

Westport Public Schools

Bedford Middle School FAQs for 2016-2017

List of Informational Websites to Bookmark:

Westport School District	www.westport.k12.ct.us
Bedford Middle School Website	bms.westport.k12.ct.us
Bedford Middle School PTA	bms.westport.k12.ct.us/pta/pta

What time does the school day start?

Students are not to be dropped off before 7:30 am unless they have a prearranged appointment with a teacher or established teacher-lead group (i.e. morning rehearsal for a music group, or school play).

The first school bell is at 7:55 am and the final bell starting the school day is at 8:00 am; at 8:00 am, students are expected to report to homeroom for mandatory morning attendance and announcements.

What time does the school day finish?

The final bell of the school day is at 2:45 pm.

How can I find out my child's ID number?

All new families will receive a Connect Ed message with instruction on how to log in and including their user ID and password. Students already in the Westport Public School system will use the same ID number they had last year at the elementary level.

How do I find bus information?

The bus schedules are published annually in the local newspapers (The Westport News and Westport Minuteman). Additionally, the bus schedules can be accessed on the Westport Public Schools district website, "Parents tab" then click on Transportation and Safety or [click here](#). The bus schedules are published approximately one week before the start of school.

What is the policy for student use of smartphones during the school day?

Students may not use their personal mobile devices during school hours 8 am - 2:45 pm. Upon arrival to school, students are expected to lock their device in their assigned locker before homeroom. Bedford's student lockers are inspected annually; the combinations are changed every summer to make certain lockers are both secure and in excellent working order. Students are not to share their locker combinations with other students. If a student has a concern about the security of their locker, they are to report the issue to their homeroom teacher or school administrator to rectify the issue.

BMS expects parents to refrain from texting with their children during school hours (8 am - 2:45 pm); all communications are to flow through the main office, health office or guidance office. Incoming text messages cause disruptions to students, teachers and the learning environment.

Students found using a personal mobile device during the school day will relinquish the device to a staff member. The staff member will deliver the device directly to the main office. For a first offense, the student will be informed that they are to pick up their device at the end of the school day; a second offense will require a parent to retrieve the device from the main office at Bedford, additional offenses may result in disciplinary action. The exception to this policy is per the consent of teachers who may grant permission for special circumstances, projects, and events.

How do I return my child's completed forms at the beginning of the school year?

Completed Connecticut Health forms, Student Medical Emergency Forms, Acceptable Use Forms, and E-mail Guideline forms should be returned to the labeled wire bins in the Bedford main office.

Where do I find a list of school supplies and what does my child need for the first day of school?

A list of suggested school supplies can be found on the Bedford Middle School home page. Please note this is a suggested list and teachers will clarify during the first week of school, therefore do not feel obligated to fill the list prior to the first day of school. For the first day of school students should have paper to write on, a folder for papers received, and something to write with, as well as a backpack to put everything into at the end of the day. Plan to bring either a bagged lunch or \$4-5 cash. Students should also remember to bring their homeroom number, and remember their bus number.

When will my child find out his/her schedule?

On the first day of school, students will report directly to their homerooms. In homeroom, students will receive their schedules and locker numbers and combinations (students new to Westport School District may have received locker information at the New Family Orientation and 6th Grade Students may have received locker information at the 6th Grade orientation).

How do I pick up my child during the school day (i.e. before 2:45 pm)?

If your child needs to leave school early, your child must drop off a parent-signed note with the pickup time and reason to the main office as soon as they arrive to school. When you arrive to pick up your child, you must park in our lot in one of the designated visitor parking spaces and then come into the main office to sign out your child. If your child is going home due to illness via a visit our health office, you still must sign-out your child in the main office before taking them home. Please note, the main office will not call your child out of class based on the pickup time written on the early pickup note; the main office will call the child out of class only when the parent has arrived in person in the main office.

How do I drop off my child?

We encourage all students to ride the school bus as-much-as and whenever possible. North Avenue is very busy in the morning: there is significant traffic to Staples High School combined with passenger cars that become backed up from BMS's front door all the way onto North Avenue. If you do decide to drop off your child, the only entrance into BMS is from North Avenue; at the top of the driveway turn right and then turn left into the drop off circle. Pull all the way up as far as possible past the entrance to the school before stopping to let your child out. If your child needs extra time disembarking, please park in the lot or pull into the specified drop off area near the handicap parking spaces. It is imperative that children quickly disembark from their cars and cars exit the campus to keep traffic flowing. Please note that at the North Avenue entrance to Bedford, buses when turning right into the school, need to make a wide right turn. For that reason, upon exiting Bedford in the morning, traffic officers expect drivers to stop at least three car lengths BEFORE the stop sign, allowing buses the necessary space to turn into the school without getting stuck.

