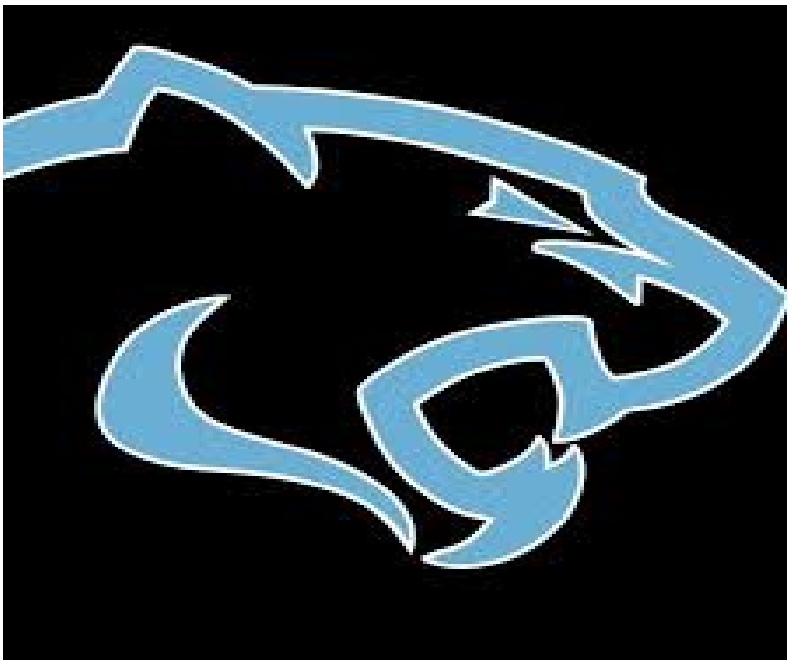
Penn Cambria Middle School Student Handbook

2026-2027

A Resource Guide for PCMS Students & Their Family



"Building the Foundation for a Lifelong Learner"

Principal: Mr. Justin Wheeler

Phone: 814-886-4181 Ext. 3000

Email: wheelejx@pcam.org

INTRODUCTION

This student handbook is meant to provide general information to PCMS students and their parents. It is our wish to provide you with this information so that you know in advance that we recognize and respect the value of each student who attends this middle school. We feel it is important to provide information and guidance, so expectations are clear, and every student has an equal opportunity to achieve success. **This handbook is NOT meant to be an exhaustive list of all district policies and procedures,** instead it is meant to serve as a guide for parents and students. A complete description of all Penn Cambria School District approved policies are available online at the Penn Cambria website at **www.pcam.org**, for anyone to review.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission Statement

The Penn Cambria School District will prepare productive citizens in a safe and positive environment that promotes excellence in academics, career skills, the arts, and athletics.

Contact Information

Penn Cambria Middle School – Phone: (814) 886-4181, Fax: (814) 886-9308

Mr. Justin Wheeler, Principal
Mrs. Renee Myers, Guidance Counselor
Mrs. Robin Stasik, Secretary
Food Service - Justine Hrzic-Smith- (814) 886-8121 Ext. 2325

District Website

Updated school calendars, Board of Education meeting minutes, announcements, links, forms, and other district information can be found on the district website: http://www.pcam.org

Security

While we encourage parental and community involvement, for security purposes, all visitors must gain entrance to the school through the front doors and report directly to the office to obtain a visitor pass. Students are **NOT** permitted to open any doors to allow anyone access to the building.

2026-2027 PCMS Back 2 School Night & Parent-Teacher Conference Schedule

August 24, 2026	Back to School Night	4:00 - 7:00
November 5, 2026	Parent/Teacher Conferences	4:00 - 7:00
January 21, 2027	Parent/Teacher Conferences	4:00 - 7:00

Student Records

Penn Cambria Middle School follows the guidelines set by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with regard to student records. This law requires that the district, with certain exceptions, obtain parental written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a child's education records.

However, the district may disclose "directory information" without written consent, unless a parent or guardian has advised the district to the contrary. Examples of directory information include but are not limited to the following: a playbill or program showing your student's role in a performance, an annual yearbook, the honor roll, a graduation program, a newspaper listing, a sports activity sheet.
Federal laws require that the district provide military recruiters, upon request, with names, addresses and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district in writing that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.
If a parent does not want the Penn Cambria School District to disclose directory information without your prior written consent, you must notify the Middle School Principal, in writing by **Monday September 14, 2026.** Your written notification will be kept on file for one year.

Student Accident Insurance

Parents will have the opportunity to purchase insurance coverage for injury, resulting from accidents sustained by students. An independent insurance company, not the school district, will handle student accident insurance.

ACADEMICS

Grading

Student report cards will be issued every nine weeks. Deficiency notices will be sent as needed throughout the semester.

Penn Cambria Middle School uses the following grade scale:

93-100% = A	S = Consistently & Independently Meets or Exceeds Standards
85-92% = B	P = Progress Towards Meeting Standards
78-84% = C	N = Limited or No Progress Towards Meeting Standards
70-77% = D	X = No Presented/Assessed at this time
Below 70% = F	

Accessing Student Grades

If you haven't already accessed the Penn Cambria School District grading system, you may contact our Guidance Counselor, Mrs. Renee Myers at 886-4181 ext. 3005.

Honor Roll Guidelines

Honor Roll – 85% or better in all courses.

High Honor Roll – 93% or better in all courses

District Promotion Policy

The Board recognizes that the personal, social, physical, and educational growth of children will vary and that they should be placed in the educational setting most appropriate to their needs at the various stages of their growth.

It shall be the policy that each child be moved forward in a continuous pattern of achievement and growth that is in harmony with his/her own development.

Such a pattern shall coincide with the system of grade levels established by this Board and the instructional objectives established for each.

Penn Cambria School District's goal is to maintain promotion with purpose. This goal maintains linear learning for each student, working to avoid the need for retention. This goal provides direction and available resources to maintain or regain a cohort position in the class.

A student shall be promoted when she/he has successfully completed the curriculum requirements and has achieved the academic standards established for the present level, based on the professional judgment of the teachers and the results of assessments. A

student shall earn the right to advance to the next grade by demonstration mastery of the required skills and knowledge. Compliance with Chapter 14 and Chapter 16 regulations and achievement of IEP goals and objectives shall be considered when determining the educational setting most appropriate to the needs of children with disabilities.

Promotion/Transfer

Penn Cambria School District's goal is to maintain promotion with purpose. This goal maintains linear learning for each student, working to avoid the need for retention. This goal provides direction and available resources to maintain or regain a cohort position in the class.

A student shall be promoted when s/he has successfully completed the curriculum requirements and has achieved the academic standards established for the present level, based on the professional judgment of the teachers and the results of assessments. A student shall earn the right to advance to the next grade by demonstrating mastery of the required skills and knowledge.

Retention:

Grade 1-6

Students who receive failing grades in math and/or English Language Arts or who demonstrate a significant lack of age-appropriate skills may be recommended for retention. Data including, but not limited to, standardized testing, classroom assessments, progress monitoring, teacher observations, and attendance data will be considered in determining promotion or retention.

