

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK 2015-2016

Bedford Middle School
Westport Public Schools



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Dear Students, Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year at Bedford Middle School (BMS); we are confident this will be a positive and fulfilling school year! This handbook is designed to communicate core school procedures and policies and to help answer questions about daily operations, rules and regulations in our school. This handbook is revised annually in response to emerging school-community needs and updates to district and state level education policies and statutes.

Bedford Middle School works to provide a safe school environment conducive to learning. To maintain our safe school climate, Bedford's professional faculty and staff recognize individual differences that exist among students and the responsibility to provide a positive and meaningful educational experience for all.

At Bedford Middle School, we encourage students to think, create, and excel. Our goal is to help students experience the love of learning and the joy of discovery. We want students to respect themselves while learning to care about others. Therefore, we strive to create a dynamic learning environment that recognizes students' unique qualities and help them to be successful.

The Bedford community believes that the following elements should apply to all members of the school community:

1. Students should be happy to be at school; school should be a joyful place
2. Students should feel close to the adults in the school; every student should have a positive meaningful relationship with at least one adult in school
3. Students should have a sense of belonging so they don't get 'lost'; every student should 'be a part of it' in at least one aspect of school life and 'it' takes on a unique meaning for every child
4. Students should feel that the adults in the building treat students fairly—fairness is essential; when adults listen, they are on the pathway to fairness
5. Students should be safe at all times — physically, emotionally, intellectually

BEDFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Bedford is a learning community, composed of students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators, who create an academic environment where learning thrives within a school culture of mutual respect, responsibility and integrity.

Our mission at Bedford Middle School is to help students experience the joy of learning through the satisfaction of discovery. In an effort to meet this goal, we create learning environments where students are encouraged to think, create and excel academically. Bedford Middle School is committed to providing a safe learning environment where staff, students, parents, and community accept the responsibility of preparing students for academic success and to face the challenges of the future. Bedford Middle School's environment of trust and mutual respect for all people reflects our belief that all students can learn. With rigorous and varied academic standards, we will work together to prepare our students to take a role in society as productive citizens and help develop their personal commitment to learning.

WE EXPECT OUR STUDENTS TO:

- Master basic skills
- Acquire a core of knowledge
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Accept increasing responsibility
- Build a positive self-image
- Increase awareness of individual differences
- Respect others' rights and differences
- Demonstrate citizenship
- Develop academic integrity
- Work cooperatively with others
- Be reflective learners
- Develop self-advocacy skills

Bedford Middle School Online: <http://bms.westport.k12.ct.us/>

Westport Public Schools Online: <http://www.westport.k12.ct.us/>

Home Access Center (HAC):

<https://hac.westport.k12.ct.us/HomeAccess/Account/LogOn?ReturnUrl=%2fhomeaccess>

Schoology: <https://www.schoology.com/home>

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BMS DAILY ROUTINES

THE SCHOOL DAY

- The school day for students: 8:00 am to 2:45pm
- Early dismissals (commonly referred to as 'half days') are scheduled and appear on the district calendar; the early dismissal time for BMS is 12:15 pm
- Students may enter Bedford starting at 7:30 am for extra help and also enjoy our cafeteria, which is open serving breakfast daily.
- Students may arrive before 7:30 am if they are part of a special music performing group or have a meeting with a teacher for extra help
- The BMS Main Office hours are 7:30 am – 3:30 pm

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The school day begins at 8:00 am; this is when teachers record morning attendance for all students grade 6-8. The final dismissal bell is at 2:45 pm. Students attending school for less than four (4) hours on any given school day shall be recorded as being absent.

Attendance in class is an integral part of a student's total educational experience. Daily attendance and punctuality are essential for your child's learning success. Therefore, we ask that families make every effort to schedule appointments during after school hours and to avoid taking family vacations while school is in session.