Why won't they 'buzz me' (i.e. open the door) into the building!? I just want to drop off my child's lunch!

If you are parked in the fire lane in front of BMS ***for any length of time*** you will not be permitted into the school building. The fire lane in front of BMS is an emergency lane for first response providers at all times. We take this extremely seriously. Please park your car in the designated visitor parking in our lot.

Is there an alternate way to get to Bedford other than the main driveway off North Avenue?

Yes! The Wakeman Drive off Cross Highway is open in the early morning before 8 am, locked from 8-2:30 pm and the opened for afternoon dismissal. Look for the school administrators that double as parking lot attendants in the afternoon to help you navigate your way out of campus via Wakeman Drive because the main driveway off

North Avenue becomes a one-way into campus to allow the school buses to pick up students without waiting in line behind passenger cars.

What if my child is late?

Any student who arrives to BMS after 8:00 am should report directly to the main office to (1) deliver a signed note from a parent or guardian that states the reason for the tardiness and (2) to receive a hall pass to class from main office personnel. Although a parent/guardian note is provided, an 'ET' (excused tardy) will appear on the student's transcript.

- Any time you are aware that your child will not be arriving at school by 8am, please call the attendance line, 203-341-1599 to record their absence and expected arrival time.

Does my child need a note to go home with another student?

Students do not need notes regarding their after school plans. They are allowed to ride on another student's bus as long as there is room.

What is the procedure when parents visit the school during school hours 8 am – 2:45 pm?

All visitors must buzz in at the front door – press the white button once on the intercom, an administrative assistant will ask, "How may I help you?" Please respond accordingly and respectfully as this procedure is part of our school safety and security protocol. Once buzzed into the school building, please go straight to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor badge.

How can I meet my child's teachers?

'Back to School Night' is the first opportunity for parents to meet their child's teachers. You will receive a separate Connect Ed message with all the details of the evening.

Throughout the year there will be three grade level team meetings (Oct., Jan, and March) at which core teachers discuss the curriculum, upcoming lessons and any trips, events and special projects. Parent volunteer opportunities will be discussed at these meetings. Pod meeting notes will be posted on the PTA - Grade Level web pages on bms.westport.k12.ct.us.

Grade Level transition meetings are scheduled in the spring to provide parents with an overview of the curriculum for the next grade.

What is a 'Pod'?

A pod is the physical space for each of the three grade level teams. Students attend core classes within their grade level team's pod. Encore subjects including Gym, Art, Music and Foreign Language instruction will take place out of the physical pod and may include students from other grade level teams.

Are student's hallway lockers secure?

Bedford's student lockers are inspected annually; the combinations are changed every summer to make certain lockers are both secure and in excellent working order. **Students are not to share their locker combinations with other students.** If a student has a concern about the security of their locker, they are to report the issue to their homeroom teacher or school administrator to rectify the issue.

What is Schoology? Is my child's homework on Schoology?

Teachers will post the evening's homework on Schoology. It is best to sign in under your child's login as parent access does not always display all the information. We encourage you to check homework assignments nightly with your child. (<https://www.schoology.com/home.php>; your child's teachers will provide a more accurate link to their Schoology page).

How will I know how my child is doing? How do I find their grades through the online gradebook?

All homework, quizzes, tests and special projects and their corresponding grades can be found on [Home Access Center \(HAC\)](#). You can also find HAC directly on the [BMS homepage](#): On the left hand side of the screen you will see "Tools and Resources:", HAC is in that drop-down menu. After you log in and select your student, click on the "Classwork" tab on the left and you will see all your child's assignment by class along with their current grade. This is an ideal way to make sure that all homework has been completed and teachers will add comments on an as needed basis. In addition, because grade books are online in real-time, you will no longer receive Interim Progress Reports. Quarterly report cards can be found on Home Access; they are not mailed home but parents will receive an email notification once the report cards are posted.

What if I have a problem or question?

