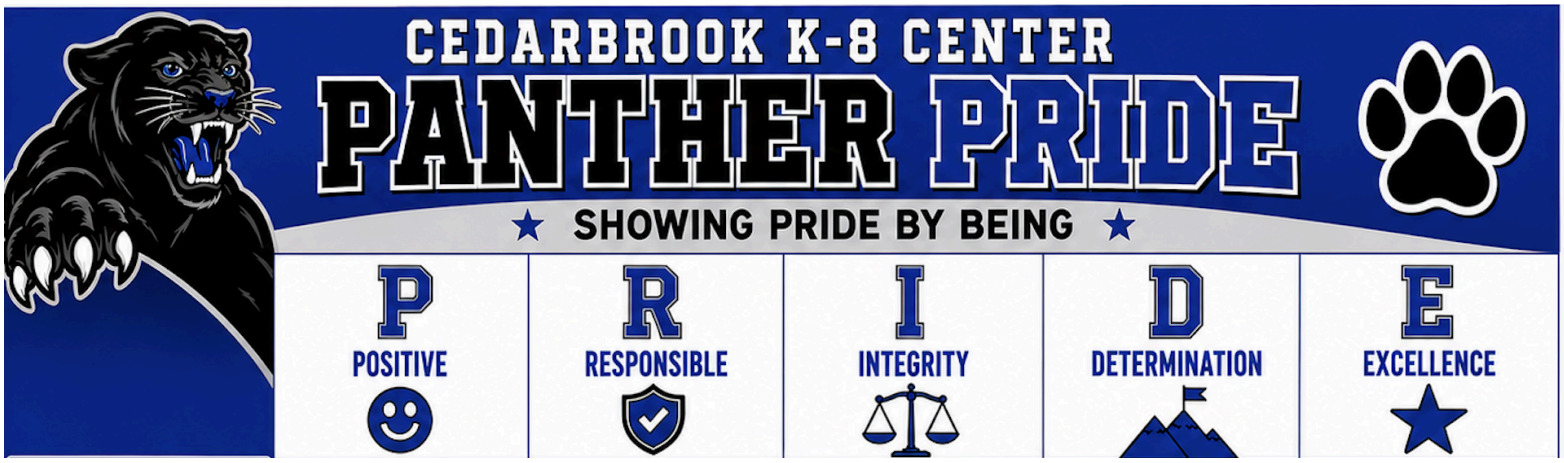
Cedarbrook K-8 Center

Student Parent Teacher

HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Ms. Tenisha L. Fort, Principal
Mrs. LeeAnne Benson, Assistant Principal



Welcome to Cedarbrook K-8 Center!! We are looking forward to a productive school year filled with lots of learning and fun. The following handbook of information may help to answer the numerous questions you may have regarding our school. Please read this information and cooperate with us by following the policies and procedures. Please keep this handbook to refer to throughout the school year.

I. Code of Conduct

At Cedarbrook K-8 Center, we will help each other respect everyone by using the district Code of Conduct. The district Code of Conduct was developed to provide levels of disciplinary responses that match the severity of an incident, while also focusing on ways to redirect behavior and teach students appropriate responses and behaviors. All stakeholders, including students, school staff, families, and community partners, are entitled to a safe, supportive, positive, and orderly learning environment.

II. Cedarbrook Student Pledge

I will be positive, productive, and proud. I will be respectful, responsible, and accountable. I will believe, achieve, and succeed. I am, I can, I will…I believe in myself – excellence starts with me!

III. Panther PRIDE & Character Education

The Plainfield Public Schools (PPS) Standards of Character Education are an essential component of the District's Code of Conduct. At Cedarbrook K-8 Center, our **Panther PRIDE** is more than a motto—it is the foundation of who we are and how we treat one another every day. We demonstrate **P.R.I.D.E.** by being **Positive, Responsible, showing Integrity, demonstrating Determination, and striving for Excellence** in our words, actions, and decisions. These core values align with the **Plainfield Public Schools Standards of Character Education**, which serve as an essential component of the District's Code of Conduct. Through the intentional integration of character education into our curriculum, the positive modeling of appropriate behavior by staff, and the continued partnership among school, home, and the community, we empower our scholars to develop strong character and make responsible choices. At Cedarbrook, Panther PRIDE inspires our students to become not only successful learners but also respectful, compassionate, and productive citizens who positively contribute to their school and the world around them.