Retention decisions shall be based on recommendations from teachers, school counselor,
principal, and the Director of Special Education with involvement and input from the parents/guardians.

ATTENDANCE

District Attendance Policy

We believe that the educational learning process involves presentation, questioning, discussion, and interaction. The Penn Cambria School District recognizes the important relationship between attendance and learning

If a student is absent, parents are required to submit a written explanation for the legal absence within THREE (3) school days of the child's return to school. Failure to provide this may result in the absence being declared UNEXCUSED. A written explanation does not in itself qualify the absence as excused. The absence must be for legal reasons according to the law.

Absences for the following reasons are EXCUSED:

Personal illness, Quarantine/Isolation, Death in immediate family (maximum of 3 days), Appearance in court, pre-approved family trips, Observance of religious holiday, exceptionally urgent reasons approved by the principal or designee.

Absences for the following reasons are UNEXCUSED:

Visiting out of town, Overslept, Missed the bus, Truancy, Hunting/Fishing

- **Note:** All class work, tests, quizzes, and assignments missed because of an unexcused absence shall be considered as zero (0) with no-make up work permitted unless specifically ordered or approved by the principal. Unlawful absences will be reported to the appropriate authorities as required by Compulsory School Law.

PCMS administration will take the following actions with regards to student attendance:

When a **student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences**, a First Offense Notice of Compulsory Attendance Violation will be issued to the parent(s)/guardian(s). These unexcused absences are considered a violation of the Compulsory Attendance requirements outlined in the Pennsylvania Public School Code. In accordance with state law, three unexcused absences constitute a summary offense, and legal penalties may be imposed on the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Once a student reaches six (6) unexcused absences, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be considered in violation of the Compulsory Attendance Requirements for a second time. A letter of concern will be issued, offering the opportunity to participate in an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIP) conference to address the cause(s) of the absences. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to either provide a written explanation and return the letter to the school or attend the scheduled AIP conference to resolve the matter.

After the six unexcused absences the school may: (1) refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program or (2) the county children & youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act. Additionally, the school may file a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under fifteen (15) in a magisterial district court.

After the tenth (10th) day of absence, the administrator may require a doctor's excuse (medical verification) for each subsequent absence, based on a history of attendance, adjudication, or individual circumstances. The parent and student shall receive written notification indicating the requirement of a doctor's excuse (medical verification) for each subsequent absence by the student. If a medical excuse is not provided, the absence will be considered "Unexcused."

Early Dismissal / Excusal

Middle School (Grades 4–6): 9:00 AM – 3:05 PM

Attendance Categorization Based on Time of Arrival or Dismissal

Category	Middle School (4–6)
Tardy	Arrives between 9:01 and 10:01 without medical excuse
Short-Term Dismissal	Arrives before 10:01 with medical excuse or excused ≤ 1 hour during day with medical excuse or emergency exception
AM Absent	Absent > 1 hour anytime between 9:00 AM–12:00 PM
PM Absent	Absent > 1 hour anytime between 12:00–3:05 PM
Full Day Absence	Present < 90 minutes total during the day

** If half-day absence crosses AM/PM, choose one for which most time was missed. Example: Student absent from 10:00 AM–1:30 PM = PM absent

Educational Trips

Requests for family trips will be considered as excused absences **IF** the principal gives prior approval, and the duration and frequency of trips do not interfere with the child's educational progress. Students requesting permission to an educational trip with parents must complete an Educational Trip approval form available in the school office.

If a student has already accumulated the following number of absences, he/she may be refused permission for excused family trips.

1st 9 weeks – 4 or more days 2nd 9 weeks – 8 or more days

3rd 9 weeks – 12 or more days 4th 9 weeks – 15 or more days

All make-up work must be completed within TEN days after the completion of the vacation. Any Educational trip for which prior approval is **NOT** obtained may be considered unexcused.

Class Cuts

Class cuts are unexcused absences. Therefore, work missed during a class cut will not be accepted for credit. The first time a class cut occurs, the parents shall be notified, and the student disciplined according to the discipline code. If any subsequent cuts occur, a conference must be held with the parents, the counselor, and/or principal as well as appropriate disciplinary action.

Make-Up Work

Any time a student is legally absent from school or class, he/she must make up all assigned work. The student must contact his/her teachers within TWO school days after his/her absence to schedule the necessary make-up work. If contact is not made within two school days, all missed work will be considered as zero (0) for grade purposes.

Homework

When a student is absent MORE than one day, a parent or guardian may call the school office and request homework for the student. Please call the office before 10:00AM, so the office has time to collect homework from their teachers.

Homeroom

Students are responsible for reporting to homeroom on time. Students that are reporting to another room for any reason (ex. make-up work, tutoring, library) must first report to their homeroom teacher every day and receive a written pass to the other

area. Students who do not check in with their homeroom teacher to gain permission will be marked tardy for that day.

Tardy to School

Tardy is defined as not in homeroom by 9:00 AM. It is very important that every student reports to homeroom **BEFORE** reporting to another room in the morning (ex. to take a test, make up work, etc.) to avoid being marked tardy. Asking another student to tell the teacher is not a valid excuse and you may be marked tardy. After 10:10AM, a student will be considered half-day absent.

First Tardy	=	Verbal Warning
Second Tardy	=	Written Warning
Third Tardy	=	1 Lunch Detention
Fourth Tardy	=	2 Lunch Detentions
Fifth Tardy	=	After School Detention
Sixth Tardy	=	2 After School Detentions
Seventh Tardy	+=	Suspension

STUDENT INFORMATION & RESPONSIBILITES

Dress Code

Student dress and grooming are the responsibility of the student and parents, unless there is a safety or health hazard, a hindrance to the educational processes, or a case of obscenity. Enforcement of the Penn Cambria Middle School Dress Code will be the responsibility of the administration and/or professional staff. Clothing should be neat and appropriate for school in all cases. Articles of clothing, which are questionable in the minds of parents, will undoubtedly be inappropriate. The Penn Cambria Middle School principal reserves the right to ban dress that may be considered inappropriate and is not specifically addressed in this handbook. The rule of common sense is clean, neat, and decent. This dress code applies while in school and at all school activities including activities at other schools.

Guidelines:

- Shirts must cover the midriff at all times. Shirts must reach the waistband of pants at all times when you are sitting or standing.
- Halter, tube tops and spaghetti-strap shirts are not permitted. Tops can be worn if straps are two and one-half (2 1/2) inches wide.
- Pants for boys and girls must fit at the waist so that underwear does not show when sitting or standing. Logos on the back of pants or shorts are not permitted.
- Clothing articles will be considered unacceptable or disruptive if they are too

sheer, too short, or too revealing. Any garment that exposes any undergarment or bare midriff is prohibited. Some examples of inappropriate clothing include halter tops, tube tops or tank tops, crop tops, mesh tops, bicycle shorts, mini-skirts, underwear and undershirts worn as outerwear, shirts with open sides.

