

Catonsville Middle School
A Blue Ribbon School of Excellence
2301 Edmondson Avenue
Catonsville, MD 21228
(410) 887-0803

January 17, 2008

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Our primary goal at Catonsville Middle School is to provide a high quality education to every student. Academic excellence has been a long-standing tradition at this school, and our students have a reputation for being respectful, responsible, and well mannered. These qualities prepare our students for success in high school and beyond. At this point in the year, we want to ensure that our students will continue to meet or exceed the high expectations that their families and teachers have set for them. One way that we can prepare our students for success is to teach them good work habits, and this includes being punctual. During the past few weeks, the staff has noticed an increase in the number of students who are arriving late to classes. Another concern has been an increase in the number of students who are consuming candy, gum, and/or flavored beverages (*e.g.*, Gatorade) in the hallways and in classrooms. Since our school's \$6 million renovation project is nearing completion, it is imperative that we maintain the condition of our building, furniture, lockers, and floors. Although these concerns may seem to be minor, experience has taught us that minor concerns can lead to major concerns if they are not addressed. For decades Catonsville Middle School has had rules in place to promote prompt attendance to class and to prohibit students from consuming candy, gum, and flavored beverages in our hallways and classrooms.

At the January meeting of the school's leadership team, the administration, grade level managers, and department chairs developed a plan to enforce these school rules. We are sending you this letter because we need your support to make this plan a success.

As of Tuesday, January 22, 2008, students will be expected to conform to the following policies:

1. Students are expected to arrive to each class before the late bell rings. They have four to five minutes for each class change, which is more than enough time to make it from any one point on our campus to any other point on our campus—even to and from the trailers, gymnasium, or cafeteria.
2. Any student who needs to speak with a teacher after class must ask that teacher to write a pass in his/her agenda book. Once the student has a signed pass from a staff member in his/her agenda book, the receiving teacher will admit the student to class after the late bell without a consequence.
3. No student shall be permitted to consume candy, gum, or flavored beverages in the hallways or classrooms at Catonsville Middle School.

Students who do not comply with the rules will receive consequences, as follows:

1. First offense: Lunch detention with the teacher
2. Second offense: Grade level detention (after school)
3. Third offense: Grade level detention (after school)
4. Subsequent offenses: Office referral

If a student receives a grade level detention, it will be held on a Thursday afternoon when an activity bus has been scheduled. The detention will begin at 3 PM and end when the activity bus arrives at approximately 4:15 PM. Parents will be notified at least 24 hours in advance of the student's detention if it is an after-school detention.

Grade level managers will monitor student compliance with these policies at their weekly grade level meetings. If a student is assigned more than one detention in a single day, the grade level manager may elect to write an office referral at that time.

While we want school to be an enjoyable experience for our students, our primary goal is to educate them. These policies have been in place for years, but they will be enforced with increased vigor beginning Tuesday, January 22, 2008. We believe this plan will maximize instructional time and promote a clean and orderly school environment. Of course, we cannot do this alone, which is why we are sending this letter home to ask for your support. You can help us in this endeavor by doing the following:

- Make sure your child understands the policies (listed above) and the consequences for not adhering to them.
- Ensure that your child brings his/her agenda book to school every day.
- Encourage your child to leave candy and gum at home.

Thank you in advance for your support as we strive to (a) decrease the number of students who are arriving late to class and (b) preserve the cleanliness of the building by prohibiting the consumption of candy, gum, and beverages (other than water) in the hallways and classrooms. By enforcing these rules, we will maintain the orderly learning environment that you have come to expect from Catonsville Middle School.

Sincerely,

Michael G. Thorne
Principal