

CHATHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL



# CMS PTO GUIDE

2026-2027

**BEHIND EVERY GREAT SCHOOL  
IS A GREAT COMMUNITY**

A guide for CMS families.

Who we are, what we do, and every way you can be part of it.

CONNECT • SUPPORT • EMPOWER

# HELLO & WELCOME



## Dear CMS Families,

Welcome to the 2026–27 school year! Whether your family is returning to CMS or joining us for the first time, we hope you had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to the year ahead.

Our goal as a PTO is simple: to help make the CMS experience as meaningful, connected, and memorable as possible for every student. We work closely with the CMS administration, teachers, staff, and families to support the experiences that happen beyond the classroom, from grade-level events and assemblies to student programs, staff appreciation, and improvements throughout the school.

This year, we are also excited to make it easier for families to stay connected with everything happening at CMS. Our new CMS PTO website brings together upcoming events and important dates, volunteer opportunities, PTO meeting information, and ways to support the school. We hope it becomes an easy first stop whenever you are looking for PTO-related information.

Middle school may look a little different from elementary school, but parent involvement still matters. There are lots of ways to participate. You can volunteer at an event, help behind the scenes, attend a meeting, contribute financially, or simply stay informed and engaged. Every bit of involvement helps strengthen our CMS community.

Please take a few minutes to look through this guide, review the calendar, and find a way to get involved that works for you and your family. We are grateful to have you as part of the CMS community and are looking forward to a great year together.



### YOUR PTO DOLLARS AT WORK

Last year, in partnership with the school, the PTO co-funded the Chromebook carts now used in classrooms as CMS transitioned from individual take-home devices to shared classroom Chromebooks. This is a great example of how family support allows us to invest in meaningful, school-wide needs.

Warmly,

**PTO Executive Committee**

*Amie, Katie, Laura and Laura*

Questions, ideas, or suggestions are always welcome at [cms@chathampto.com](mailto:cms@chathampto.com)



# MEET THE CMS PTO

## 2026-2027 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



PRESIDENT

Amie Patel

[cms@chathampto.com](mailto:cms@chathampto.com)



VICE PRESIDENTS

Two positions open

[A two-year track into the President role](#)



TREASURER

Katie Young

[cmstreasurer@chathampto.com](mailto:cmstreasurer@chathampto.com)



ASSISTANT TREASURER

Laura Johnston

[cmstreasurer2@chathampto.com](mailto:cmstreasurer2@chathampto.com)



SECRETARY

Laura Bojanowski

[cmssecretary@chathampto.com](mailto:cmssecretary@chathampto.com)



SOCIAL MEDIA

Christina Norcia

[newsletter@chathampto.com](mailto:newsletter@chathampto.com)



*The Vice President role and several committees are still open. Please see the following pages and the PTO website for current openings.*



# WHAT THE PTO DOES

A PARENT-LED, VOLUNTEER NONPROFIT SUPPORTING GRADES 5-8



## STUDENT EVENTS

*The signature traditions of each grade:*

- 5th Grade Challenge Quest
- 6th Grade Halloween Happenings
- 7th Grade Spring Fling
- 8th Grade Blizzard Bash (Winter Fete)
- Fun in the Sun (Grades 5-7)
- 8th Grade Farewell Ceremony
- Cougar Crew mentor program



## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

*Enriching the school day itself:*

- Author's Day, Grades 5 & 6
- Guest Speaker, Grade 7 & 8
- Holocaust Remembrance Speaker
- Grade-level activities
- School-wide initiatives
- Enhancements to shared spaces



## PROGRAMS

*Coordinated and staffed by parents:*

- New family welcome
- Book Fair and library volunteers
- Community service projects
- Picture Day and retakes
- Spirit wear
- After school enrichment



## TEACHER & STAFF SUPPORT

*Recognizing the people behind CMS:*

- August Welcome Luncheon
- Stock the Lounge days (Fall and Valentines)
- Staff Appreciation Week
- Sunshine Committee recognition days

### PTO DUES

**\$25** per student

Supports PTO programming, supplies, and activities across CMS.

### FUND FOR CMS

**\$100** suggested gift per student

An optional additional contribution toward larger school initiatives and student experiences.

### HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

**Online:** [chathampto.square.site](https://chathampto.square.site) • **By check:** Mail to address on the payment site, or leave @ CMS Main Office.

