

WELCOME TO THE CENTER FOR INQUIRY

Dear Center for Inquiry Families,

The Center is a unique and wonderful school. As a Center Family, you and your family are also members of our schoolwide community. To help you become informed about policies, procedures, routines, and events at CFI, we have produced this notebook. The notebook format is new this year. We hope it will be convenient and useful. We plan to give each family a notebook and then send additions and revisions, rather than a whole new document, at the beginning of each year.

This notebook contains the Center Family Handbook and the Center Family Directory. The Handbook is divided into two sections: Policies and Procedures which presents information concerning district and school policies; and Nice to Know which presents information about common "happenings" at CFI. The Directory lists the names, addresses, and phone numbers of our students by class. Please respect that some information may have been omitted at the request of parents. Each section is organized in alphabetical order by topic and begins with a listing of contents. Page numbers are not used to simplify the process of adding and replacing pages in the future. Remember to check Friday's *Center Connections* each week for announcements and school news as well as for a monthly calendar highlighting upcoming events at the Center.

Please know that your presence on campus is both welcomed and encouraged. As always, thank you for supporting our children.

Respectfully yours,

Lyn Z. Mueller

Lyn Z. Mueller, Ph.D.
Principal

The Center for Inquiry

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This directory was created for use by CFI families. It is not to be used for solicitation or inappropriate correspondence of any kind. Some student information may be withheld upon request.

Center for Inquiry Where Questions Matter

The Center for Inquiry is a K-5 elementary magnet program established in 1996 as a partnership between Richland School District Two and the University of South Carolina. A hallmark of the Center is that all faculty members share the same philosophical approach to teaching and learning. This innovative approach emphasizes hands-on learning experiences and high-interest studies through the use of an inquiry-based, interdisciplinary curriculum.

The Center for Inquiry is located on the campus of Summit Parkway Middle School. It is housed in portable classrooms with awnings for protection from inclement weather. There is one self-contained classroom at each grade level with 22 students. Students and teachers "loop" for a period of two years. This looping strategy allows students to have the same teacher for grades K/1; for grades 2/3; and, for grades 4/5.

The Center for Inquiry follows the regular elementary schedule for Richland School District Two and incorporates state and district standards within its curriculum.

MISSION STATEMENT

The students, parents and staff of the Center for Inquiry, a genuine collaboration between the University of South Carolina and Richland School District Two, are responsible for developing ourselves as more thoughtful, caring and intelligent people who delight in learning and are committed to creating a more compassionate, equitable, knowledgeable and democratic world!

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ABSENCES

If a child misses school because of illness or injury, a written excuse, signed by a doctor or the parent, should be sent on the first day the student returns to school.

It is the parent's responsibility to monitor the number of absences that a student incurs during the course of the school year. To assist parents with monitoring, tardies and absences are listed on the progress reports received at the end of each of the nine weeks. By law, a student can have only 10 absences during the school year. All absences must be excused. Excused absences are those for which a medical excuse or an approved parent note has been received. In the case of an illness lasting longer than three days, Dr. Mueller should be contacted to discuss the possibility of accessing the school district's Homebound Instructional services. Absences other than illness should be approved in advance by Dr. Mueller.

AFTERCARE

AfterCare is provided for CFI students until 6:30 p.m. on all days that school is in session (except on half-days). Parents can choose between a weekly or a daily rate for students who need less than five days or need to drop-in occasionally. Registration can be completed at any time during the year.

Students enrolled in Aftercare go directly from dismissal to the Summit Parkway Middle School cafeteria where AfterCare meets each day. Snack, free time, homework time, and outside play (weather permitting) are included in the daily routine. Appropriate behavior is expected from students and the school behavior code is enforced.

ALERT

Students at the Center do not participate in the district's ALERT program. The academic needs of all students are accommodated in each classroom. CFI participates in all district testing that qualifies students for gifted status during their enrollment at the Center. All students may qualify for gifted status while at CFI and, those who do qualify, are eligible for ALERT classes when they enter middle school. Students enrolled in ALERT who transfer to the Center, retain their gifted status.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION TO CFI

Any child who is eligible to enroll in grades K-5 in Richland School District Two may apply to attend the Center. Beginning in January, applications are accepted for the next school. Closing dates are at the end of January for kindergarten and grade 1-5 applications. Exact starting and closing dates for accepting applications are posted in the local newspaper and on the district and Center web pages. Elementary schools within the district are also provided information regarding application procedures. Anyone interested in submitting an application is strongly encouraged to attend an information session and participate in visitation day. Dates for these activities are also on the web page.

All applicants have an equal opportunity to be selected to attend the Center. Selection for the program is completed through a random process beginning shortly after the application period has closed. Selection continues until all 22 slots in each class have been filled or through the end of the first month of school.

Students currently enrolled at the Center are guaranteed continued admission in the program for the next school year pending response to the call for notification conducted by the Center. Incoming siblings of students currently enrolled at the Center for Inquiry are given priority status in the random selection process.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Teachers at CFI use a wide variety of assessment and evaluation strategies. For students in grades two through five, a narrative progress report rather than traditional report cards, are used to document growth at the end of the first and third quarters. A second progress report, based on the South Carolina State Curriculum Standards is provided at the end of the second and fourth quarters. Grades K/1 use the South Carolina Readiness Assessment along with parent conferences, a mid-year student-led conference, and a final narrative report. Student-led conferences to highlight academic progress are conducted annually for all parents.

CELL PHONES AND PAGING DEVICES

According to District Policy JICJ, students may not possess paging devices (including cell phones) while on school property or while attending a school sponsored or school related activity on or off school property during normal school hours.

Under special conditions (for example, a medical or security issue), Dr. Mueller may grant permission for a student to have a cell phone or paging device. Requests must be submitted in writing to Dr. Mueller. At no time should such devices be disruptive in the classroom or at recess.

If a student has a paging device or a cell phone on campus without permission, the device will be confiscated and returned to parents upon request. Items confiscated for subsequent offenses will be returned to parents at the end of the year. Parents must sign a contract when the device is returned outlining the conditions of the return.