- Safe flat shoes are to be worn at all times. Shoes having/needing laces must be tied. Shoe heels cannot be higher than one (1) inch.
- Jackets and coats worn in the building must be unbuttoned or unzipped at all times
- Pocket chains and spiked jewelry are not permitted.
- Clothing displaying tobacco, alcohol or drug affiliation is not permitted.
- Clothing displaying sexually inappropriate material is not permitted.
- Certain jewelry and other adornments, and the manner in which they are worn or displayed, may not be appropriate under certain circumstances and may pose a danger to the safety or welfare of the student or other students or staff, and may pose a threat to, or interruption of, the educational process. For example: rings with sharp points or edges, chain belts, chains hanging from jackets or pants, collars, spiked jewelry or any other jewelry or ornament that could be used as a weapon. When deemed inappropriate the student will be asked to remove the item. The item will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. This is not an exhaustive list and the interpretation of the dress code is at the discretion of the principal.
- Students participating in physical education classes or in extracurricular activities are required to wear the clothing detailed by the Physical Education Department or the director or advisor of the particular extracurricular activity.

- Some type of head covering may be required for industrial arts, home economics and some science laboratories where the length of a student's hair might present a safety or health hazard.
- Bandannas, animal headgear, or hats should not be worn at any time in the school building.
- Painting your face or using excessive make-up is not permitted.

Electronic Devices

Electronic Devices including such items as paging devices, MP3 players, Game Boys and other electronic game devices, cameras, laser pointers and other electronic equipment **are prohibited**. At **NO TIME** will PCMS accept responsibility for lost, broken, or stolen electronic devices.

Cell Phones

Guidelines for the acceptable use of such devices follow:

- Cell phones shall remain off and **stored out of sight.**
- If the device is used without permission of teacher or supervisor and/or in a way that disrupts the education p**rocess**, the teacher or supervisor will make a written disciplinary referral and give the device to the principal.
  - *1st Offense* – Written Warning & Cell Phone returned to student at the end of the day
  - *2nd Offense* – Detention & Cell phone returned to student at the end of the day
  - *3rd Offense* – 2 Detentions & Principal will contact a parent to retrieve the electronic device. Beyond the 3rd Offense, a student will be suspended and parent will be contacted to retrieve the electronic device.
- During lunch, 5th and 6th students maybe permitted to use cell phones for a short time, but cannot video or take pictures at any time. Using cell phones during lunch is a privilege and can be taken away if rules are not followed.

Sexual Content in Text Messages (Sexting)

Any student in possession of text messages with sexual content on school grounds will be subject to the disciplinary procedure appropriate, up to and including expulsion where appropriate. Students participating in the taking or distribution of text messages with sexual content risk felony prosecution in addition to any District imposed penalties. District officials recommend that any student who receives this type of image deletes it immediately from their electronic device. Such offenses that occur on school property or during school sponsored activities also violate the District's Student Code of Conduct and District policy. The following actions, at a minimum, will be taken by the administration: Students found in possession of such photographs or video will be subject to a 3-day suspension from school.

- Students found in possession of such photographs or videos who have also distributed the same will be subject to a 10-day suspension from school.
- Cell phones, found in violation of the Student Code of Conduct, will be confiscated in accordance with District policy and all inappropriate images will be destroyed.

Motorized Vehicles

PCMS Students are NOT permitted to drive a motorized vehicle of any kind to school. (Ex. Moped, quad, etc.)

Hall Passes

Students out of class for **ANY** reason must sign out on the room's laptop computer. Students are only permitted to go to the area in which they signed out to go. Students should only be excused from class for a reasonable amount of time to travel from place to place.

Textbooks/Materials

Students are responsible for any textbooks, equipment and materials supplied to them. Students must reimburse the district for the replacement cost of lost items.

Food & Drink

Open containers of food and/or drink are NOT permitted in the hallways or in lockers. Classroom teachers have authority over possession/consumption of food or drink inside their classrooms and will clearly communicate their expectations to students. Students who violate individual classroom rules will be subject to disciplinary action. Absolutely NO Energy or Power Drinks, of any kind, are permitted during the school day. Water only outside of the cafeterias during the school day.

School Assemblies

School assemblies are sometimes scheduled to enhance and enrich the student's educational experience. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner during assemblies. Students may be assigned seats during assembly programs. Student misconduct during assemblies will result in a loss of assembly privileges for the remainder of the school year as well as disciplinary action.

Any student receiving more than 3 days of suspension (In-school or Out-of-School) or receiving 5 or more detentions will have their assembly privileges denied.

Student Drop Off & Pick Up Before & After School

Students who do not ride a bus and are being dropped off at school must be dropped off at the left (facing the school) side of the school building (Exit B), they should not be dropped off in front of the school. Students who are not riding the bus home and are being picked up at the end of the day must be picked up on the left (facing the school) side of the school. Students who are being picked up will exit through the side doors (Exit B). Students who walk home will be dismissed at the front of the school building after all buses have left school property.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Wellness Policy

Penn Cambria School District recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. We are committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness. The Wellness Policy and information about how to participate on the Wellness Committee can be found on the district website (www.pcam.org) under the Wellness link.

Nursing Office

The Nurse's Office is located next to the main office in the Middle School. Students who are sick or injured during the school day MUST report to the Nurse's Office. Students must sign in and out of the Nurse's Office every time they visit. Students may not leave school due to illness, without first reporting to the school nurse or office. Students are not permitted at any time to use cell phones to call home without first receiving permission from the nurse, guidance counselor, or principal. If at any time the nurse is not in her office, the student MUST report to the main office.

Medical Emergency Card

At the opening of every school year, each student will be given a "Medical Emergency Card" to be completed and returned to the school *as soon as possible*. This form could provide life-saving information in case of an emergency. Disciplinary action may be taken if students do not return the Medical Emergency Card in a timely manner. Please be sure to update information with the school when there are changes to emergency information.

Medication

When the use of medication is necessary during school hours, the following procedure is required: The medication must be taken immediately to the nurse's office at the beginning of the school day. A maximum of 30 days' medication may be brought to school by a parent or student if the parent feels acceptable. Failure to report medication to the school nurse will result in suspension from school. All medications, whether over the counter, prescription, or herbal must have written instructions from a physician to be administered by the school nurse. In addition, a parent signature must be provided. If the school nurse is not in the building, over-the-counter medications may not be administered.

Prescription Medicine

The physician must provide written instructions. These instructions must indicate the name of the medicine, the dosage, the time intervals, possible side effects, duration of treatment, the physician's phone number and any other pertinent information.

Non-Prescriptive Medicine

The parent shall provide in writing: The name of the medicine, the dosage, time interval, and duration of treatment. The medicine must be sent in its original, properly labeled container.

Asthma Inhalers

A student shall be permitted to possess asthma inhalers and epinephrine injectors and self-administer asthma and epinephrine medication with physician and parent authorization. A written request from the parent/guardian with an order from the physician must be on file along with an asthma care plan or emergency care plan. The parent/guardian must acknowledge that the district is relieved of all responsibility for the benefits or consequences of the medication. The student must report to the school nurse that an asthma inhaler was used and report directly to the nurse after self-administering epinephrine medication.