According to the State Board of Education, a student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at their assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip during normal operating hours), for at least half of the regular school day (more than four hours). The Connecticut General Assembly enacted a truancy law which imposes requirements for greater parental responsibility, and obliges boards of education to refer truant students to the courts. Truant students are those that have accrued four unexcused absences within 4 week or ten unexcused absences within a school year.

Parent Responsibilities

The Connecticut State Law regarding parental duties and obligations relating to their children and regular school, section 10-184, provides that each parent, or other person having control of a child 7 years of age or older and under 16 years of age, shall cause the child to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the school is in session.

Westport Middle School's Responsibilities

Effective July 1, 1991, Connecticut legislators passed a law, Public Act 91-202, outlining specific mandates for public schools. All of the mandates outline early intervention efforts, as well as last resort action in dealing with truants.

Absentee Call-In System

When the school is not notified of a student's absence, our automated system places a "safe call" to insure the parent is notified the student is not in school. To avoid receiving this notification please adhere to the following procedures outlined in the section titled, "Absentee call-in system."

If you know that your child is going to be absent from school, call 203-341-1599 before 8:00 am and leave a message on the attendance line. Please provide the following information in your message:

- Parent/guardian's full name
- Child's full name & grade
- Date of the absence
- Reason for the absence

Excused Absences

In accordance with the law, and pursuant to Westport Board of Education's attendance policy, an excused absence is any absence which meets the following standards:

- Personal illness
- Health related appointments that cannot be scheduled outside regular school hours
- Religious observances
- Court appearances
- Death in the family
- Family emergencies

Procedure for Excused Absences

Cases of repeated parental-excused absences (five or more non-consecutive absences in a marking period) are to be handled by the principal or delegated agent. Excessive absences may result in a conference with the parent and a follow-up letter to resolve the situation.

Procedures for Unexcused Absences:

Absence for reasons other than those listed above are considered unexcused. Four unexcused absences within 4 weeks or 10 unexcused absences within a school year is considered truancy and will be addressed accordingly. Excessive absences may result in the following:

- Conference with the parent and a follow up letter to resolve the situation
- Referral to appropriate agencies including CT Department of Children & Family Services

Tardy Procedure

Any child who arrives to homeroom after 8:00 am must report to the main office to obtain a tardy pass which he/she will hand in to the classroom or homeroom teacher. (This does not apply to students who arrive late to school because of a bus.) Students are responsible for being punctual. All incidents of tardiness, excused or unexcused, are recorded on a child's attendance record.

Procedure for Excused Tardiness to School

Cases of repeated 'serial' tardiness to school (more than five non-consecutive within a marking period) are to be handled by a school administrator or delegated agent and may result in the following course of action, appropriate to the case:

- Conference with the parent and a follow up letter to resolve the situation
- Disciplinary action as needed

Procedure for Unexcused Tardiness to School

In case of repeated unexcused tardiness to school, the following courses of action, which are appropriate to the situation, may be taken:

- Conference with the parent and a follow-up letter to resolve the situation
- Disciplinary action as needed
- Consultation or referral to other appropriate agencies including CT Department of Children and Family Services

Procedure for Unexcused Tardiness to Class

In case of repeated unexcused tardiness to class, the following courses of action, which are appropriate to the situation, may be taken:

- Three incidents of tardiness to a specific class in a marking period will result in one central detention. Parents will receive a phone call from an administrator
- Conference with the parent and a follow-up letter to resolve the situation
- Detention or in-school suspension

Consequences of Missed Work, Homework and Make-Up Work

Students absent because of illness or other legitimate reasons for no more than two consecutive days, will usually not be given special homework, but will instead receive help from their teacher upon their return to school, either in class, or before or after the school day, at the teacher's discretion. They will be given time to make up work (e.g. homework, tests, etc.) missed on account of illness.

When a student's absence on account of illness, injury or other legitimate reasons extends to three or more consecutive days, special homework will be provided if requested or necessary. Parents may arrange for special homework by notifying the team leader. When the work is ready, parents may pick it up in the main office.

In accordance with state law, in cases of extended absences due to illness or injury, the school will provide instruction at home according to Board Policy, Homebound Instruction. The need for this is determined through pupil services department.