DISCIPLINE PLAN

Children are required to respect the schoolwide rights and fulfill their responsibilities. If a child is consistently not fulfilling a particular responsibility, he or she will be referred to the principal's office. For students having consistent problems, a parent conference will be arranged and a plan for improvement will be created.

DRESS CODE POLICY

The Center for Inquiry observes the Dress Code Policy of the Richland School District Two. Consistent with the policy, elementary students are required to dress in a manner that is appropriate for a classroom setting. Additionally, footwear should be appropriate and safe for activities such as outdoor recess and physical education class. Issues related to the Dress Code Policy are dealt with on an individual basis. In general, parents of younger students, not the students themselves, are contacted. Older students, after a discussion with a CFI faculty member, are given an opportunity to make more appropriate choices without consequence. Continuous problems concerning Dress Code are addressed as a behavioral issue.

DROP-OFF, PICK-UP, AND PARKING

Center for Inquiry traffic may enter from either Rhame Road or from the gym side of the middle school. Entering from Rhame Road, parents may park in the designated parking spots or they may park along the curb opposite the office just beyond the "No Parking" signs.

Morning Drop-Off

Teachers and staff members are on duty from 7:35 a.m. until 8:10 a.m. daily to welcome students at the crosswalk located by the CFI marquee. Our fifth grade safety patrol members will assist by opening car doors and helping students across the street. Students are to exit from cars on the curb side only. Drivers on the back circle are reminded to watch for the safety patrol crossing guard and to stay in the car line at all times.

Any student who arrives after 8:10 a.m. must be signed in by a parent in the office and will be marked tardy.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Students cross the street at the crosswalk located under the awning (in front of the computer lab) for afternoon dismissal and wait on the sidewalk in an area that has been specifically marked for their grade level. Whenever possible, we prefer to cross all classes before beginning to load cars. As in the morning, fifth grade safety patrol members assist with helping children cross the street and with loading students into cars. All students must load from the curb side.

Cars are to stay in the car pool line and are not to pull around to pass another car. If, for any reason, there is an exception to this, a faculty member will instruct the driver to pull around. The area by the curb directly in front of the crosswalk is reserved for middle school drop off and pick up and for parent-teacher conversations.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE BY STUDENTS

No student regardless of age will possess, use, sell, purchase, barter, distribute, or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or other controlled substance (as defined in the Student Behavior Code—JCDA-R) in the following circumstances:

- On school property, including buildings, grounds, vehicles.
- At any school sponsored activity, function or event, whether on or off school grounds (including any place where an interscholastic athletic contest is taking place).
- En route to or from, or during any field trip.
- During any trip or activity sponsored by the board or under supervision of the board or its authorized agents.

In determining whether a student is under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, the student's appearance, manner and any statements made by the

student may be considered without regard to the amount of alcohol/controlled substance consumed.

No student will aid, abet, assist or conceal the possession, consumption, purchase or distribution of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage by any other student or students in any of the circumstances listed above.

All principals will cooperate fully with the law enforcement agencies and will report to them all information that would be considered pertinent or beneficial in their efforts to stop the sale, possession and use of controlled substances.

The administration will suspend students who violate this policy and recommend expulsion. The board has a zero tolerance for alcohol or controlled substances on and around school grounds and at school-sponsored activities. The board intends to expel all students involved in these illegal activities and may, under circumstances it deems appropriate, permanently expel students involved in drug/alcohol offenses. All students who are expelled for a violation of this policy will be required to enroll in and successfully complete a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program approved by the school district as a condition of their readmission to school.

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EARLY DISMISSAL

If a parent wishes to remove a student during the school day, the parent is required to come to the main office to pick up the child and sign the appropriate form. If the parent sends another person to pick up the student, written authorization is required. Proper I.D. may be requested by the office staff.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Bad Weather

CFI has both a weather radio and an emergency radio linking us directly to the district head of security. In general, there are two ways that decisions are made about leaving portables in the case of bad weather: 1) the district call for an evacuation of all portables in the district, or 2) Mr. Tanner, Summit Parkway Middle School principal, and I can make that call for our campus. Please know that we all strongly believe in "better safe than sorry" and we do not hesitate to bring all students to the main building of the middle school. CFI students are usually housed in the gym or the cafeteria. Also know that the middle school is a designated evacuation site for the Red Cross, thus the building is very safe and very secure.

Fire Drills, Bomb Threats, and Lock Downs

CFI participates in drills along with the middle school campus on a monthly basis. By law, we are required to hold fire drill, hurricane/tornado drills, and earthquake drills. As well, we practice building evacuations for bomb threats and building security for lock down situations. Teacher communication procedures are regularly reviewed and revised by CFI faculty and staff members. In the event that something highly unusual occurs on campus, every effort is made to notify parents by sending a note home with students, if appropriate. It is extremely important that parents do not call the school in the case of an emergency so as not to tie up phone lines or personnel.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the case of inclement weather, the district superintendent will decide if school will be closed. This decision will be broadcast on local radio and TV stations by 6:30 a.m. In the event of a late start, arrival times will be adjusted accordingly. For example, if a two-hour delay is announced, school will begin at 10:10 a.m. and morning supervision time will be at 9:35 a.m.

In the case of an emergency closing during the school day, the school and/or the district will make every effort to provide parents notification through the Phone Notification System. For this reason, it is important to be certain that the CFI office has updated emergency and cell phone numbers.

Please do not call the office to see if "we have heard anything." This ties up our phone lines and makes it very difficult for us to organize the release of students. CFI receives notification of an early dismissal within moments of the announcement appearing on the district web page. Remember, you can always get the most current information by accessing the district web site at www.richland2.org. (If you leave the web page open on your computer, remember to periodically hit the "refresh" button.) Remember that AfterCare is NOT available during early dismissal.

FIELD STUDIES:

- ✓ In the event of a school cancellation while students are on a field study, the buses will return to school immediately.
- ✓ If there is any delay in the opening of school, field studies will be cancelled for that day and rescheduled if possible.

