Greetings from Cherokee Heights,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as Cherokee Heights Middle School’s principal. Cherokee Heights is a vibrant school with a diverse community of learners. Our mission is to support the needs of all scholars, both socially and academically. I am extremely proud of the progress we have made. We’ve built a strong foundation to continue this success, led by our students, staff, faculty, community partners and families. Our future is both exciting and bright!

Understanding that each student comes to Cherokee Heights with different learning styles and life experiences impacts the way in which they learn. As a result, we are dedicated to ensuring that each child has a highly qualified teacher who utilizes proven research-based strategies for the purpose of enhancing student growth and success. Believing that every child can learn if given the opportunity is at the root of our mission. At Cherokee Heights, we are not only interested in academic performance. A safe, caring and warm school climate is also very important to us. Parents are essential in making sure we have a safe and caring culture at CHMS. We need your help by consistently talking to your child(ren) about positive expectations and the importance of making wise decisions. This sends a strong message to all students that families and school are united in our efforts to provide a positive school climate.

An additional reminder to parents regarding transitioning to middle school
Life itself is an exaggeration during the period of time that children leave the security of their local elementary until they survive the first year of high school. Grades six through nine force students to confront life when they are most uncomfortable with their own bodies and minds. The physical awkwardness accompanying the onset of puberty, the unquenchable desire for peer acceptance and the need to test the authority of parents, adults and society’s norms create turmoil which makes each day a struggle for survival. This additional reminder is to let parents know we truly need your help with making sure we collaboratively tackle these concerns in order to ensure your child has the best middle school years. Together we can do it.

Helpful suggestions for parents
Oftentimes, prior to the beginning of a new school year, parents ask for advice in helping their children get off to a good start in school. Research shows that an overwhelming number of students feel their teachers do an awesome job teaching subject matter; nevertheless, parents can play a vital role by ensuring students develop strong study and organizational skills.

The following ideas come from several articles, and I believe they will provide some useful suggestions:

• Help children use a planning calendar and notebook to keep track of weekly, monthly or large projects.
• Make sure your child understands how to use a combination lock. It is very important to know.
• Complete homework tasks in some order of priority. Sometimes, it’s best to do the least favorite task first.
• Encourage children to break down large complex tasks into manageable pieces.
• Encourage young readers to use all the clues available to them while reading headlines, pictures, captions, charts, tables and graphs.
• A discussion with children after reading a book or article helps with comprehension. Ask your child to explain what the story was about, why or why not if it interested them, and perhaps how it might relate to their own lives.

In closing, we look forward to serving all students. We are committed to providing the very best educational experience possible. Our focus is on continuous improvement, strong instructional strategies, diminishing unwanted behavior and most of all student achievement. By logging on to Cherokee Heights’ website, you will find schedules, newsletters, contact information, lunch menus and other important school information. Please don’t hesitate to contact me with questions.

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About our school
Cherokee Heights Middle School is a dynamic learning community dedicated to providing all students with a strong
curriculum, leadership and support. Students are expected to use problem-solving skills, respect diversity, develop
self-confidence and make a positive contribution to the school environment. We work toward the following goals:
• All students will be prepared to successfully complete academically challenging courses at the next level.
• All students will use social skills that demonstrate responsibility to self, to others and to the community.
• All students will fully participate in classroom practices that recognize and incorporate student diversity.
• All families in the Cherokee Heights community will be an integral part of the educational process.

Cherokee Heights is located on 13 picturesque acres in the Nakoma neighborhood. It is near the Arboretum, Vilas
Park and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Cherokee Heights population is comprised of students from nine
west area neighborhoods.

Cherokee Heights Equity Vision Statement
Staff and students will work to understand and disrupt patterns and beliefs with regard to race and equity in order to
change practices to ensure all students are valued and challenged at high levels.

Goals
1. Implement a curriculum that is highly engaging and intentional.
2. Have high expectations for all students (Growth Mindset).
3. Use Research-Based Instructional Strategies, which acknowledge variance.
4. Administer different forms of Formative Assessments for learning often.
5. Continue to have a shared vision and values that allow for Personal Mastery.
6. Utilize Professional Learning Communities to plan for student success.

Belief Statement
The staff at Cherokee Heights believes in order for a curriculum to be successful it must engage all students, and
the curriculum must embrace Culturally Relevant Teaching and Linguistics. In addition, we believe the following
attributes are absolutely necessary to our curriculum:

Engaging: The curriculum and instructional strategies should maintain students’ attention and interest. The
curriculum should inspire student collaboration which motivates problem solving.

Data Driven: Only with data driven instructions will we be able to meet students at their readiness level. Data is
needed to drive instructions and improve student achievement.

Standards-based: All standards do not carry the same urgency. Standards define what students should know and
be able to do at the end of a lesson, chapter, unit or school year. Common Core State Standards are the standards
needed to help students endure the rigor of post-secondary institutions.
Differentiated: The curriculum should accommodate the needs of our diverse student population while challenging them to achieve their personal best.

Student-centered learning: This teaching method acknowledges the needs of the students as central to the learning experience for every learner. Student-centered learning requires students to be active, responsible participants in their learning. Learners assume primary responsibility for their choices and have opportunities to exercise control over their learning.

School calendar
Visit https://cherokee.madison.k12.wi.us/calendar for an up-to-date calendar for Cherokee Heights Middle School.

School breakfast / lunch
Breakfast is served in the cafeteria until 7:35 a.m., Monday - Friday. Breakfast will be eaten in the cafeteria before going to class.

Releasing children from school during the day
If your child needs to leave early during the school day due to an appointment or planned absence, please call or send a written note with your child excusing them from school. They should bring the note to the office first thing in the morning allowing office staff time to issue a pass.

If a parent is dropping off their student off late, or wants to release their child to go to an appointment, these procedures must be followed:

- Parent/Authorized adult (on Infinite Campus) must sign the logbook (late or early pick up) in the office. (Elementary only)
- The adult must have authority (on Infinite Campus) to pick up the child during the school day. (K-12)
- If the office does not know the adult, identification will be secured and/or verification procedures will be used. (K-12)
- The child’s teacher will be notified by the office to send the child to the office; or support staff will escort the student to the office if necessary. (Elementary only) Parents/family members should not be sent to the classrooms to pick up their children.
- No pick-ups are allowed from the playground. (Elementary & Middle School)

Visitors (Policy 4005) and volunteers (Policy 7543) should be scheduled by the teacher prior to coming into the building.

- Visitors must come into the office to sign-in and show photo ID.
- Teacher/Staff member should let office know the names the scheduled dates/times of the prearranged visitors, parents and volunteers visiting classrooms.
- If the office does not have knowledge of the visitor or volunteer coming to school, the office will call the appropriate person before allowing visitor/volunteer to leave the office.
- Parents, visitors and volunteers should not go beyond the office unless already pre-arranged by the teacher. Teachers should to notify the office of expected visitors for the day, otherwise the office will call the teacher to confirm prior to sending a parent or visitor to the classroom. (K-12)
- Once everything is confirmed, visitor/volunteer can enter the building from the office.

Find more information in the district policy guide, found at www.mmsd.org/policy-guide.