If you have a question, concern or issue that relates to a specific class or teacher, please first contact that teacher directly to address the issue, question or concern. If it is more general in nature, the team leader is the best person to contact. The Assistant Principals can be also be contacted regarding issues, however, in general, please contact the school administrators only after discussing the issue with the classroom teacher. Email communication is the preferred method of communication; teachers' email addresses can be found on BMS's homepage, as well as on Schoology ("My Students" tab). Teacher email addresses are formatted as follows: first initial of first name plus full last name followed by @westport.k12.ct.us. (ex. John Smith would be jsmith@westport.k12.ct.us)

When does my child have music lessons?

Students are pulled out of their classes to receive instrument instruction. They will be given a schedule at the beginning of the year and the times vary so they do not miss the same subject each week. It is the student's responsibility to let the teacher know they have a lesson and hand in any homework prior to going to their lesson. They need to obtain the homework for that evening and are responsible for completing it by the next day.

How does my child get extra help?

Each teacher has different days and times that they are available for extra help. They will let your child know what these are at the beginning of the year and parents will be informed at Back to School Night.

What does my child wear for Gym?

Students are required to change into shorts or sweatpants and a predominately white shirt for gym class. Sneakers are required for all students. Gym clothes are not needed on the first day of school. During the first Gym class of the year, the Gym teachers will give the students their gym lockers and combinations; and explain what are appropriate gym clothes.

What if my child forgot something (e.g. an instrument, lunch, project, etc.), and I need to drop it off?

There is a drop off table in the main office; items should be clearly labeled with the student's name and grade. Parents are not allowed to bring things directly to the classroom. Students will be told to check the table in the main office for items that are dropped off. We are preparing our students to be independent and need them to check the office as their schedule allows so that they do not miss valuable classroom instruction.

How does lunch work?

Each grade has a designated time for lunch, with the entire grade eating together in the cafeteria. Students have the option of bringing lunch or purchasing lunch. In order to purchase lunch, a student should know his/her student ID. Parents may deposit money into their child's lunch account by using the mySchoolBucks online meal account, or by bringing cash or check directly to the cafeteria. To create an account with mySchoolBucks, please visit www.mySchoolBucks.com and follow the instructions. Please note that some students recommend bringing lunch to school during the first few days of the school year, as the lines can be longer as students familiarize themselves with the system and their school IDs.

Can my student decorate their own locker or a friend's locker for their birthday?

Students are not permitted to decorate lockers for birthdays. To be clear, we no longer allow students to decorate lockers for birthdays. After a number of years condoning this practice, the damage to the lockers in Bedford was so significant that all lockers had to be repaired and repainted over this summer break. Furthermore, in many cases, birthday decorations degraded into a 'candy fest' which then caused disruptions in classrooms and put students with food borne allergies at-risk. Additionally, not all students had their locker decorated resulting in inequities. Ultimately, the cost of decorating lockers vastly outweighed the benefits.

What is the BMS Spirit and Leadership Committee?

The BMS Spirit and Leadership Committee consists of students and teachers who work in three areas: community outreach, school spirit and student governance and leadership. Committee members are selected through an application process early in the school year. All students, including 6th graders and those students new to Bedford, are welcome to apply.

What is Blue/Gold Competition?

Students will be assigned to Blue or Gold team when they first enter Bedford Middle School, and remain on that same team throughout their time at Bedford. The program includes academic and sports competition between the two teams, and includes all students and faculty at Bedford.

Does BMS have Intramurals?

The intramural program gives students an opportunity to participate in a variety of sports after school. The activities are held after school from approximately 2:45-4:00pm. The program is on a drop-in basis and there is no cost associated with the program. A schedule of activities will be announced during the morning announcements, and in the weekly PTA emails. Students must arrange for a ride home after intramurals, as late bus service is not available.

Where do I order BMS Spirit Wear?

Spirit Wear order forms are sent to families in the annual online summer mailing and may be available in the main office. BMS Spirit Wear purchase can also be made during the school year on the [Athletic Shoe Factory site](#). Please note that students are not required to purchase BMS Spirit Wear.

How do I find out about volunteer opportunities at BMS?

Volunteering for activities, events and initiatives at BMS is done through the PTA. Volunteering at BMS is a wonderful way to meet new friends, become involved in the Bedford community, and support the school and our students! In August you will receive an email from the BMS PTA titled, "ZARCA." This link will invite BMS parents to sign-up for volunteer opportunities scheduled throughout the school year. PTA Volunteers must be members of the BMS PTA.