END OF THE YEAR PACKETS

Progress Reports, Curriculum Reports, reports from Special Areas, end of the year materials, and supply lists for the upcoming school year are available for pick up approximately one week after the close of school. Picking up these packets saves the Center between \$300 and \$500 in postage costs. If it is not possible for a packet to be picked up within a week, arrangements can be made for another parent to pick up the packet, or it can be left in an outside location for after hours pick up. If possible, all packets should be picked up within a week.

GATHERINGS

An important feature of the Center for Inquiry's program is the development of a campus-wide community. One of the strategies used at CFI to support community is our School Gathering. To begin and end each week, all classes, K-5, come together for a Gathering.

A different class each week is responsible for conducting the Gathering, making daily announcements, and providing the Thought for the Week. At Monday Gathering, announcements are made and the Thought for the Week is presented. During Friday Gathering, the class highlights what they have learned during the week and connects their learning to their Thought for the Week.

Parents and friends are always welcome at Gatherings. Monday Gathering is held around 8:15 a.m. and Friday Gathering is held around 2:30 p.m. In particular, parents enjoy coming to Friday Gatherings when their child's class is presenting. Notice of upcoming Gatherings is given in class newsletters and in the *Center Connections* calendar.

GOING HOME WITH ANOTHER STUDENT OR WITH A DIFFERENT RIDE

If it is necessary for a student to go home with another student or with a different ride, a written note from the parent to the classroom teacher is required. In the event of an emergency, please call the main office as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that messages received at the end of the school day will be delivered in a timely manner.

GUEST PROCEDURES

All guests, including parents, grandparents, volunteers, and visitors, must report directly to the CFI office to sign-in and pick-up a green guest sticker. Upon completion of the visit, guests must sign out in the CFI office. Lunch guests are required to follow the same procedure.

HEALTH ISSUES

Parents are often concerned about communicable diseases and other health conditions that may be contagious in classroom settings. Parents should be aware that all Richland Two schools adhere to guidelines recommended by DHEC and our district's Health Advisory Council. The Health Advisory Council is a district committee comprised of district nurses, doctors, pediatricians, and representatives from community health organizations. CFI policies and procedures strictly adhere to these district health guidelines and are overseen by our nurse, Mrs. Elaine Arnold. In the event that a student does contract a condition that is contagious, parents are strongly advised to notify Dr. Mueller so that she may inform Mrs. Arnold. Information regarding any health concern is available from the office or from Mrs. Arnold.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

If a parent wishes to enroll their child in homebound instruction, Dr. Mueller should be contacted. Following the South Carolina Department of Education guidelines, the procedure for requesting medical homebound instruction is established by the school district. Therefore, parents should submit a request for homebound instruction to Dr. Mueller. State Board of Education Regulation 43-241 requires that a licensed physician certify that the student cannot attend school as a result of an accident or illness, despite the aid of transportation, and that he or she may profit from instruction given in a home or in a hospital. The physician must complete the state's medical homebound instruction form provided by the school district. Dr. Mueller may or may not then approve the student's participation in a program for medical homebound instruction.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Our school newsletter, the *Center Connections*, is sent home each Friday. It features school level announcements, the weekly menu, and a monthly calendar of events. Additionally, each classroom teacher regularly sends home an informative newsletter containing class news, information about upcoming class events, and curriculum information. The newsletters in K/1 also include weekly assignments. Periodically, newsletters in grades 2-5 will also include assignment information.

At the beginning of the year, each classroom teacher provides a communication plan for their parents which details times and methods for contacting them during non-school hours. Parent conferences should be arranged by contacting the teacher and setting up an appointment.

LIBRARY PROCEDURES

Because CFI students conduct a great deal of research, they need access to a wide range of resource materials. Therefore, classes make bi-weekly visits to the Sandhills branch of the Richland County Library adjacent to campus and inside the Summit subdivision. Students walk to the library and are chaperoned by at least two adults. All students are asked to apply for a Richland County Library card prior to their arrival at CFI. Library cards remain in classrooms during the school year for easy access and are returned to the students for use during the summer months.

Permission forms for the library trip, and other walking trips within the Summit area, are distributed at the beginning of the school year. Inclement weather or holidays may interrupt a class' regular library schedule. Teachers and staff make every effort to remind parents about returning library books; however, return of public library materials is the responsibility of the students and their families. The Center is not responsible for incurred library fines.

LUNCH FEES

Center students eat lunch each day in the Summit Parkway Middle School cafeteria. Students may purchase lunch or bring it from home. Lunch fees are \$1.75 daily and may be paid on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. To ensure accurate records, all lunch fees should be paid by check. Checks should be made payable to Summit Parkway Middle School.

Lunch fees cannot be charged in the cafeteria. If, after five days, payment has not been made, the parent will be contacted by the Cafeteria Manager. If parents have been contacted and payment has still not been received, an alternative meal may be provided to the students. The Richland School District Two approved alternative meal is a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or tuna fish sandwich with fruit and vegetable and a glass of milk. If after several parent contacts, there is still no response, the Principal will refer the matter to the Food Service Office who will forward the information to the Office of Financial Services to begin collection efforts.

If lunch fee payments present financial difficulties for any CFI student, parents are encouraged to complete an application to participate in the free and reduced meal program or to speak privately with Dr. Mueller about the application process. Applications for free and reduced meals are given to every student at the beginning of each school year and are available throughout the year in the office.

Parents and other special guests are always welcome to eat lunch with students in the cafeteria. The price for an adult lunch is \$2.75. Parents do not have to notify the school in advance if they wish to join their child's class for lunch.

MAP Testing

Students in grades 2-5 participate in the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) test. MAP is administered during fall and spring via a computer. Questions are randomly selected from a bank of test questions that are controlled for difficulty. Thus, all students in the same grade do not receive the same test. The computer program has the ability to adjust the overall difficulty of the test based on student responses. Teachers use the results along with the variety of strategies that they already use to assess student growth over time. Please do not feel that it is necessary to do any advance preparation for MAP. You will receive results from this testing when available.

MATs

Through its partnership with the University of South Carolina's College of Education, the Center hosts MATs (Master's level graduate students in Education) in each classroom. Students enjoy getting to know the MATs and they provide our students an opportunity to broaden and diversify their learning as they work alongside of other teachers. MATs are assigned to one grade level for the fall semester and a different grade level for the spring.