Extended absences for family vacations, travel, etc. are considered unexcused. Parents should give teachers timely notice of the need for work. Teachers are not required to devise special assignments or projects; however, children may be given the assignments that the teacher has

already scheduled, if possible and appropriate to the situation. Teachers may also make suggestions to parents about appropriate activities for children on vacation. In some instances, children may be given textbooks to take on vacation and children may check books out of the school library.

K-8 students are not penalized by the school for absences due to family vacations or travel. That is, they are not given zeros for work missed. Depending on the teacher's judgment of the value of the make-up, either they are not required to make up specific tests or projects, or they are given time to complete the projects and are permitted to make up the tests after an appropriate time. If as a result of absences, a child needs extra help, teachers are not required to provide it on their own time. If special tutoring is needed as a result of elective absence, any cost incurred would be the responsibility of the parents, not the school.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If your child is to leave school early during the day, send your child with a note signed by a parent to be delivered to the main office by 8:00 am. Students will not be released to any person other than their custodial parent without written permission from their custodial parents. When dismissed, a student must be met in the main office by a parent or guardian. The parent must complete the sign-out form. If students return to school after an appointment, they must sign-in in the main office

SCHOOL BUSES

- School bus schedules are published in local Westport newspapers approximately one week before school opens in the fall; they are also posted to the district website.
- For additional bus information call Westport Schools Coordinator of Transportation Sandra Evangelista at 203-341-1754.
- While on a bus, children are under the authority of the bus driver and should behave appropriately at all times to maintain safety.
- The privilege of riding a bus may be revoked due to inappropriate/unsafe conduct and behavior, i.e. bus suspension
- We offer the courtesy of permitting students to ride buses other than their assigned bus, however this special privilege can be revoked for a time period or duration of the year for misconduct.
- Repair or damage to a bus by a student is the financial responsibility of the student.
- Students are to get on and off the bus at their assigned bus stop.
- All students must adhere to these safe riding practices:
 - Be at the bus stop on time; wait for the bus in a safe place
 - Enter the bus in an orderly manner
 - Follow the instruction of the bus driver
 - Always remain in the seat

- Keep head and arms inside the bus
- Keep aisles clear at all times
- Follow general school rules; remain quiet and orderly
- Be courteous to the driver and to other students
- Be alert to traffic when leaving the bus
- No food or drinks are to be consumed on the bus

SCHOOL CANCELLATION, EARLY CLOSING & DELAYED OPENINGS

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

- Call the school system for recorded information at 203-341-1SNO (203-341-1766)
- Refer to local radio and TV: Channel 12 News, WICC 600 AM and WEBE 108 FM
- ConnectEd, our automated communication system, will keep you updated

UNEXPECTED EARLY CLOSINGS

- Please do not call the school, Town School Office, or radio stations
- Call school system for recorded information at 203-341-1SNO (203-341-1766)
- Tune in to channels noted above for emergency information
- ConnectEd, our automated communication system, will keep you updated
- Have an emergency plan ready in place and review it with your child so that it can be put into action in the case of an unexpected early dismissal

DELIVERY OF MESSAGES OR ITEMS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

As parents and educators, we need to work together to foster a sense of responsibility for belongings, assignments, lunches, instruments, etc. Therefore:

- Classroom instruction will not be interrupted to deliver messages and/or articles.
- Parents are urged to remind students of appointments and after-school activities before they leave for school.
- Under normal circumstances, students will be called to the main office at the end of the day for messages.
- Please be sure to label all items and messages with student's name and grade level and place on the pick-up table located inside the main office.
- The office staff will deal with emergency situations on an individual basis.

CELL PHONE POLICY FOR STUDENTS

- Students are urged to plan ahead to avoid the need for frequent phone calls from school
- Classroom phones are for teacher use only
- Students can use the telephone in the main office for emergency use only
- Use of cellular phones by students is not permitted in school; students found using a cellular phone/mobile device during the school day will relinquish the device to a staff member. The staff member will surrender the device to the main office for student pick up at the end of the

school day; repeated offense will require a parent to retrieve the device from the main office at Bedford.