Daily Procedures

Attendance

Attendance is the collaborative responsibility of students, parents, and school personnel. The Board of Education Attendance Policy states in part, "The frequent absence of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of pupils to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully." Absences from school jeopardize the pupil's ability to satisfactorily complete prescribed courses of study and violate New Jersey Statutes 18A:25-31 that requires children of school age to attend school regularly.

Students are expected to arrive on time for all classes throughout the school day and week. One major factor in a student's success in school is regular attendance. Each time a student is absent from school, he/she misses instructional experiences that cannot be duplicated. It is very important that you attend classes every day unless you have a medical excuse because of an illness.

When it is necessary for your child to be absent from school, please call the school and contact your child's teacher(s). A doctor's note must also be sent to the school when you return giving the dates and the reason for the absence.

If your child will be absent from school, please notify your child's teacher and our Attendance Secretary, **Mrs. Ruth Cortes**, as soon as possible via ParentSquare or by email at **Ruth.CortesPerez@plainfield.k12.nj.us**. To be considered an **excused absence**, appropriate documentation must be submitted, such as a doctor's note or, in the event of a death in the immediate family, an obituary or other acceptable documentation. All other absences will be recorded as unexcused in accordance with district policy.

Tardiness and Early Dismissals

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to student success. Arriving late to school or class disrupts instruction and interferes with the continuity of learning for both the student and classmates. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to begin learning each day. Likewise, early dismissals should be limited to emergencies or unavoidable appointments, as leaving school before the end of the instructional day results in missed learning opportunities. Excessive tardiness and/or early dismissals may result in a conference with school administration and additional interventions or disciplinary action, as appropriate.

Attendance Correction Action Plan

To support student success, the following corrective action plan will be taken when attendance concerns arise:

- **Initial Meeting:** We will schedule a meeting with you to discuss your child's attendance record and identify any issues or challenges.
- **Individualized Plan:** Together, we will create a tailored plan that outlines specific actions and supports for improving attendance.
- **Regular Monitoring:** Your child's attendance will be monitored closely, and you will receive regular updates on their progress.
- **Support Services:** We will connect you with any necessary resources, such as counseling, transportation assistance, or tutoring.

Behavioral Expectations - Living the Panther PRIDE 🐾

- **P – Positive**

Take pride in your home, school, and community.
Do your best at all times.
Maintain a positive attitude and encourage others.

- **R – Responsible**

Take responsibility for your own actions.
Obey all school rules.
Make informed choices and accept accountability for your decisions.

- **I – Integrity**

Do what is right, not just what is easy.
Obey all state and federal laws.
Be honest, respectful, and trustworthy in all that you do.

- **D – Determination**

Set both short- and long-term goals.
Don't give up—finish what you start.
Persevere through challenges and continue to grow.

- **E – Excellence**

Strive for your personal best every day.
Think about the needs and feelings of others.
Lead by example and contribute positively to the Cedarbrook community. 🐾💙

Please note that the full copy of the Student Code of Conduct is available on the district website.

Scan the QR Code to access the Plainfield Public Schools Student Code of Conduct.

Students' Responsibilities	Parent/Guardian Responsibilities	Teacher Expectations
Be aware of and follow school policies, regulations and district code of conduct	Teach your child self-discipline and a respect for authority. To cooperate with the school to require and reinforce self-discipline.	Be flexible, responsive, and positive.
Refrain from disruptive behavior which may interfere with a teacher's right to teach and a student's right to learn; and to help keep classrooms orderly.	Familiarize the child with the School Discipline Code and procedures and to ensure that the child understands the dangers and consequences of committing acts which violate it.	Be on time and prepared for each class, create engaging, student-centered lessons that actively involve all learners, and use student data to monitor progress, adjust instruction, and provide appropriate support to meet the needs of all learners.
Treat all students, school staff, parents and personnel with respect	Ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and well prepared.	Communicate with students and families via Genesis, ParentSquare, and/or email for all assignments, class meetings, and school information.
Report incidents or activities that may threaten or disrupt the school environment. To seek assistance from school personnel to prevent or resolve conflicts.	Provide school personnel with current emergency phone numbers and other pertinent information available.	Provide timely, meaningful feedback on student assignments and maintain an accurate, up-to-date gradebook to effectively communicate student progress.
Attend school/ classes regularly and punctually, prepared with necessary materials and completed assignments.	Available for meetings and conferences when necessary, and to cooperate with the school for the benefit of the child.	Available for students and families during regular school hours.
Participate in, or help develop, student government organizations and guidelines that promote a safe and orderly environment for learning.	Respond to all school communications regarding your child(ren).	Provide a safe space for students to engage in learning and socialization with their peers.
Encourage and assist other students in their academic pursuits.	Develop a school/community spirit that encourages and supports pride in oneself, family, home, school and community.	Collaborate professionally with colleagues, administrators, and support staff to promote student success and maintain a positive school culture.
Together we will develop a school spirit that encourages and supports pride in oneself, family, home, school and community.		