As well, USC interns from the Early Childhood and Elementary programs participate in classrooms on a regular basis offering additional instructional support.

MEDICATION

If a child must take medication while at school, the principal, principal's designee, or school nurse will administer the medication in compliance with district policy. Instructions, signed and dated by a parent or guardian, are required and must include: child's name, name of medication, amount and time to be given, purpose of medication, and termination date. A physician's signature is required for all prescription medication. Medication must be in the original pharmacy container and properly labeled. The parent/guardian assumes the responsibility of informing school personnel of any change in the medication routine or in the child's health status. Medication should be taken to the office upon arrival.

Tylenol, with proper documentation, may be sent to the office for emergencies. Medication containing aspirin or narcotics will not be given in the school setting. Self monitoring/self medicating is an option for students meeting the requirements of the school district's policy and whose parents/guardians want them to self monitor/self medicate. This does not include controlled medication.

Medication for field trips should be sent to the homeroom teacher the morning of the field trip. The medication should be in a pharmacy container with a note from the parent with the instructions.

OPENING/CLOSING TIMES

School begins at 8:10 a.m. and ends at 2:50 p.m. Students may go into their classrooms at 7:50 a.m. Students are not permitted on campus without a parent prior to 7:35 a.m.

PACT TESTING

All students in South Carolina, grades 3-5 participate in the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT), a South Carolina testing program designed to measure whether students meet challenging state standards for student achievement in the areas of Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. The scores that a student can receive on PACT are Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced. The PACT tests are administered in spring and results are usually sent home with the first progress report in the fall. Parents of any student scoring a Below Basic on one or more sections of PACT are contacted by the student's teacher for a conference where the teacher will discuss instructional strategies that they feel would be especially beneficial for the school year.

As parents review their child's scores, they should consider them along with all of the other information that you receive during the year concerning academic progress—progress reports, other assessment information, performance on school work, and feedback from the teacher. PACT is one more important piece of information about your child's progress.

RESEARCH AT CFI

Research is ongoing at the Center and contributes to instructional practice. Faculty and students collaborate with university researchers to investigate the nature of inquiry and learning. Research proposals received from individuals not employed at CFI must be approved by Center faculty and must adhere to the Richland Two and Center guidelines.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Rights

1. I have a right to work and play in a safe and organized environment.
2. I have a right to be happy and to be treated with kindness and respect.
3. I have the right to learn new things.
4. I have a right to be myself and express my opinions.
5. I have a right to hear and to be heard.

Student Responsibilities

Our Rights and Responsibilities serve as a code for living that we all follow. Each grade level and special area class develops student responsibilities that are developmentally appropriate for achieving each of the student rights. These responsibilities function as guidelines for living and learning together. Each student has the responsibility to honor, to respect, and to uphold these guidelines.

At the beginning of each year, the Rights and Responsibilities are reviewed in each class and they are sent home for parents to review and to sign. Below are a few examples from the classroom lists that result from the student discussions about the Rights and Responsibilities.

Listen with your eyes, ears, and heart.

Treat others with kindness and respect.

Use good manners.

Say you're sorry when you make a mistake—accept apologies.

Help others to learn.

I have a responsibility not to pick on others.

I have a responsibility not to start arguments in the first place.

I have a responsibility to not laugh at someone who gets a wrong answer.

I have a responsibility to take care of what I use and return things where I find them.

Parent Rights

It is the right of parents or guardians at the Center for Inquiry to:

1. Visit their child's classroom at any time.
2. Be informed of the activities and learning that is occurring in their child's classroom via periodic newsletters from their child's teacher or by attending Curriculum Night meetings.
3. Be provided information and support regarding inquiry-based interdisciplinary curriculum.

Parent Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians at the Center for Inquiry to:

1. Be involved in their child's education by contributing their time, treasure, and talents to support the Mission Statement of the Center for Inquiry.
2. Attend student-led conferences, academic conferences, and any other conferences requested by their child's teacher.
3. Collaborate with faculty and students in guiding students in their inquiry.
4. Communicate in a timely manner both verbally and in writing with faculty regarding their child's development as a learner.

SECURITY

Every effort is made to ensure that CFI is a safe and secure environment. CFI enforces a sign-in procedure for all volunteers and visitors. Our office maintains walk-talkies with SPMS and an emergency radio with the district that is also a direct link to the Richland County 911 service. Video cameras are located at SPMS which also film at CFI. All students and staff members participate in monthly campus-wide drills. Additionally, CFI shares a School Resource Office from the Richland County Sheriff's Department who is easily accessible for curriculum assistance or emergency situations. Anyone who is not listed on the Family Information Sheet to sign out or pick up a child may not remove a child from campus without direct communication from the child's parent or guardian.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment of students by District employees, other students, or third parties associated with schools is prohibited. Employees are also prohibited from engaging in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature towards students. All employees, students and third parties associated with schools must avoid any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. The District will take prompt, appropriate and responsive action to end sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature, and to prevent its reoccurrence. Teachers and school administrators are expected to use judgment and common sense which are important elements of a proper response to a particular allegation of sexual harassment of a student or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature directed towards a student.

Any student who believes he/she has been subjected to sexual harassment or inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature is encouraged to report the matter to his/her parents and to a teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator at the school. The student is also encouraged to file a written complaint in accordance with Richland District Two's Board Policy JI, and its accompanying Administrative Rule.

STUDENTS WHO FILE A COMPLAINT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT OF A SEXUAL NATURE WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO RETALIATION OR REPRISAL IN ANY FORM. ANY EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT WHO IS FOUND TO HAVE ENGAGED IN SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT OF A SEXUAL NATURE WILL BE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY ACTION, UP TO AND INCLUDING TERMINATION IN THE CASE OF AN EMPLOYEE, OR EXPULSION IN THE CASE OF A STUDENT, AND ALL OTHER APPROPRIATE STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO CORRECT OR RECTIFY THE SITUATION.