How do I get a student directory?

The Bedford student directory will be available online to members of the BMS PTA. In early September you will receive more information on how to sign up and use the online directory.

Who do I contact to update address information, name spelling, and/or emergency contact information?

Please contact the main office of your youngest child's school. Parents can update their own phone numbers, email addresses, and passwords for Home Access Center and from within Home Access Center.

Who do I contact for technical assistance with the MySchoolBucks online payment program?

Dining Services Director, 203-341-2431

Who do I contact for technical assistance with Home Access Center or Schoology?

The parent helpdesk at parenthelpdesk@westport.k12.ct.us Please include your first and last name, your child's grade, and your child's first and last name in the email. Alternatively, you can reach the parent helpdesk by phone Mon-Fri, 7AM-2PM at 203-341-1214

How do I find out what is going on at school?

The PTA sends out a Weekly Planner email blast. The emails are sent out Monday of each week with all of the news of upcoming happenings and events. PTA meetings are held 3 times during the year. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. Additional opportunities to meet parents and find out what is going on at school include: New Family Parent Coffee held the first week of school (for families new to Bedford or Westport Public Schools only), Grade Level Coffees held in September and Grade Level Meetings with the School Psychologists (PYD meetings) discussing what parents may expect to see developmentally from their pre-teens and teens.

To access the most up to date PTA information, go to the BMS website <http://bms.westport.k12.ct.us> click on the PTA tab then click News & Announcements or bookmark this address for easy reference <http://bms.westport.k12.ct.us/pta/pta/>.

How do I download the School and PTA calendar to my personal calendar or mobile device?

All important school dates and PTA events can be found on the BMS School calendar which includes the District Calendar and BMS School Calendar. The site is set up so events can be added to your personal calendar.

<http://www.westport.k12.ct.us/calendars/full/event-calendar/>

In addition, to download the entire calendar to your personal calendar or mobile device please follow the instructions below. The two calendars will have to be downloaded separately.

District School Calendar link (If you have children in multiple schools, you can reach out to the school webmaster to get the link to download other school calendars):

https://www.google.com/calendar/ical/westport.k12.ct.us_2d3531343134393438313133%40resource.calendar.google.com/public/basic.ics

BMS School Calendar link (only download this once even if your child is in multiple schools)

http://www.google.com/calendar/ical/bms_pta%40westport.k12.ct.us/public/basic.ics

To add the calendar to your Apple computer, click on the each link above, an .ics file will then be downloaded, click on the downloaded file and it will open up directly in your Apple Calendar. The window in the Apple Calendar will prompt you with "This calendar contains new events. Please select a destination for your calendar". Click on the drop down list and select "New Calendar", the calendar will be added to your list of calendars, to delete the calendar -- right click on the calendar and click delete. Repeat this process for the other calendar.

To add the calendar to your Google calendar, copy the above link and open your Google Calendar, click on the arrow next to "Other Calendars" on the left hand bar and click on "Add by URL". Paste the above link into the box and the BMS calendar will be added to your calendar. To display the calendar within your personal calendar, assign a color to the calendar. The calendar can be removed by going to "Settings", "Calendar" then "Other Calendar" and clicking on "Unsubscribe" next to the calendar you want to unsubscribe.

What is Positive Youth Development (PYD)?

PYD is partnership of Westport's PTA's, United Way, Westport Schools, Department of Human Services and Positive Directions. Its mission is to promote the positive development of children and youth in their families, in their schools, among their peers, and in their communities. PYD sponsors various meetings and opportunities, free of charge. Please visit the PYD website at www.westportpyd.org for details on programs. Additionally you

can sign up for email alerts of upcoming PYD sponsored activities by emailing your name and email address to lrosenkranz@westportct.gov

Other questions?

The entire Parent Handbook can be found on the BMS website.

Helpful Links for Families New to Westport.

Community Sports:

<http://westporty.org/>

<http://westportpal.org>

<http://www.westportsoccer.org>

<http://westportlittleleaguebaseball.com>

<http://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=256>

Community Resources:

<http://toquethall.org/> (teen center)

<http://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx>

Westport Continuing Education:

<https://www.westportcontinuinged.com>