Health Examinations

In compliance with the School Code, Penn Cambria requires students to submit health and dental examinations to protect the student and the school community.
All students in grade K-12 have a vision screening every school year. A hearing screening is conducted in grades K-3, 7, & 11 along with all ungraded classrooms.

Students in 6th grade are required to have a comprehensive physical examination on file with the school. At the end of 5th grade, every student will receive a Private Physician's Examination form to be completed before the start of school. If a private physical exam form is not received by spring, school physicals will be completed by our school physician.

Growth Screening Program—All students in grades K-12 under Pennsylvania School Law, section 1402 (a) (3) of the Public-School Code, requires each child to be measured for height and weight with body mass index (BMI) for age percentile being calculated. This is done individually, and results are confidential. The results are required to be provided to you. A growth screening letter will be provided to you via Quarter 3 report cards each year. If you have any questions regarding this or any other school health issues, please contact the school nurse.

STUDENT SERVICES

Bus Services and Conduct

Misconduct on school buses is dangerous, so regulations have been established for the safety of all. Students who violate them may be denied bus service. The bus driver oversees the bus and the students. Misconduct will be reported to the principal. For safety purposes, there are surveillance cameras on each bus.
Students are only allowed to get on or off the bus at the bus stop authorized for that student. A note signed by a parent or guardian and approved by the principal must be presented to the office. The students will get a Bus Pass to give to the bus driver to get off at another stop. Questions for McIlwain School Bus Lines can be directed to 814-886-4600.

Cafeteria

Penn Cambria Cafeteria provides both breakfast and lunch services to students and staff daily. The cost of breakfast is $1.30 for students. The cost of lunch is $2.00 for students. Penn Cambria uses a fingerprint program to track student cafeteria accounts and protect student confidentiality. Parents/guardians may choose to deposit money into a student account with the cafeteria so that students don't have to carry money with them to school. Parents may also check student food service accounts online by going to the district website. Food Service Director, Justine Smith can be contacted by phone at 814-886-8121 ext. 2325.

Free and reduced-price lunch applications are available at the Middle School. Families that are eligible should apply for this program! The reduced price for breakfast is $0.30—for lunch is $0.40.

Students are NOT permitted to run to the cafeteria, or they will be placed at the back of the line and may be subject to disciplinary action. Students are not permitted to leave the cafeteria without the permission of the lunch monitor.

Guidance Services

Penn Cambria Guidance Counselor, Renee Myers is on hand to offer assistance and guidance to students to encourage educational and personal growth and plan for post high school employment and/or education. The Guidance Suite offers students career counseling materials, study tips, standardized testing information, post-secondary education and training information, course selection guidelines and information on topics affecting student well-being such as dealing with divorce, substance abuse, dating, bullying, making health decisions and smoking. Students are encouraged to see

their guidance counselor for information and assistance when needed. Parents also should contact the guidance counselor whenever they have questions or concerns.

Library Media Center

The Middle School Library Media Center is well equipped to provide students with necessary materials and research tools to support course offerings and encourage literacy. Print materials, online subscription databases, Microsoft Office applications and Internet access are available for research and class assignments. Preference is given to teacher-scheduled classes in the library. Students must always report to class first and bring a signed pass to the library to be admitted.

All library materials checked out by students become the responsibility of that student. The fine for overdue materials is .05 cents per school day. Students who fail to return materials due to loss or theft will be charged a replacement cost. Any student who has a library book that is overdue for 30 days or more may receive disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

Student Lockers

Lockers are provided for student convenience but are owned solely by Penn Cambria School District. Each student will be assigned a locker to use for storage of school materials. Students should exercise caution when placing valuable items inside lockers as the school assumes no responsibility for items lost or stolen from lockers. Students may not share lockers. Students may request a school issued lock from the office, for a deposit of $5.00 (the cost of the lock.) Students will return the locks at the end of the school year and be refunded $3.00. The students may use their own lock, provided they turn in a spare key or combination to the office.

Computers/Network Use

All students and their parents/guardians must read and sign an Acceptable Use Policy to be granted access to middle school computers and the district network. Copies of the policy are available online at www.pcam.org and in the Middle School Library Media Center. Please read this document carefully and return the signed signature page to the library media center. Upon receipt of the signed policy, the student will receive a username and password that may be used for the duration of their middle school career. Students may ONLY login to the computer network using their OWN username. It is equally important that students always remember to LOGOUT before leaving the computer to prevent others from gaining access to their account.
In general, *computers and Internet access are intended for educational purposes!* Therefore,

social networking sites, gaming web sites and social blog sites not related to the educational objectives of the school are prohibited! Examples of such sites include but are not limited to chat rooms, X (Twitter), Snap Chat, Instagram, Facebook, and game sites.

Also, students must respect copyright laws and intellectual property rights of others. "Cutting and pasting" information from online sources is plagiarism and equates to cheating.

Students are given storage space on the district server (H: drive) on which they may store schoolwork, papers and projects. This server is accessible from any computer in the school building. The school reserves the right to inspect any user's computer, computer records or computer files at any time. Students violating the Acceptable Use Policy may be subject to loss of computer privileges and disciplinary action.

Students Assistance Program (SAP)

Penn Cambria Middle School has a Student Assistance Team called SAP. The purpose of this confidential team is to identify students who are having trouble, which is interfering in student achievement and provide information and referral to appropriate school and outside services which may be of assistance. Such difficulties may be the result of attendance issues, behavior, substance abuse, depression, traumatic events, bullying or any other events or problems which interfere with a student's success in school. SAP is meant to help students and parents receive appropriate services. It is **NOT** a disciplinary program, nor does it serve to punish students in any way.

Field Trips/Social Events/Class Trips

Students must obtain written parental permission to participate in school-sponsored field trips. Students will be responsible for following the same rules and will be subject to the same discipline as applies during the regular school day. **Any student receiving more than 3 days of suspension (In-school or Out-of-School) or receiving 5 or more detentions, will be denied their field trip privileges.** A student who has fines owed to the school will be denied field trip privileges. Attendance also applies to field trips as follows:

1st 9 weeks – 4 or more days absent
2nd 9 weeks – 8 or more days absent
3rd 9 weeks – 12 or more days absent
4th 9 weeks – 15 or more days absent

Students cannot go on the same field trip twice. A student who is retained cannot go on the field trip he/she went on the previous year

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Discipline Policy

The Penn Cambria School District affirms that education cannot proceed without good discipline, fairly and consistently applied.

Teacher aides deserve the same respect as teachers. Insubordination and disrespect to any staff member will be dealt with in the same manner as insubordination towards a teacher.

Summary of Student Code of Conduct

Level ONE:

Misbehavior on the part of the student, which impedes orderly classroom procedures or interferes with the orderly operation of the school.