SNACKS

Students in all grades eat a snack during the day that is supplied from home. We request that snacks be healthy and easy for the student to manage. Leftover snacks may not be stored in the classroom.

SPECIAL AREAS

Weekly classes in art, music, physical education, technology, and Spanish are offered at CFI. Both the specific content of special area as well as the interrelationships with the core curriculum areas is studied.

Special Area classes at CFI were developed in conjunction with our USC partnership and were originally taught by USC professors with assistance from their masters and doctoral level interns. Over time, CFI has developed its own part-time staff of Special Area teachers, many of whom are products of, or are still connected to, our USC Partnership.

Funding of technology and Spanish instruction is, in part, dependent upon the CFI Annual Fund Drive.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION

Parents are a vital part of a student's behavior and are encouraged to have a conference with the teacher to address behavior issues as they arise. However, if a student's behavior is continuously distributive, or if any student exhibits an extreme behavior or one that is harmful to another child, a suspension may be warranted. Suspensions may include in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension. The particulars of an in-school suspension are decided upon by Dr. Mueller in consultation with the teacher and, oftentimes, the student. Parents are notified through a phone call or as appropriate for the particular situation.

In the case of an out-of-school suspension, a parent will be notified immediately by Dr. Mueller or by her designee. A parent is required to come directly to school to pick up the child. Children who have been suspended are not allowed to participate in any Center activities during the time of their suspension. Whenever possible, the student is expected to make up missed academic work. Richland District Two Board policy requires that the principal recommend expulsion for students in grades one through five who are suspended three times during the school year.

TARDY POLICY

After 8:10 a.m., students will be marked tardy. Parents should make every effort to have their children at CFI no later than 8:05 each morning. Morning transitions can often be a concern for some students. Establishing a regular routine that ensures prompt arrival at school each morning helps students be prepared to be responsible members of their classroom learning community. A parent conference may be requested in the case of excessive tardies.

TECHNOLOGY USE

Each year, students and parents are required to review and sign the Acceptable Use Policy for Technology. Inappropriate use of technology can result in a student's right to access technology on campus. Parents are encouraged to be educated about and to monitor their child's use of technology at home.

TRANSPORTATION

Because the Center enrolls students from across the district, parents are expected to provide transportation for their children. The Center can be conveniently accessed from Rhame Road or through the Summit Parkway Middle School gym parking lot.

VISITATION

Center families are encouraged to visit and participate in campus activities on a regular basis. Families are not considered "Visitors" but still must follow the sign in procedures discussed in Guest Procedures.

Because the Center is nationally recognized for its innovative instructional practices, visitations are held for interested educators and pre-service teachers. CFI visitors are required to register in advance with the office. Visitors are only permitted on campus during designated visitor days. A typical visitation day includes an orientation, a tour of campus, classroom visitations, and a debriefing session with a CFI faculty member.

One visitation day is specifically designated for parents who are interested in applying to CFI for the upcoming school year. Pre-registration for these times is not required. The date of this visitation is publicized on the district and CFI web sites. It is also available by calling the school district office or the main office at CFI.

WEB PAGES AND PICTURES

The Center for Inquiry maintains a school web that is managed by our Technology Specialist. The site contains information about the school, important dates for upcoming events, faculty information, and class web pages.

Student work and pictures often appear on a class web page. It is the policy of our school that a parent permission form is sent home at the beginning of each requesting approval for inclusion of pictures and work on the web site. It is also the Center's policy that at no time will a child's first and last name be used in conjunction with their photograph.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CFI

If a parent or guardian wishes to withdraw a student from CFI regardless of reason, a district Magnet Withdrawal Form must be completed and signed. Additionally, an exit conference with Dr. Mueller must be completed. Student records will not be released until both of these requirements are satisfied.

NICE TO KNOW

Annual Fund Drive
Author Visits
Birthdays and Other Parties
Book Fairs
Center Connections
Curriculum Nights
Faculty and Staff Members for 2006-2007
Fall Festival
Field Studies
Fundraising
Graduation
Grandparent's Day
Inquiry-based Learning
It's A Grand Day
Opening and Closing Picnic
Passing of the Cans
Parent Resource Library
Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP)
Parent Teacher Partnership Board for 2006—2007
School Improvement Council (SIC)
School Improvement Council Members for 2006—2007
School Pictures
Skate Nights
Splash Day
T-shirts
Teacher Newsletters
Thought for the Week
Timeline of Schoolwide Activities
Volunteering
Yearbook

NICE TO KNOW

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

During the fall, the Parent Teacher Partnership begins its Annual Fund Drive to address the needs of the Center. CFI families feel strongly that an Annual Fund Drive rather than door-to-door product sales is more in keeping with the Center's philosophy.

All contributions are collected to support educational needs and other student activities not funded by the state or by the school district. The Annual Fund Drive supports foreign language and technology instruction, classroom and teaching materials, student yearbooks, author visits, student scholarships, school celebrations, teacher training, and other activities.

Reports of the progress of the Annual Drive Fund are periodically featured in the *Center Connections*. While it is preferable that donations to the Annual Fund Drive be committed during the Annual Fund Drive, they are accepted at any time during the school year. A listing of companies which match individual donations is also available in the CFI office. Additional strategies that CFI employs to raise funds are discussed in the "Fundraising" section.

AUTHOR VISITS

Thanks to parent funding provided by the Parent Teacher Partnership, the Center hosts a visit each year by a professional author or artist. The visiting author spends a day on campus providing presentations and workshops to students. Every effort is made to make the author's books available for sale and autographing at the end of the day so that parents may attend the autographing session if they wish. Profits from book sales support future author visits and other Parent Teacher Partnership activities.

BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER PARTIES

The Center's guide to parties helps to ensure that birthday and other celebrations remain fun and do not inadvertently result in hurt feelings. With this in mind, parents are required to send party invitations directly to individual children's homes, rather than distributing them in school. We do make an exception to this policy when the entire class is invited. The office staff is happy to help you obtain addresses or phone numbers not published in the Center Directory.