Uniform/Dress Code Policy

The Plainfield Board of Education revised its Uniform/Dress Code Policy in December 2024 to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment by allowing school branded t-shirts, hoodies, and regular dress-down days. This change seeks to reduce suspensions and disciplinary actions related to uniform violations while maintaining clear expectations for student appearance. The policy also offers uniform waivers for families with health, religious, or financial concerns, emphasizing equity and collaboration among students, families, and staff.

Cedarbrook Uniform/Dress Code

As a reminder, all students are expected to follow the school's dress code and take pride in representing the Cedarbrook K–8 Center community.

Uniform/Dress Code Guidelines:

- Bottoms: Navy blue or khaki pants, slacks, jumpers, skirts, jeans (no holes/not ripped)
- Tops: White, light blue, or navy-blue shirts, polos, sweaters, or vests
- Fridays & School Spirit Days: Students may wear jeans and Cedarbrook spirit wear/ school colors (t-shirts, hoodies, sweatpants)

The following attire/footwear items are ALWAYS prohibited:

Ripped Jeans	Crop Tops	Biker Shorts	Leggings
Crocs	Slides	Flip-Flops	Mini Dresses
	Mini Skirts	Mid-Drift Tops	

(MANDATORY) Communication Methods

Genesis-Parent Portal

The Cedarbrook K-8 Center (Plainfield Public Schools) uses a parent/guardian communication tool that enables you to view your child or children's information. This online tool is called **Genesis Parent Portal**. This powerful tool will allow you as parents/guardians to view your child's grades/report cards, daily attendance, communicate with their teacher, and schedule via the internet. We are requiring you to utilize this tool in order to keep track of your child or children's progress.

If you are not currently signed up for the **Genesis Parent Portal**, please go to the link that can be found on the district website. You must complete an *Access Request Form*. Once this is done, you will be sent an email, using the email address you have provided, with your login information and instructions for using the portal.

Finally, once you are into the portal, please make sure that you and your child/children's information is current. This is important because your contact information will be utilized by staff members to communicate with you throughout the year.

ParentSquare



ParentSquare is the district's new two-way communications platform that provides instant translations in 100+ languages and has been launched in all PPSD schools. ParentSquare is used for items such as newsletters, snow day notifications, group chats, calendars, and more.

ParentSquare is now used for districtwide newsletters and announcements! We highly suggest all parents/caregivers:

1) download the ParentSquare app from the Google Play Store or Apple Store, and **2) register your ParentSquare account** with the email address that is connected to your student through the Genesis Parent Portal.

School Schedules

Full Day Schedule

Beginning Time	Ending Time	Period	Lunch
8:00 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	**Homeroom**	
8:15 a.m.	8:55 a.m.	Period 1	
8:57 a.m.	9:37 a.m.	Period 2	
9:39 a.m.	10:19 a.m.	Period 3	
10:21 a.m.	11:01 a.m.	Period 4	
11:03 a.m.	11:43 a.m.	Period 5	K-1
11:45 a.m.	12:25 p.m.	Period 6	2-3
12:27 p.m.	1:07 p.m.	Period 7	4-5
1:09 p.m.	1:49 p.m.	Period 8	6-8
1:51 p.m.	2:31 p.m.	Period 9	
2:31 p.m.	2:35 p.m.	**Dismissal**	

If your child is not enrolled in an afterschool program, dismissal is at **2:35 p.m.**

Half Day Schedule

Beginning Time	Ending Time	Period	Lunch
8:00 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	**Homeroom**	
8:15 a.m.	8:41 a.m.	Period 1	
8:43 a.m.	9:09 a.m.	Period 2	
9:11 a.m.	9:37 a.m.	Period 3	
9:39 a.m.	10:05 a.m.	Period 4	

10:07a.m.	10:33 a.m.	Period 5	K-1
10:35 a.m.	11:01 a.m.	Period 6	2-3
11:03 a.m.	11:29 a.m.	Period 7	4-5
11:31 a.m.	11:57 a.m.	Period 8	6-8
11:59 p.m.	12:25 p.m.	Period 9	
12:27 p.m.	12:30 p.m.	**Dismissal**	

If your child is not enrolled in an afterschool program, dismissal is at **12:30 p.m.**

Delayed Opening Schedule

Staff Report at 9:30 a.m. **Students** Report 10:00 a.m. **Dismissal** 2:35 p.m.