Examples of Offenses: (*similar offenses not listed will be dealt with similarly)*

Pass Violation
Eating at unauthorized times and places
Disruptive Attire
Minor Misconduct in library or cafeteria
Abusive language
Non-defiant insubordination
Lying
Minor Misconduct in assembly program
Littering
Chewing Gum

Level ONE Discipline: *(Detention, at the discretion of the administrator, may be substituted for suspensions)*

1st offense – Reprimand / 1 detention
2nd offense – 3 consecutive detentions
3rd offense – Suspension / parent contact

Level TWO:

Infractions that tend to disrupt the learning climate because of their seriousness or whose educational consequences are serious enough to require corrective action.

Examples of Offenses: (*similar offenses not listed will be dealt with similarly)*

Level TWO Discipline: *(Detention, at the discretion of the administrator, may be substituted for suspensions)*

Offenses	First Offense	Second Offense	Third Offense	Fourth Offense
* Chronic Level ONE misbehavior * Tobacco use * Leaving building without permission * Cheating and other serious acts of dishonesty * Forgery	Suspension/ parent contact/conference/ appropriate legal action	Suspension / Appropriate legal action	Suspension / Appropriate legal action	Refer to Superintendent
*Class cutting (10 minutes or more)	Suspension / parent contact/ no credit for work missed/ no make-up work	Suspension / no credit for work missed/ no make-up work	Suspension / no credit for work missed/ no make-up work	Suspension / Failure for course and re-assignment to course
Defiant insubordination	Administrative judgment	Administrative judgment	Administrative judgment	Administrative judgment
* Class misconduct * Lavatory lookout or loitering in lavatory	Detentions	Suspension	Suspension	Suspension / Refer to Superintendent
Fighting	Suspension / parent contact/Fine with magistrate	Suspension / parent contact/Fine with magistrate/Refer to Superintendent	Referral to Superintendent	Referral to Superintendent
Simple bus violation	Warning / parent contact	Denial of bus privilege for 5 days	Loss of bus riding privilege / Administrative judgment	Refer to Superintendent
Unexcused absence, truancy and illegal absence	1 detention / parent contact	3 consecutive detentions / parent contact / no credit for make-up work may result	Suspension / contingency contract between parents, student and administration / no credit for make-up work may result	Suspension / contingency contract/ no credit for make-up work may result

Level THREE:

Any act which results in violence to property or to another person which poses a direct threat to the safety of others in the school.

Examples of Offenses: *(similar offenses not listed will be dealt with similarly. Detention, at the discretion of the administrator, may be substituted for suspension.)*

Level THREE Discipline: *(Detention, at the discretion of the administrator, may be substituted for suspensions)*

OFFENSES	FIRST OFFENSE
Repeated Level II misconduct Extortion Bomb Threat Possession/Use/Transfer of Dangerous Weapon Possession/Use/Transfer of Explosive or Incendiary Devices Assault/Battery Major Vandalism Theft/Possession/Sale of Stolen Property Arson False Fire Alarm Furnishing/Selling/Possession/Use of Unauthorized Substances	Refer to Superintendent Suspension/Expulsion

After-School Detention Guidelines

Failure to abide by the following rules will result in the reassigning of the detention for another date and additional disciplinary action up to and including suspension.

- Students must be in the assigned detention room by 3:30pm. No students will be admitted late.
- Detention will be from 3:30-4:30PM.
- Student must be picked up by a parent/guardian promptly at 4:30PM.
- No food, no music, no drinks, no magazines, no cell phones, no talking, no sleeping (or putting head down).
- Students MUST bring work with them to do. Also acceptable would be a book to read AR.
- If a student does not have work to do, he/she will be required to repeat the detention.
- Failure to attend will result in lunch detention until the detention is served.
- A parent/guardian must sign the discipline referral and must **be returned prior** to the day of detention or further disciplinary action will occur.

In-School Suspension Guidelines

- Students must report to the office upon arrival to school (By 9:00 am).
- There will be assigned seats. No food, no drinks, no cell phones, no music, no magazines, no sleeping (or putting head down).
- Students must BRING work with you to do or a book to read.
- If a student does not bring work to do, he/she will be required to repeat the suspension.
- Students will not leave the room for any reason (lunch will be delivered).
- Each student will receive a P (pass) or F (fail) for the day by the teacher in charge. If a student receives an "F", the office must be informed as to why. The administration will notify the student if the student needs to repeat the suspension. Depending on the reasons for receiving the "F", the student may receive additional disciplinary consequences.

Out-School Suspension

When a student is on Out of School Suspension, all work must be made up when the student returns to school.

Tobacco Policy

The school district prohibits students from possessing and using tobacco, including any unlighted or lighted cigarette, cigar, pipe, smokeless tobacco, Vapes, Juuls, etc. at any time in a school building, on a school bus, or on school property. The school district will prosecute any student who violates this policy. A student convicted shall be fined up to $50 plus court costs (approx. $160.00 total).

In addition, violators will be subject to the following:

1st offense – One-day suspension from school
2nd offense – Three-day suspension from school
3rd offense – Referral to school board for expulsion

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Any student who possesses, uses, dispenses, or sells *controlled drugs, look-alikes, or alcoholic beverages* while under the jurisdiction of the school shall be suspended immediately pending an informal hearing with the student and parent/guardian at which time a plan of action will be developed. The police and other proper authorities will be notified. A student committing a second offense shall be considered for expulsion.

Specific information concerning discipline is as follows:

- Possession of drug paraphernalia on school grounds **-**3 days Out of School Suspension
- Possession, use or under the influence of drugs, mood altering substances or alcohol.

  1st Offense – Student cooperates with investigation -
  Up to 5 days of out of school suspension and suspension from any/all extra-curricular activities for 30 school days (not calendar days).
  1st Offense- Student refuses to cooperate with investigation – Up to 10 days out of school suspension and suspension from any/all extra-curricular activities for **60 school days** (not calendar days).

  Note: *Length of suspension can be mitigated by a cooperative response to SAP recommendations.*

  2nd Offense – 5 days of out of school suspension and formal expulsion hearing before the Penn Cambria School District Board of Education.

- Distribution of a drug, mood-altering substance, or alcohol on school grounds at any time - Up to 10 days out of school suspension and formal expulsion hearing before the Penn Cambria School District Board of Directors.

Harassment

It is the policy of PCMS to maintain a learning environment that is free from unlawful harassment for both students and staff. Harassment is a serious offense and will NOT be tolerated! Special attention is called to the prohibition of sexual harassment. Examples of sexual harassment might include but are not limited to: sexual flirtations, advances, touching or propositions, verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body, sexually degrading words to describe an individual, jokes, innuendoes, references to sexual activity or any conduct that has the effect of unreasonably interfering with the educational process or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment. Harassment should be reported immediately to the principal, guidance counselor or another adult.

Nondiscrimination/Sexual Harassment (Policy #103)
The district is committed to the maintenance of a safe, positive learning environment for all students that is free from discrimination by providing all students course offerings, counseling, assistance, services, employment, athletics and extracurricular activities without any form of discrimination, including Title IX sexual harassment. Discrimination is inconsistent wit the rights of students and the educational and programmatic goals of the district and is prohibited at or, in the course

of, district-sponsored programs or activities, including transportation to or from school or school-sponsored activities.
Violations of this policy, including acts of retaliation as described in this policy, or knowingly providing false information, may result in disciplinary consequences under applicable Board policy and procedures.
The district does not discriminate in any manner, including Title IX sexual harassment, in any district education program or activity.