BOOK FAIRS

Twice each year the Center hosts a Book Fair on campus. A browsing time is scheduled for each class during the first day. A complete listing of the books is sent home just prior, or on the first day, of the Fair. To make the Book Fair convenient for everyone, hours include morning as well as after school times. Proceeds from book sales support the Annual Fund and Parent Teacher Partnership activities.

CENTER CONNECTIONS

Every Friday, our weekly newsletter, the *Center Connections* is published and sent home with students. This newsletter contains information and announcements about upcoming schoolwide events. A calendar with important dates is also sent home on a monthly basis.

CURRICULUM NIGHTS

Once each nine weeks, the Center holds a Curriculum Night. These evenings are important to understanding the inquiry curriculum, provide parents with knowledge and experience about classroom strategies, and allow students an opportunity to showcase their learning. Curriculum Nights usually take place in classrooms and often give families a demonstration of a specific aspect of the Center curriculum. Students are encouraged to come with their families. Students and younger siblings must remain in the classrooms with their families during the evening since child supervision is not available. We appreciate your support of your children and their learning.

FACULTY AND STAFF MEMBERS FOR 2006-2007

Listed below are the faculty and staff of CFI for the school year. They consist of the full-time instructional staff, part-time Special Area teachers and AfterCare staff, as well as our USC University Partner and MATs (see a discussion of MATs in the Policies and Procedures section).

Dr. Lyn Mueller, lead teacher
Mrs. Angie DeBeaugrine, school secretary
Miss Jennifer Buch, instructional assistant

Mrs. Jennifer Barnes, kindergarten teacher
Mrs. Jaretta Belcher, kindergarten assistant
Mrs. Dori Gilbert, first grade teacher
Mr. Tim O'Keefe, second grade teacher
Mrs. Susanne Pender, third grade teacher
Mrs. Julie Waugh, fourth grade teacher
Mr. Brent Petersen, fifth grade teacher

Mrs. Susan Shriver, physical education teacher
Mrs. Becky Watkins, art and Spanish teacher
Mrs. Martha Edwards, music teacher
Mrs. Sherry Grosso, technology teacher

Mrs. Elaine Arnold, nurse
Mrs. Connie Steele, speech pathologist
Mrs. Robin Young, resource teacher
Dr. Bob Cantrell, school psychologist

Ms. Tashiba Nicole Days, AfterCare Director

Dr. Heidi Mills, USC University Partner
Ms. Amanda Cauley, MAT Intern
Ms. Jennifer Johnson, MAT Intern
Mrs. Kathy Sellers, MAT Intern
Ms. Lacey Sanders, MAT Intern
Ms. Lindsay Christmas, MAT Intern
Ms. Ashley Curtain, MAT Intern

FALL FESTIVAL

Every October, CFI holds an Outdoor Fall Festival on a Friday afternoon organized by our Homeroom Moms. Students always enjoy participating in the games, relay races, and other outdoor activities. The special fall snacks are always a big hit as well. Often classes decorate the outsides of their classrooms or participate in a special activity during the week of Fall Festival. All parents are invited to come and Homeroom Moms certainly welcome any extra hands. In the event of rain, Fall Festival is rescheduled to the following week.

FIELD STUDIES

Center students are fortunate to engage in many field studies. Field studies are selected by the teachers and the students to complement aspects of the curriculum or of student inquiry. During fourth and fifth grade, students have the opportunity to attend an overnight field study. This trip is scheduled at least six months in advance and parents receive information regarding the trip and fee payment several months prior to the trip. For any overnight trip, there is also a special parent meeting and question and answer session that parents are encouraged to attend.

To begin the year, the entire school participates in a common field study. This trip encourages community across the grade levels and helps new students feel comfortable at the Center.

Field studies are a regular part of the curriculum at CFI. Because of this, we do not allow students to bring electronic games or other similar devices on the study.

Most field trips incur a minimal cost. Every effort is made to keep costs low. If, for any reason, a family has difficulty with a field study expense, they are encouraged to speak privately with a teacher or with the lead teacher.

FUNDRAISING

While the main source of revenue for raising additional funds is CFI's Annual Fund Drive (see discussion in previous section). We do supplement our Annual Fund with fundraising activities that do not involve door-to-door product sales. Below is a list of activities in which we participate throughout the year. Participation in fundraising activities is voluntary. Questions about any of these activities may be directed to the chair of PTP's Fundraising Committee or to the office staff.

Box Tops for Education --Families collect and bring in "Box Tops" from specially marked General Mills products. These are usually sent to the company twice each year. Kindergarten and first grade classes often sort and count the box tops during math workshop to prepare for shipment. Notification of collection deadlines are published in the *Center Connections*.

Cards from Local Stores--Local stores often donate a small portion of sales to the school. Any cards that are used for check out scanning are distributed.

Kroger and Publix--Scan a card at check out with precoded ID no. for CFI.

Office Depot--Report "Center for Inquiry" at check-out.

Local Restaurant Nights--A certain portion of sales from CFI families who eat at or drive through restaurants on a particular evening are donated to CFI. Restaurants who are frequent contributors to CFI include:

Chick Fil-A--Usually held on Curriculum Nights and Opening and Closing Picnic. You must have coupon that designates CFI for the school to get credit. Coupons are distributed just prior to, or on the day of, school events.

Beef O'Bradys: This local restaurant donates sales every Monday night for participating CFI families. A coupon is not necessary. Families simply tell their server to put "CFI" on the check.

Bruster's Ice Cream, Marble Slab Creamry, Sonic: A percentage of sales from a certain time period, on a certain day are donated to CFI.

Recycling--Empty printer and toner cartridges and old cell phones are collected in the office for reimbursement from an educational corporation. Families may want to consider collecting these items from relatives or from their work places. Items may be turned into the office.

Skate Nights--These are scheduled 3 to 4 times each year at Skateland in Pontiac. CFI receives a portion of the proceeds from Skateland.

Book Fairs--Fairs are held twice each year and are coordinated through R.L. Bryan. CFI receives 25% of the sales. Often families use this opportunity to purchase books for the classroom in honor of a student's birthday or as a holiday gift. This helps to build classroom libraries and provides a 25% donation as well. Teachers usually register a "Wish List" at the check out table.