Emergency School Closing

In the event of a school closure or emergency, the Superintendent of Schools (or designee) will notify all students, families, and staff through **ParentSquare** and the **Plainfield Public Schools website**. Families are encouraged to ensure their contact information is current in Genesis and to regularly monitor these communication platforms for important updates and instructions.

Technology

Technology is an essential part of teaching and learning at Cedarbrook K-8 Center. Each student is issued a district-owned device to support instruction both at school and at home. Parents/guardians are required to complete and electronically sign the **Digital iPad Agreement Form** in the **Genesis Parent Portal** before their child may use a school-issued device. Families are also strongly encouraged to purchase the optional device insurance, which provides coverage for accidental damage, loss, theft, and other covered incidents. Insurance is recommended within 30 days of receiving the device and before any damage or loss occurs.

If your child experiences any issues with their iPad, such as apps not working, login problems, or other technical concerns, please contact your child's teacher through **ParentSquare**. The teacher will assist with basic troubleshooting and, if necessary, submit a technology request to the appropriate department.

Students are expected to use all school-issued technology responsibly and in accordance with the **Plainfield Public Schools Code of Conduct**. Devices, chargers, and accessories must be handled with care at all times. Intentional damage, misuse, or destruction of a school-issued device may result in disciplinary action, loss of device privileges, and financial responsibility for repair or replacement costs. Parents and students should carefully review the **Device Code of Conduct** together and understand the expectations for the appropriate use and care of all district technology.

Homework Expectations

Homework is designed to reinforce classroom learning, build responsibility, and develop independent learning habits. Parents are encouraged to support their child's success by establishing consistent homework routines while allowing students to complete assignments independently.

Parents Should...

- ✔ Provide a quiet, distraction-free workspace.
- ✔ Establish a consistent daily homework routine.
- ✔ Encourage effort, perseverance, and independence.
- ✔ Monitor homework completion without completing the work for your child.
- ✔ Encourage students to do their own thinking and problem-solving.
- ✔ Contact the teacher through **ParentSquare** if concerns arise.
- ✔ Include a photo of the assignment in ParentSquare when it will help explain the concern.

Homework Expectations by Grade Level

Grade Level	Student Expectations
Kindergarten	• Complete homework with the support of a parent, guardian, or older sibling. • Work in a quiet, organized space. • Complete homework at the same time each day. • Keep learning positive, and take breaks when needed.
Grade 1	• Read with a family member **15–20 minutes daily**. • Practice **5–10 sight words** each day. • Complete short math practice activities. • Complete all assigned homework.
Grades 2–3	• Read independently **20–30 minutes daily**. • Practice math skills daily. • Attempt assignments independently before asking for help. • Keep homework organized and submit assignments on time.
Grades 4–8	• Spend **30–40 minutes maximum** on homework (reading, math, writing, and unfinished classwork). • Complete assignments independently. • Record assignments in a planner. • Stay organized and submit work on time. • Use **StudentSquare** to communicate with teachers regarding assignments.

Honor Roll Standards

Students are recognized for academic achievement based on the following criteria:

Recognition	Core Classes	Co-Curricular Classes
High Honor Roll	97–100% (A+)	90–100% (A- to A+)
Honor Roll	80–100% (B- to A+)	80–100% (B- to A+)

Core Classes: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Co-Curricular Classes: Visual and Performing Arts, Practical Arts, Technology, Physical Education, and World Language

Students must meet the required criteria in **all classes**. As time permits, students will be celebrated for their academic success during Cedarbrook's **Blue Carpet Awards**, held each trimester for elementary students and each marking period for middle school students. 🏆🐾

Cell Phone Policy



Cell Phone & Personal Electronic Device Policy

To provide a safe, focused, and distraction-free learning environment, Cedarbrook K-8 Center will implement a **Cell Phone and Personal Electronic Device Policy** for the 2026–2027 school year. This policy is aligned with **New Jersey Legislation S-3695/A-4882 (P.L. 2025)** and the **Plainfield Public School District's Board policies and procedures**.
Students may bring a cell phone or personal electronic device to school; however, **all personal electronic devices are prohibited during instructional time**. Devices must be stored as outlined below and may only be used as permitted by school procedures.