Penn Cambria School District Title IX Coordinator:
Mr. Justin Wheeler, Principal
Penn Cambria Middle School 401 Division St., Gallitzin, PA 16641
814-886-4181 x3000
wheelejx@pcam.org

Bullying/Cyberbullying

We are committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for district students. Bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence**.**

Bullying means an intentional electronic, written, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting that is severe, persistent, or pervasive. By school setting, we mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised, or sanctioned by the school. Students are encouraged to promptly report such incidents to the building principal or designee. Complaints shall be investigated promptly, and corrective action shall be taken when allegations are verified. A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct.

School Searches

Locker Searches

All lockers are the property of the school district. As such, students have no reasonable expectation of privacy in their lockers. School authorities may search a specific student's locker if they have a reasonable suspicion that a student has violated a rule or guideline and seize any illegal materials. When a student's locker is being searched, the student shall be notified and given the opportunity to be present unless school authorities have a reasonable suspicion that the locker contains materials which may threaten the safety and welfare of others or where there is a reasonable likelihood that the evidence will be removed or destroyed.

Student Property or Possessions

School authorities can conduct searches of student property (including vehicles parked on PC property) when there is a reasonable suspicion that the student is in possession of an item or substance that is prohibited by school regulations, threatens school routine, or poses a threat to the safety and welfare of other students.

Backpacks and/or Bags

Student backpacks and/or bags dropped off in the office during the school day may be searched by a school or district administrator.

Person Searches

When school authorities have reasonable suspicion that a student has on his/her person materials that pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of students in the school, a search may be conducted.

In such cases, school authorities may conduct a pocket search of a student's person in which a student will be asked to empty his /her pockets or shoes in the presence of a second witnessing school official and/or a pat-down search of a student may be done by a school official of the same sex in the presence of a second witnessing school official.

Weapons

Weapons and replicas of weapons are FORBIDDEN on school premises, including school grounds and vehicles used for official school purposes. Weapons shall include, but not be limited to, firearms, knives, metal knuckles, straight razors, explosives, noxious or irritating gases, poisons, drugs, or other items fashioned with the intent to harm, threaten or harass students or members of the school community.

Any loaded or unloaded firearm or dangerous weapon on school property is subject to seizure, forfeiture, and further legal action. including expulsion. Students may be prosecuted under the law.

Terroristic Threats / Acts

Students are prohibited from communicating terroristic threats (including bomb threats) or committing terroristic acts directed at any student, employee, school board member, community member or school building. Students communicating such threats or committing such acts will be immediately suspended. The Superintendent shall notify law enforcement officials and recommend the appropriate discipline, including expulsion, to the school board. If a legitimate threat is made to a school in the district, the Superintendent will contact every parent District-wide via School Connects call explaining the threat and what the district's response will be.

If a rumored threat is investigated at the building level and found to be false, the building principal will make a School Connects call to all the parents of students at PCMS and explain that a threat was investigated and found to be a rumor and false. The building principal will also make an announcement to the student body notifying them that a threat was investigated and found to be a rumor and false.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extra-Curricular Offerings

Penn Cambria Middle School offers extracurricular activities for the benefit of students. A list of activities, clubs, and organizations is below. This list is subject to change.

Students must maintain academic eligibility to be active participants in these activities. This eligibility shall be reported on a weekly basis.

- A student reported as not passing 2 full-credit subjects will be ineligible to practice or perform the following week (Monday through Sunday).
- If a student's work in the immediately preceding grading period does not meet the 2-full credit subject rule, the student will be ineligible for the first 15 school days of the next grading period.
- A student who has been absent for a total of 15 or more days during a semester shall not be eligible to participate in any extracurricular activities until he/she has been in attendance for a total of 60 school days following the 15th day of absence.

A student who is not in school by 10:10AM shall NOT be eligible for practice or performance on that day. A student who is absent from school is NOT eligible for practice or performance on the day they were not in school. Also, if the absence occurs on a Friday, the student will be declared ineligible on Saturday and/or Sunday.

Extracurricular Activities offered at PCMS may include the following:

Reading Competition

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs
Services for Gifted Students and Services for Protected Handicapped Students
2026-2027

It is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth, including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004 (IDEA '04).

The IDEA '04 requires each state educational agency to publish a notice to parents, in newspapers or other media, before any major identification, location, or evaluation activity. The IDEA '04 requires this notice to contain certain information. Another federal law, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which protects confidentiality, requires educational agencies to notify parents annually of the confidentiality rights (FERPA regulations have been amended 9 times). Pennsylvania special education regulations require each school district to fulfill the IDEA '04 notice requirement by providing an annual public notice. To comply with the above requirements, the following is the annual public notice for the Penn Cambria School District.

School districts are required by the IDEA '04 to provide a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities who need special education and related services. (Note: The duty to identify, locate, evaluate and provide special education services to school-age individuals incarcerated in local correctional institutions rests with the school district within whose boundaries such an institution is located.) School age children who need special education and related services are identified as children with disabilities. These students have been identified as being in need of specially designed instruction and have one or more of the following physical or intellectual disabilities:

Autism
Emotional disturbance
Deafness
Hearing impairment
Specific learning disability
Intellectual disability
Multiple Disabilities
Other health impairments
Orthopedic Impairment due to chronic or acute health problems
Speech and language impairment
Visual impairment including blindness
Deaf blindness
Traumatic Brain Injury
Developmental Delay

Early Intervention

The IDEA '04 requires the provision of a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners. In Pennsylvania, a child between 3 years of age and the school district's age of beginners who has a developmental delay or one or more of the physical or intellectual disabilities listed above may be identified as an "eligible young child."

Eligible young children are afforded the rights of school age children with disabilities, including screening, evaluation, individualized education program planning, and provision of appropriate programs and services.

Potential signs of developmental delay and other risk factors that could indicate disabilities and the possibility that a child is an eligible young child could include: **By the age of 3**: not saying many words; not using 2 or 3 word phrases and sentences; not walking; awkward gait (walking); drooling; not able to answer "who" or "what" questions; not using utensil to feed self; **By the age of 4 (all of the above included)**: not toilet trained; difficulty with directional words (in, on, under, out); not playing with other children; not able to draw a circle, cross or imitate a vertical line; not able to understand the child's speech most of the time; difficulty following simple two-step directions (pick up the paper and put it in the garbage); **By the age of 5 (all of the above included)**: unable to answer "where" questions; unable to recall details from a story; not drawing a person with at least 6 parts; immature speech patterns (me instead of I); not able to hop forward with one foot without support; **Other warning signs-at any age**: Little or no eye contact; over/under sensitivities to pain, light, noise; hand flapping; no awareness of space-always bumping into other people or things; awkward hand or foot positioning; won't touch or eat certain textures; child no longer can do things he/she used to do; developed normally, then stopped; echoes what is said; plays with toys inappropriately (watches wheels spin on the car but doesn't play with the car).