Online Sales--For those interested in Sally Foster products, online sales are now available. Information about accessing the website and the CFI code (85736) is released in the Center Connections and is available in the office. Extended families and out of town friends can also purchase products using the CFI code through January 15, 2005.

CFI Sales--These products are sold as a particular interest and as a service to our families. Profit margins are kept to a minimum to assist all families who wish to take advantage of these items.

T-Shirts--Each year the school produces a t-shirt, available in different colors, with all the student, faculty, staff, and MAT names listed on the back. Most students wear their shirts on field studies or at other times when CFI is represented in the community. Fridays also seem to be a favorite time for wearing them. The shirt is printed after the 30th day of school when the school roster is finalized. Some families purchase new shirts each year and others buy one to last

several years. Parent sizes are available as well--great for accompanying classes on field studies. Scholarships based on financial need are available for t-shirt purchases. To request a scholarship, families should speak with Dr. Mueller.

School Logo Items --Additional items with the CFI logo are also available. It Items range from hats to umbrellas, from golf shirts to tote bags. The selection of items is rotated each year to provide families with as many products as possible.

Art Product Sales--During art class, students have an opportunity to create a piece of art work that can be put on stationary or on a mug. CFI utilizes a company that provides every student with a free magnet featuring their art work regardless of whether or not their family wishes to order additional products. We find that CFI families like to give these products as holiday or Mother's Day gifts and make every effort to accommodate this time schedule.

GRADUATION

At the close of the school year, the Center hosts a special celebration for its fifth graders. Because many of these students have been on campus for six years, this is a very special event. All students attend this celebration and the fourth grade students participate in the ceremony along with the fifth graders. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the fourth grade traditionally hosts a reception for the fifth graders and their families.

Graduation takes place in the outdoor arena. All Center families are welcome to attend. In the event of rain, the ceremony is held in the Summit Parkway Middle School. Because of numerous end-of-the-year activities at SPMS, the starting time may vary slightly. Therefore, it is important to check the *Center Connections*.

GRANDPARENT'S DAY

See "It's A Grand Day."

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Students engage in inquiry when they are invited to pose and investigate questions or issues they find compelling. Through this investigative process, broad themes, concepts, or topics of study emerge with all participants in the classroom functioning as teachers and learners. Teachers align this process with the skills, standards, and goals appropriate for the age level of the students.

Students are encouraged to explore, think, ask questions, and solve problems through the perspectives of mathematicians, scientists, historians, artists, musicians, readers, and writers. The application of these multiple perspectives broadens student knowledge and fosters an appreciation of the disciplines.

This effective approach supports and challenges students and provides them with opportunities to develop ownership in their learning. Additionally, strong community bonds are built between students, teachers, and parents of Center families.

IT'S A GRAND DAY

CFI is pleased to welcome grandparents and other special friends and relatives on this special day. Through the *Center Connections*, families are invited to submit addresses to the main office for invitations to this event. Visitors are invited to an informal reception with an overview of the Center and then invited into classrooms. We close the visit with a schoolwide Gathering.

NEW FAMILY RELATIONS

Each year we welcome new families to CFI. Prospective parents are encouraged to come to the Information Session and to the Classroom Visitation offered in January. After the lottery, new families are required to participate in a Commitment Conference with Dr. Mueller that outlines major features of the Center for Inquiry. Parents/guardians have one week from the date of this conference to secure a slot for the next school year. Shortly after spring break, CFI mails copies of the school's weekly newsletter, *Center Connections*, to its new families. New families are also welcome to attend any Center functions during the spring. New families are contacted by our New Family Relations Director and invited to the Closing Picnic. As well, new students receive correspondence from their new teachers during the summer. New families are encouraged to contact the office with any questions during the summer. On the first day of school, CFI hosts "Coffee & Kleenex" in honor of our new kindergarten families which is coordinated by our New Families Relations Director. This is a wonderful time for CFI adults to visit with "old" friends and welcome our new ones.

OPENING AND CLOSING PICNIC

One of the great joys at CFI is our family picnics. We begin and close each year with a family picnic. The Opening Picnic is a time for new families to be welcomed to our community and for old families to reunite. The Closing Picnic honors the graduating fifth graders and features songs and well-wishes from each of the classes.

PASSING OF THE CANS

During the month of November, all classes at the Center participate in a Canned Food Drive. On the day of the Food Drive, all the food is brought to the arena for the Passing of the Cans. Students pass each item of food from hand to hand until it reaches the truck where the food is loaded for delivery. As always, parents and Center families are welcome to join this important and fun event.

PARENT RESOURCE LIBRARY

Books and information are available to the parents about the inquiry philosophy and a variety of topics related to education. These are located in the bookcase in the main office. Parents may take out materials by signing them out and are asked to return the materials within a two week time period.

PARENT TEACHER PARTNERSHIP (PTP)

All families are members of the Parent Teacher Partnership. There are no dues to pay. Updates of PTP and SIC (School Improvement Council) business is provided during the first 10-15 minutes of Curriculum Nights by members of the PTP or SIC Boards.

All families are welcome to participate as committee members, committee chairs, or officers. The PTP Executive Board is comprised of the officers, heads of the PTP standing committees, teacher representatives, and the lead teacher. They meet on the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the office conference room unless otherwise stated on the monthly calendar. General elections for officers are held during the spring of each year. Committee chairs are appointed.

If you are interested in serving on a committee, you may contact the committee chair directly or indicate your preference on the Volunteer Form distributed to all families during the first weeks of school. Even grandparents are invited to volunteer!

PARENT TEACHER PARTNERSHIP BOARD FOR 2006-2007

Suzanne O'Dell, President
Pam Walters, Vice President
Cindy Charles, Secretary
Babette Renfro, Treasurer
Lyn Mueller, Lead Teacher
Dori Gilbert, Faculty Rep

Ashley Fakoury, Fundraising
Beth Ashworth & Melinda Daniels, Volunteers
John Weidner, Technology
Charlotte Schroeder, Grounds
Wanda Mujica, Public Relations
Brent Petersen, Faculty Rep

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL (SIC)

The School Improvement Council is comprised of elected and appointed members who represent parents and the community, teacher representatives, the lead teacher, and a representative from USC. SIC meets on the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the office conference room unless otherwise stated on the monthly calendar. Elections are held at the beginning of each school year. All families are eligible to vote. A call for nominations and election ballots are sent home through the *Center Connections* newsletter.