**Employer matching gifts:** use legal name "The PTO of the Chathams, Inc." and Tax ID 20-8695766.



# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

*The PTO is just parents like you! It is how the good stuff happens. No experience required, ever.*

## LIGHT

*Easy on-ramp*

A burst of help around one or two events, or flexible tasks on your own time.

## MODERATE

*In the mix*

A handful of meetings or activities across the year, usually shared with a committee.

## HIGHER

*All in*

Ongoing leadership of a major program or event.



### YEAR-LONG COMMITTEES

- Hospitality
- Sunshine
- Community Service
- Cougar Crew Mentor Program
- New Family Welcome
- Spirit Wear
- Assembly Committee
- Beautification & Gardening
- Library Volunteer Coordinator
- Board of Education Observer
- Cafeteria Liaison
- Social Media / Website Communications



### SINGLE-EVENT & SHORT-TERM

- After School Enrichment - Winter
- 5th Grade Challenge Quest — October
- 6th Grade Halloween Happenings — October
- 8th Grade Blizzard Bash — January
- 7th Grade Spring Fling — April
- Fun in the Sun (Grades 5-7) — June
- 8th Grade Farewell Ceremony — June
- Book Fair volunteers — fall
- Picture Day Coordinator — Sept & Oct
- Teacher appreciation support
- Community service drives
- Beautification workdays — fall & spring

*Most roles can be shared by co-chairs or a small committee. Grab a friend so you are never doing it alone.*



## READY TO SAY YES?

Committee nominations are open. Sign up at:

[signup.com/go/jMYfQAAQ](https://signup.com/go/jMYfQAAQ)

*Additional day-of event volunteers are recruited separately during the year. Watch for sign-ups.*



# GOOD TO KNOW

## A FEW THINGS THAT SAVE FAMILIES A PHONE CALL



### THE SCHOOL DAY

- Doors open at 7:45 AM.
- In cold or wet weather the gym and auditorium open at 7:30 AM.
- First class begins at 7:55 AM. Students arriving after that are marked tardy.



### ABSENCES & EARLY DISMISSAL

- Report absences and late arrivals in the Genesis Parent Portal before 7:30 AM, with a reason.
- Students leaving early must be signed out at the Main Office.
- Makeup work is due in the number of days equal to the absence.



### PHONES & DEVICES

- Cell phones and smartwatches are not permitted during the school day. They stay off, in lockers.
- CMS is moving to shared classroom Chromebooks rather than individual take-home devices.



### VISITORS & VOLUNTEERS

- Bring a photo ID every time you enter the building.
- Sign in through the Main Office and follow all school security procedures.
- Allow extra time for drop-off and pick-up during the first weeks of school.



### FOOD AT PTO EVENTS

- All snacks require nurse approval.
- Full ingredient lists must go to the school nurses at least three weeks before an event.
- Ingredient labels for packaged items should be available to parents on request.



### STAY AHEAD OF IT

- Read the Student Handbook with your child early in the year.
- Keep emergency contacts current in Genesis.
- Encourage students to check Google Classroom and talk to teachers directly.

*For the most current procedures, always see the Student Handbook and the CMS website.*



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2026 – JANUARY 2027

## AUGUST 2026

|        |                               |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Aug 3  | Genesis Parent Portal opens   |
| Aug 19 | New Family Welcome, 9:00 AM   |
| Aug 25 | Back-to-School Staff Luncheon |
| Aug 31 | First day of school           |

## SEPTEMBER 2026

|        |                               |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Sep 4  | Early dismissal               |
| Sep 7  | No school – Labor Day         |
| Sep 9  | School Picture Day            |
| Sep 15 | PTO General Meeting, 9:30 AM  |
| Sep 16 | Back-to-School Night, 6:30 PM |
| Sep 21 | No school                     |

## OCTOBER 2026

|           |                                              |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| Oct 2     | Custodial Workers Recognition                |
| Oct 12    | No school                                    |
| Oct 14    | PTO General Meeting, 9:00 AM                 |
| Oct 16    | 5th Grade Challenge Quest, 2:45–5 PM         |
| Oct 20–23 | 5th grade early dismissal – conferences      |
| Oct 27    | Picture re-takes                             |
| Oct 30    | 6th Grade Halloween Happenings,<br>6:30–8 PM |