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is responsible for providing programs and services to eligible young children under Act 212 of 1990, the Early Intervention Services System Act. Intermediate Unit 8 provides programs and services to eligible young children on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. For more information, contact the IU8 Preschool Office at (800) 228-7900.

Screening

Intermediate Unit 8 and Penn Cambria School District have established and implemented procedures to locate, identify, and evaluate students and young children suspected of being exceptional. These procedures include screening activities which include but are not limited to: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards); hearing screening (at a minimum of kindergarten, special ungraded classes, first, second, third, seventh, and eleventh grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening. In schools which have a Pre-Referral, Child-Study, Early Intervening or Instructional Support Team, the above screening activities may lead to consideration by the teams to move to the next level of screening activities.

Intermediate Unit 8 and each school district have an established annual schedule to conduct screening activities. The screenings are conducted at specific times during the school year in designated school buildings and community sites. Screening may also be conducted in the student's home school unless other arrangements are necessary. **Parents, guardians or surrogate parents may contact their local school district or Intermediate Unit 8 contact person if they wish to learn more, have questions, believe their child may need to be identified or to obtain specific information about the times and locations of screening activities**. The contact person is listed at the end of this notice.

Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly, screening activities take place in an ongoing fashion throughout the school year. Each educational agency has a system for annually evaluating the effectiveness of its screening process.

Evaluation

When screening indicates that a student may be a child with a disability, the school district will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Evaluation means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services

that the child needs. The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not mean basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children.

This evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary team (MDT) that includes the parent and a group of qualified professionals. The process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include protection-in-evaluation procedures. For example, tests and procedures used as part of the evaluation may not be racially or culturally biased.

The evaluation process results in a written evaluation report. This report specifies a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction. The evaluation report also makes recommendations for educational programming. Once parental consent for evaluation is obtained, the school district has timelines and procedures specified by law which it must follow.

Parents who think their child is exceptional may request that the school district conduct an evaluation. This request should be made in writing to the contact person in the accompanying listing. If a parent makes an oral request for an evaluation, the school district shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. Pre-Referral, Child-Study, Early Intervening, or Instructional Support Team activities do not serve as a bar to the right of a parent to request, (at any time, including prior to or during the conduct of instructional support activities, an evaluation.)

Parents also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. The school district must provide parents with, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an independent educational evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

Educational Placement

The IEP team develops a written education plan called an IEP. The IEP is based on the results of the evaluation. Required members include at least one regular education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment), at least one special education teacher, or where appropriate, at least one special education provider, a local educational agency, the child, whenever appropriate, or beginning at age 14. Parents may agree, in writing, to excuse a team member or members.
An IEP describes a student's current educational levels, goals, objectives (when required), and the individualized programs and services that the student will receive. IEP's are reviewed on an annual basis. The IEP team will make decisions about the type of services, the level of intervention, and the location of intervention. Types of services include:
1. Autistic Support
2. Blind and Visually Impaired Support
3. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support
4. Emotional Support
5. Learning Support
6. Life Skills Support
7. Multiple Disabilities Support
8. Physical Support
9. Speech and Language Support

Level of support options include:
* Itinerant – Special Education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 20% or less of the school day.

* Supplemental – Special Education support and services provided by Special Education personnel for more than 20% but less than 80% of the school day.
Full-time - Special Education supports and services provided by Special Education personnel for 80% or more of the school day.
Placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as "protected handicapped" students and therefore be protected by other federal and state laws intended to prevent discrimination. The school district must ensure that "protected handicapped" students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student.

In compliance with state and federal law, the school district will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. To qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or intellectual disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped" students may be distinct from those applicable to exceptional or thought-to-be exceptional students. The school district or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student, is a protected handicapped student. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact the Special Education Contact listed at the end of this notice.

Services for Mentally Gifted Students

While Mentally Gifted is not included under the IDEA 2004, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education's regulations as set forth in Chapter 16, Special Education for Gifted Students, provide that gifted students are considered to be children with exceptionalities and are in need of specially designed instruction. Penn Cambria School District will conduct public awareness activities to inform the public of gifted education services and programs and how to request these services and programs throughout the school year. These awareness activities should be designed to reach all parents of students living within the Penn Cambria School District via the local newspapers, student handbooks, and on the school district website.

Screening

Penn Cambria School District conducts an annual search for students that may potentially be gifted. This search is conducted yearly, however at any time teachers from grades K through 12 may make a request to have a student screened or evaluated for gifted eligibility. At any time throughout the school year, a parent may also request in writing to the special education director for a child to be evaluated to determine eligibility as a mentally gifted student. A parent may only request to have the child evaluated one time per school term. The school district shall determine the student's needs through a screening and evaluation process which meets the requirements of Chapter 16.

Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation

For students who are potentially mentally gifted students, the district will take the following steps:

Conduct the Gifted Multidisciplinary Evaluation
Compile a Gifted Written Report
Convene a Gifted Individualized Education team meeting to determine whether the student is gifted; and,
Develop a Gifted Individualized Education program if the student is determined to be a mentally gifted student.

Program Model

Penn Cambria School District implements an inclusive model for Gifted Education across all grade levels. Please contact the special education director if you need additional information about evaluation and programming for mentally gifted students.

Confidentiality

Each school district protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws, policies, and regulations.

Education records mean those records that are directly related to the student, including computer media and videotape, which are maintained by an educational agency or by a party acting for the agency. Educational agency, for purposes of this notice, means the local school district and/or the Intermediate Unit 8. For all students, the educational agency maintains education records that include but are not limited to:
·Personally identifiable information - confidential information that includes, but is not limited to, the student's name, name of parents and other family members, the address of the student or student's family, and personal information or personal characteristics which would make the student's identity easily traceable.
·Directory information - information contained in an education record of a student which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes, but is **not limited** to, the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age certain rights with respect to the student's education records. They are:
1. Parents have the right to inspect and review a child's education record. The educational agency will comply with a request to inspect and review education records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP or any due process hearing, but in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made. Requests should be submitted in writing, indicating the records the parents wish to inspect, to the school principal or other appropriate school official. Parents have the right to respond with the educational agency to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records. Parents have the right to request copies of the records. While the educational agency cannot charge a fee to search for or to retrieve information, it may charge a copying fee as long as it does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review the records. Parents have the right to

appoint a representative to inspect and review their child's records. If any education record contains information on more than one child, parents have the right only to inspect and review the information relating to their child.

2. If parents think information in an education record is inaccurate, misleading, or violates the privacy or other rights of their child, they may request amendment of the record. Requests should be in writing and clearly identify the part of the record they want to change and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. The educational agency will decide whether to amend the record and will notify the parents in writing of its decision. If the educational agency refuses to amend a record, it will notify the parents of their right to a hearing to challenge the disputed information. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parents or student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. "Destruction" of information means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers, so the information is no longer personally identifiable.

