://sites.google.com/usd420.org/6th-8thcounselor/home

## Seminar

Students will have several opportunities to strengthen their social-emotional skills during seminar this year. Below is a list of seminar activities your student may be involved in:

- **Monday**: Grade Checks & Social-Emotional Check-In
- **Tuesday**: Student-Led Conferences/Xello
- **Wednesday**: Second Step Social-Emotional Curriculum
- **Thursday and Friday**: Work Time and Meetings

## Second Step

We are so excited that our middle school will be using the Social-Emotional curriculum Second Step. This is a research based learning program that is designed to improve children's social-emotional skills. The skills and concepts covered in this program will help students be successful both in and out of school. Middle School is such a difficult age for some students and feel that this program is going to be extremely beneficial for them. Students will be taught lessons weekly during seminar class be either myself or their seminar teacher.

There are four units that will be covered throughout the school year:

- Mindset and Goals
- Recognizing Bullying and Harassment
- Thoughts, Emotions, and Decisions
- Managing Relationships and Social Conflict

If you ever have any questions about the program you can contact myself or your student's seminar teacher.

## Contact Info

**Name:** Carly Chisham
**Email:** cchisham@usd420.org
**Phone:** 785-528-3175