## NOVEMBER 2026

|           |                                     |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Nov 5–6   | No school – NJEA Convention         |
| Nov 12    | Club pictures                       |
| Nov 18    | Education Support Professionals Day |
| Nov 25    | Early dismissal                     |
| Nov 26–27 | No school – Thanksgiving            |

## DECEMBER 2026

|              |                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Dec 15       | PTO General Meeting, 9:30 AM            |
| All Dec      | Staff holiday appreciation & gift cards |
| Dec 24–Jan 2 | No school – Winter Recess               |

## JANUARY 2027

|        |                                                     |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Jan 9  | Law Enforcement Appreciation Day                    |
| Jan 18 | No school – MLK Day                                 |
| Jan 22 | 8th Grade Blizzard Bash (Winter Fete),<br>7–8:30 PM |

*Dates reflect the 2026–27 PTO calendar as of publication. Always check the PTO website for updates.*



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2027 — JUNE 2027

## FEBRUARY 2027

|        |                               |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| Feb 3  | School Counselor Appreciation |
| Feb 12 | No school — Presidents' Day   |
| Feb 15 | No school — Presidents' Day   |

## MARCH 2027

|        |                              |
|--------|------------------------------|
| Mar 10 | No school                    |
| Mar 16 | PTO General Meeting, 9:30 AM |
| Mar 26 | No school                    |
| Mar 29 | No school                    |

## APRIL 2027

|           |                                   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| Apr 2     | School Librarian Appreciation     |
| Apr 7     | National Assistant Principals Day |
| Apr 12–16 | No school — Spring Recess         |
| Apr 21    | Administrative Professionals Day  |
| Apr 30    | 7th Grade Spring Fling, 6:30–8 PM |

## MAY 2027

|         |                                   |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| May 3–7 | Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week |
| May 31  | No school — Memorial Day          |

## JUNE 2027

|        |                                  |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| Jun 11 | Fun in the Sun — Grades 5, 6 & 7 |
| Jun 14 | Fun in the Sun — back-up date    |
| Jun 17 | 8th Grade Farewell Ceremony      |
| Jun 18 | Last day of school               |

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# SCHOOL-RUN CLUBS & ACTIVITIES

*Run by the school, not the PTO. Offerings vary year to year – check Clubs & Activities on the CMS website for current details.*



## CLUBS & SERVICE

- Acceptance Alliance
- Battle of the Books
- Builders Club
- Crochet & Knitting Club
- Games Club
- Science Club
- Pop Culture Club
- Yearbook
- Student Council
- Pro-Leaders



## ARTS & PERFORMANCE

- Chamber Orchestra
- CMS Jazz Band
- CMS Pops Orchestra
- Woodwind Ensemble
- Glee Club / Select Choir
- Musical (Grades 5 & 6)
- Musical (Grades 7 & 8)
- Talent Show
- CMS in the AM
- Cougar Chronicles newspaper



## ACADEMIC, STEM & REC

- Continental Math League
- Math Counts
- Math League
- FIRST LEGO League Robotics
- Junior Model UN
- Mock Trial
- Open Gym
- Environmental Club
- Nothing But Nets
- WAAG – Animal Guardians



## HOW STUDENTS SIGN UP

Students should listen for morning announcements and check the Clubs & Activities page on the CMS website for meeting times and sign-up details.

## ALSO WORTH KNOWING

**After School Enrichment is a PTO-run program, separate from school clubs. It is not scheduled for 2026–27 because the committee is currently unstaffed. If you would like to see it return, this is a role worth raising your hand for.**





# GO COUGARS

Every role helps build a stronger, more connected CMS.

## VOLUNTEER

[signup.com/go/jMYfQAQ](https://signup.com/go/jMYfQAQ)

Committee nominations are open — light, moderate and higher-commitment roles available.

## CONTRIBUTE

[chathampto.square.site](https://chathampto.square.site)

PTO dues are \$25 per student. The Fund for CMS suggested gift is \$100.

## ASK ANYTHING

[cms@chathampto.com](mailto:cms@chathampto.com)

Questions, ideas and suggestions are always welcome — no question is too small.

## CHATHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL PTO

480 Main Street, Chatham, NJ 07928 • Facebook: Chatham Middle School PTO • Instagram: @ptocms

The PTO of the Chathams, Inc. • a parent-led 501(c)(3) volunteer organization • Tax ID 20-8695766

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