Whenever information is no longer needed to provide educational services to a child or six (6) years after graduation, the information in their education record will be destroyed by the educational agency if there is not a current request to inspect and review or a request for copies. However, a permanent record of a former student's name, telephone number, grades, achievement, attendance, classes attended, grade level completed, year completed, Evaluation/Re-evaluation Reports, last three (3) IEPs, and last Notice of Recommended Educational Placement may be maintained in an electronic form without time limitation.

Information no longer needed to provide educational services must be destroyed if requested by a parent. However, a permanent record of a student's name, address, phone number, grades, attendance, classes attended, grade level completed, year completed may be maintained in an electronic form without time limitation.

4. The educational agency will provide, upon request, a listing of the types and locations of education records maintained, the school officials responsible for these records, and the school personnel authorized to see personally identifiable information. Such personnel receive training and instruction regarding confidentiality. The educational agency keeps a record of parties obtaining access to education records, including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.
5. Parents have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. "Consent" means: the parent (s) have been fully informed regarding the activity requiring consent, in their native language or other mode of communication; they understand and agree in writing to the activity; and they understand that consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. Information may be disclosed without consent to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); person or company with whom the educational agency has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or

her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Directory information may be released without parent consent unless the parent has exercised their right to opt out of disclosure of directory information. Parents have the right to refuse to let an agency designate any or all the above information as directory information.

Upon request, the educational agency discloses education records (including disciplinary records) without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

6. Parents have a right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by an educational agency to comply with the requirements of FERPA. Complaints may be filed with the Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202-4605.

7. NDAA of 2002 also requires districts to give military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as provided to postsecondary institutions or to prospective employers; and provide students' names, addresses, and telephone listings to military recruiters, when requested, unless a parent has opted out of providing such information.

Mode of Communication

The content of this notice has been written in straightforward, simple language. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the school district or Intermediate Unit 8 and request an explanation.

The educational agency will arrange for an interpreter for parents with limited English proficiency. If a parent is deaf or blind or has no written language, the educational agency will arrange for communication of this notice in the mode normally used by the parent (e.g., sign language, Braille, or oral communication).

Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

PPRA affords parents certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include the right to:

· *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas ("protected information survey") if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)—

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent.
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family.
3. Sex behavior or attitudes.
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships.
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers.
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

· *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of*—

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding.

2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

· *Inspect,* upon request and before administration or use—

1. Protected information surveys of students.
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who has graduated from high school, or is 18 years old, or an emancipated minor under State law, or has reached the age of majority in Pennsylvania.
The educational agency will develop and adopt policies regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The educational agency will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive changes. The educational agency will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation in the specific activity or survey. The educational agency will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the educational agency has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below and provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided with an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:
Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution.
Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.
A parent may file a written complaint alleging that the rights described in this notice were not provided:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
Division of Compliance
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

PC SPECIAL EDUCATION CONTACT:
Mrs. Carrie Conrad, Special Ed. Director
Penn Cambria School District
205 6th Street
Cresson, PA 16630
(814) 886-4785

Penn Cambria School District
Public Notice
Education Rights of Children and Youth that are Homeless

This public notice provides information about the rights of children, youths, and unaccompanied youth that are homeless to attend a public school or public charter school. An unaccompanied youth is a youth that does not live with a parent or guardian. This notice includes information to help you know if you or someone you know is considered homeless and is eligible for the services from our school district. Children or youths that are homeless have rights that include the right to attend public schools. If you need assistance understanding this letter or need an interpreter, please tell us and we will assist you.

Our school district actively enrolls and provides services for children and youth that are homeless. If you are homeless or know of a child, youth, or unaccompanied youth that may be homeless, please contact the person listed here for help.

Mrs. Jeanette Black, Assistant to the Superintendent, Homeless Liaison
Phone: (814)886-8188 Extension 1183
Address: 201 6th Street Cresson, PA 16630
Email: Blackjl@pcam.org

• *Who is "homeless"?* Children or youth (including children of migrant workers) who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence are homeless. Fixed means the home is connected to the ground and is not easy to move. Regular means a place where the child sleeps every night. Adequate means the home meets modern standards of living. Children who share someone else's housing because they lost theirs or because they cannot afford their own housing are homeless.

Children and youths who are homeless may be living in: motels, hotels, trailer parks (this does not refer to a mobile home (trailer) park, this refers to a type of camping ground for fifth wheel camper trailers or other types of movable campers), camping grounds because they do not have an adequate home, emergency or transitional shelters, or are abandoned in hospitals.

Children and youth who are homeless may have a place they usually sleep in that is public or private place not meant to be a regular place for people to sleep. They may also be living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing (housing that does not meet modern standards of living), bus or train stations, or other similar settings.

If you are not sure, please contact the person listed on this notice.

• *What are the education rights of children and youth that are homeless*? Our schools provide the same educational services to all students without regard to their living situation. Children and youth who are homeless also have rights that include: Based on what is best for the child or youth, the child or youth can continue to attend the "school of origin" or be immediately enrolled in any public school where the student now lives. This includes any school that students who are not homeless attend that is in the area where the child or youth now live.

o Being given services without delay, such as transportation and meal programs

o Other appropriate services and programs, such as programs for: gifted children, children with disabilities, English learners, career and technical education, and preschool.

Help in school through the district's federally funded Title I program. A student that is homeless can receive Title I services even if the student is not attending a Title I funded school.

o School activities for parents or guardians.

o Participation in athletics, fine arts, or other extra-curricular activities.

o Being treated the same as students who are not homeless by school personnel.

· *What is the "school of origin?"* 'School of origin' means the school the child or youth attended before becoming homeless or the school the child or youth last attended, including a preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level of a school of origin, then 'school of origin' means the school the child or youth would attend at the next grade level. The district must consider what is best for the child or youth when deciding about which school the student will attend. Placement at the school of origin must be a choice unless doing so is not what is best for the student or is against the wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

What if there is a disagreement about school placement? If the district places a student in a school that is not the school of origin or a school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, then the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth may appeal (ask to change) the placement decision. The student will be immediately enrolled in the school that the student or parent asked for while an appeal is being considered. The district homeless liaison listed on this notice will provide information and assistance to appeal a placement decision.

No Child or Youth Should Be Denied Access to Free and Appropriate Public Education.

District Homeless Liaison:

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Community Partnerships and Resources for Homeless Services- "Finding Your Way in PA" – This can be downloaded as an app as well.
https://findingyourwayinpa.app/introduce

Threat Assessment Team

According to PA Public School Code, Article XIII-E, Threat Assessment refers to a fact-based process for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behaviors may indicate a threat to the safety of the student, other students, school employees, school facilities, the community, or others.

The established PCSD Threat Assessment Team is immediately notified and subsequently follows the Threat Assessment procedures to assess and intervene with the student(s) to determine the level of threat. The goal of this process is to ensure the safety of the school community, and also to ensure that the student presenting the threat receives assistance through a range of strategies established in the school and in the community.

Students & Parents Reminder:

You must review this handbook then sign & return the form given to you by the homeroom teacher verifying that you have read this Penn Cambria Middle School Handbook for the 2026-2027 school year.