Each year, the SIC set goals for the Center in relation to the goals set by the Richland Two School Board. Goals are set according to the following four areas of priorities:

1. Excellence in Student Learning
2. Quality Teachers and Personnel
3. School, Parents, Students and Community Partnerships
4. Providing a Safe and Secure Environment

Past examples of SIC goals for CFI achieved are listed below. The complete listing of the current SIC goals and objectives is published annually in the *Center Connections* and available in the office.

- ④ Initiate foreign language instruction.
- ④ Promote the philosophy of inquiry-based learning with the next generation of CFI parents.
- ④ Emphasize the need to support the professional development of the CFI faculty.
- ④ Develop an expanded approach to fundraising.
- ④ Oversee the volunteer indoor and outdoor cleaning days.
- ④ Obtain quality air filters and vacuum cleaners for classroom use.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS FOR 2006-2007

Babette Renfro	Beck Sullivan
Steve Thompson	Debbi Bailey
Suzanne O'Dell	Mikki Gay
Jeri Stanek	Rachel Bourke
Jennifer Barnes	Julie Waugh
Lyn Mueller	

SCHOOL PICTURES

Twice each year a photographer comes to CFI to take student pictures. Parents receive information concerning dates and payments for these pictures about a week in advance. In the spring, class pictures are also taken during the photo sessions and are available for purchase. Dates for pictures are always listed in the *Center Connections* monthly calendar.

SKATE NIGHTS

Three or four times a year CFI participates in a Skate Night at SkateLand located just down the road in Pontiac. Participation in Skate Nights is optional. There is a cost for skating and for renting skates. Parents are expected to supervise their children and to provide transportation. CFI families enjoy this opportunity to visit and skate together. Remember, parents are always welcome to skate! Proceeds from Skate Nights are used to supplement the Annual Fund Drive.

SPLASH DAY

Each May, CFI holds a Splash Day organized by our Homeroom Moms. Students always enjoy participating in the water games, sponge relay races, splash a teacher, and other outdoor activities. Students change into their bathing suits or wear old clothes that can get wet and dirty. Beach towels, shoes that can get wet, and sun screen are also a must! This is certainly the messiest day of CFI's year!!! Many parents come out to get wet, take pictures, and generally participate in the "mess." Homeroom Moms certainly welcome extra hands. In the event of lightning or heavy rain, we make every effort to reschedule Splash Day.

T-SHIRTS

Each year the Center produces a new CFI t-shirt that includes all of the names of the students, faculty, staff, and MATs listed on the back. Orders for these t-shirts, along with other CFI logo items are taken early in the fall. While we do receive a small amount of profit from the sales, school spirit, not fund-raising, is the goal of this activity. (See additional discussion under "Fundraising.")

TEACHER NEWSLETTERS

See "Home/School Communication Plan" listed in the Policies and Procedures section.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

The Thought for the Week is presented each week by the class in charge of Gathering for that week. (See discussion of Gathering in the Policies and Procedures section.) Thoughts are developed by the students and generally grow out of curriculum content, social issues related to learning, or to world issues. These Thoughts serve as invitations to the rest of the school and provide a weekly focus for sharing learning across the grade levels. Thoughts for the Week are regularly published in the *Center Connections*. We invite all of our families to think about, discuss, and share these Thoughts at home as well.

TIMELINE OF SCHOOLWIDE ACTIVITIES

Following is a list of what typically happens at CFI in a month by month format so that families have an idea of the yearly activities. Obviously there may be changes as the year progresses. Individual class activities may vary. Therefore, it is important to read the class newsletters and the *Center Connections* for additional information. See the *Center Connections* for exact dates.

July

K/1 State-mandated testing

August

Opening Picnic

September

Schoolwide Field Study

CFI T-Shirt and Logo Item Orders Taken

Curriculum Night #1

Fall MAP Testing (grades 2-5)

October

Annual Fund Drive

Individual School Pictures

Narrative Progress Reports (grades 2-5)

Fall Festival

November

District Six-Trait Writing Assessment (gr. 2-5)

It's A Grand Day Celebration

Curriculum Night #2

Passing of the Cans

American Education Week

December

Book Fair

Holiday Music Celebration

Winter Break

January

Standards-based Progress Reports
K/1 Parent Conferences Held
Curriculum Night #3
Kindergarten and 1-5 Application Period
Information Sessions and Visitation for prospective parents

February

Student-led conferences
Commitment Forms due for 07-08 from existing families
Lottery held for 07-08

March

Curriculum Night #4
Narrative Progress Reports (gr. 2-5)
Fourth and Fifth Grade Overnight Trip
Spring MAP testing (gr. 2-5)
District Six-Trait Writing Assessment (gr. 2-5)
Individual and class pictures
CFI Family Dance
Author Visit

April

Spring Break

May

Book Fair
PACT testing (gr. 3-5)
Splash Day
Closing Picnic
Fifth Grade Graduation
Pick up End of Year packets after school closes

VOLUNTEERING

"Many hands make light work."

There are many, many opportunities for becoming involved with your child's education at CFI. We welcome all forms of volunteering, from providing refreshments for a class party to providing adult edits during a class Writer's Workshop, from eating lunch with a class to helping print out pictures from disc on your home computer. CFI highly encourages all families to be involved. We feel strongly that we are a community and that we all benefit from supporting each other!

If you come to volunteer during the school day, remember to sign in at the office and to log in your time. We would also appreciate knowing any off campus volunteer time. Volunteer hours are reported to the school district office at the end of each school year.

YEARBOOK

Each year the Center compiles a student-produced yearbook or an anthology of student work for publication. Donations to the Annual Fund provide the funding for this publication; thus, there is no charge to the students for the yearbook. The yearbook is distributed at school. If a student is no longer at the Center when yearbooks are distributed, the book will either be mailed or delivered to them.