Student Procedures & Expectations

All students are expected to:

- Use only district-issued technology for instructional purposes.
- Power off or silence all personal electronic devices during instructional time.
- Place their device in the designated, visible classroom storage unit immediately upon entering each classroom. Devices remain in the storage unit for the entire school day.
- Students retrieve their devices at dismissal before leaving for the day.

Consequences for Non-Compliance

First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense	Repeated Violations
• Verbal warning • Device confiscated and secured in the main office until dismissal • Parent/guardian notified • Student reminded of the district's electronic device expectations	• Device confiscated until dismissal or parent/guardian pickup, as determined by administration • Parent/guardian notified • Referral to the school counselor or social worker, when appropriate • Additional school consequences (such as detention or loss of privileges) may be assigned	• Parent/guardian required to pick up the device • Parent conference with school administration • Referral to the school counselor or social worker • Additional school consequences (such as detention or loss of privileges) may be assigned	• Loss of privilege to bring a personal electronic device to school for a designated period • Behavior intervention plan, when appropriate • Progressive disciplinary action in accordance with the Plainfield Public Schools Code of Conduct

Communication During the School Day

To minimize classroom disruptions and maintain a focused learning environment, students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day should report to the **Main Office**, where school staff will assist them. Likewise, parents or guardians needing to communicate with their child during the school day should contact the **Main Office**, and school personnel will ensure that messages are delivered promptly. Communication between students and parents/guardians should take place through **StudentSquare** and **ParentSquare**, rather than through personal electronic devices during the school day.

Thank you for partnering with **Cedarbrook K-8 Center** to support a focused, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment. By limiting the use of personal electronic devices during instructional time, we can maximize student engagement, improve academic achievement, and foster meaningful interactions among students and staff. Together, we are building a school community where every scholar can demonstrate **Panther PRIDE** by being **Positive, Responsible, showing Integrity, demonstrating Determination, and striving for Excellence**.

Visitors

A safe school environment is a secure school environment. We have a security guard on duty during school hours. All visitors must bring their license or another form of identification and sign in for pre approved appointments. Visitors will not be allowed in the building unless they have prior approval from the building administrators.

Personal Items

The school takes **no responsibility** for personal items brought to school.

Lost and Found

A “lost and found” area is in the cafeteria. Scholars should check periodically for misplaced or lost items and clothing. Scholars should write their name in all workbooks, textbooks, and notebooks. The school recommends that all personal property items be labeled. Items not claimed will be disposed of or donated after a reasonable length of time.

Lockers

Student lockers are the property of Cedarbrook K-8 Center and are provided for student use. The school reserves the right to inspect or search any locker at any time, with or without prior notice, when deemed necessary to maintain a safe, secure, and orderly school environment, in accordance with the district policy, applicable law, and the standards established by the U.S. Supreme Court in *New Jersey v. T.L.O., 469 U.S. 325 (1985).*

Field Trips

Whether educational or rewarding, field trips are a privilege. Students who cannot follow the student code of conduct due to Misbehavior or disregard of school policies can result in denial of field trip privileges.. When students travel away from school, they are subject to the same rules, regulations, and appropriate politeness observed at the school. As in the classroom, the teacher will judge behavior as acceptable or unacceptable. Signed permission slips must be on file with the teacher for each student on each field trip.

Birthday Parties/Celebrations

Classroom birthday celebrations are at the discretion of each individual teacher. Parents/guardians who wish to recognize their child's birthday at school should contact the classroom teacher directly to determine whether celebrations are permitted, what food or non food items (if any) may be provided, and the appropriate time and expectations for the celebration. Parents should not send birthday treats or items to school without prior approval from the classroom teach

Cedarbrook K-8 Center Mission and Vision Statements

MISSION STATEMENT

At Cedarbrook K-8 Center, we will inspire and empower every student to achieve academic, social, and personal success. Through a culture of trust, respect, collaboration, and leadership, we will nurture confident, compassionate, and lifelong learners who are prepared to make a positive impact in their school, community, and future careers.

PANTHER PRIDE

VISION STATEMENT

Every student will be empowered to reach their fullest potential to become a successful lifelong learner and leader. Cedarbrook K-8 Center is a collaborative learning community committed to continuous growth and improvement by analyzing data, setting meaningful goals, reflecting on progress, and working together with their peers, staff, families, and community partners!

PANTHER PRIDE



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