STUDENT ACCESS TELEPHONE

There is a telephone for student use located in the main office on the round counter. Please ask an adult for permission before using this phone and for assistance as needed, thanks.

SCHOOL LUNCH

To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced lunch is offered at a reasonable price. Students may purchase a hot or cold lunch, bring a bag lunch, or purchase milk, juice or snacks. A complete standard lunch, deli sandwiches and a variety of salad plates cost approximately \$2.60. Items such as smoothies, fresh baked cookies and pretzels are available for an additional cost

- Please encourage your child to make healthy choices.
- Parents who would like further information about free and reduced lunch should contact Mrs. Duva at 203-341-1503.
- Students are responsible for cleaning up their tables during each lunch period.
- Students have thirty minutes for lunch each day. Fifteen minutes into the lunch period students may have outside recess (weather permitting) for the remainder of the period.

Lunch periods are:

- o Grade 6: 11:15 – 11:45
- o Grade 7: 12:00 – 12:30
- o Grade 8: 12:45 – 1:15

LOST AND FOUND

- Two locations: the cafeteria is the main location; the main office is secondary for small items
- Student clothing and school materials should be labeled clearly with student's name
- Students who have lost belongings should check the Lost and Found area
- Articles not claimed at the end of each quarter will be donated to charity

VISITORS

- All visitors to BMS including parents are required to come to the main office upon arrival to sign in and obtain a visitor's pass
- Students may not bring another student, relative, friend, acquaintance (i.e. a 'visitor') to Bedford Middle School at any time; all visitors of this nature will be required to leave the school.

STUDENT STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

The standards of conduct for all students shall be those of good citizens. Students shall be governed by established policies, procedures and rules. Such policies, procedures and rules are applicable in the school, on school grounds, on the bus, on the way to and from school, and at school-sponsored activities, including field trips.

Bedford Middle School also recognizes the value of consistency in dealing with disciplinary matters across grade levels and in each classroom. The goal of all disciplinary action is to bring about a positive change in student behavior with the ultimate goal of developing self-discipline in each student.

In most cases, the classroom teacher handles initial discipline; the courses of action outlined in the following pages refer to those matters that come to the attention of administration. In order to implement the following standards effectively, cooperation and mutual support between parents and professional staff is essential. Please remember to sign and return the form mailed to you in the summer mailing packet to confirm that you have read and reviewed this document with your child.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Bedford Middle School is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all students have the right to:

- Take part in all school activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender, gender orientation or disability
- Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel

All students have the responsibility to:

- Contribute to a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning, and show respect to other persons and to property
- Be familiar with and abide by all school policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct
- Attend school every day, unless legally excused, and arrive in class on time and prepared to learn
- Work to the best of their ability in all areas and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible
- Respond to direction given by teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner
- Conduct themselves as positive representatives of the school when participating in or attending school-sponsored events

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The remainder of this document provides more details regarding our standards of behavior; teachers and administrators will review the standards of conduct with your child the first week of school. In order to provide an environment that is safe, healthy and conducive to learning, it is expected that students will show courtesy and consideration for all members of the school community.

Students may not...

- Threaten or intimidate any school community member
- Engage in fighting; engage in conduct that is violent
- Commit an act which causes physical injury or leaves a mark on another person. Examples include, but are not limited to, hitting, kicking, pushing into an immovable object and scratching
- Attempt or threaten to cause physical injury to a student, teacher, administrator, other school employee, or any other person lawfully on school property
- Possess a weapon, dangerous weapon, dangerous instrument or dangerous object. Exceptions are made for authorized law enforcement officials and personnel
- Display or brandish what appears to be a weapon, dangerous weapon, dangerous instrument or dangerous object or threaten to use any weapon, dangerous weapon, dangerous instrument or dangerous object
- Engage in sexual harassment, or unwanted verbal or physical advances
- Engage in kissing, handholding, hugging, or any other physical displays of affection

ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERNET & NETWORK

Students are prohibited from using the Internet or other electronic technology to interfere with the educational process. Such prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:

- any interference with the school district's computer systems, including but not limited to unauthorized access into or interference with district computer systems;
- any interference with communication by teachers or administrators with parents or guardians, including but not limited to blocking or intercepting email or other electronic communications;
- making statements (e.g., website postings, instant messages, email messages)
 - that threaten students, staff or administration;
 - that are falsely attributed to others;
 - that are intended to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate another student;
 - that are intended to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate staff members or administrators;
 - that are defamatory of students, staff members or administrators.

Such conduct is prohibited at school or a school- sponsored activity. Such conduct is also prohibited off-campus when it has the effect of interfering with the educational process. In considering such interference, school officials shall consider the following factors:

- Whether the conduct seriously impeded the day-to-day operation of the school;
- “(A) whether the incident occurred within close proximity of a school; (B) whether other students from the school were involved or whether there was any gang involvement; (C) whether the conduct involved violence, threats of violence or the unlawful use of a weapon, as defined in section 29-38, and whether any injuries occurred; and (D) whether the conduct involved the use of alcohol.” Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-233d(a)(1);
- whether the conduct had a direct and negative impact on a student’s academic performance or safety in school. Connecticut General Statutes, Section 10-222d.
- All students are required to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement. Noncompliance with the Agreement may result in the revocation of computer use privileges.

MEAN-SPIRITED BEHAVIOR (BULLYING)

In accordance with state law, it is the policy of the Board of Education that any form of bullying behavior, whether in the classroom, on school property or at school-sponsored events, is expressly forbidden.

“Bullying” behavior by any student in the Westport Public Schools is strictly prohibited, and such conduct may result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion from school.

“Bullying” means any overt acts by a student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, which acts are committed more than once against any student during the school year. Off-campus bullying that has a direct, negative impact on a student’s academic performance or safety in school is also subject to in-school discipline. Students and parents may file written complaints concerning suspected bullying behavior, and students shall be permitted to file verbal complaints or anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers, school administrators, counselors, nurses and other school staff members. Any report of suspected bullying behavior will be promptly reviewed. If acts of bullying are verified, disciplinary action may be taken against the perpetrator, consistent with his/her rights of due process.

Students who engage in bullying behavior shall be subject to school discipline up to and including expulsion in accordance with the Board’s policy on student discipline.

The detailed Board Policy and Administrative regulations can be accessed online at <http://blackboard.westport.k12.ct.us>. Under the “District” tab, link to “Policies”

For purposes of this policy, "Bullying" shall mean (1) any overt acts by a student or group of students directed against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity, which acts are repeated against any student over time and (2) any overt acts by a student or group of

students directed against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while off school grounds, which acts are repeated against any student over time.

For purposes of this policy, "school-sponsored activity" shall mean any activity conducted on or off school property (including school buses and other school-related vehicles) that is sponsored by the Board of Education.

LEGAL REFERENCES: Public Acts No.02-119 AND 06-115; Connecticut General Statutes Sections 10-233a through 10-233f

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Students shall behave in a manner that is conducive to our learning environment and educational process. Students shall:

- Use appropriate and respectful language
- Adhere to school and classroom rules and regulations
- Remain in the cafeteria during the assigned grade-level lunch wave and not go into the cafeteria during another grade's lunchtime
- Remove hats in the building; we do not permit students to wear hats
- Not chew gum
- Not bring any of the following into school: weapons, laser pointers, distracting toys, gadgets or games, 'prank' items, or any item that is a distraction to the learning or safety of self or others. Any item deemed to be a distraction or present a safety risk may be confiscated by a staff member. In general, items are held by a teacher for a duration of time, or delivered to a school administrator for further investigation, handling or processing.
- Keep food in the cafeteria unless specifically approved by a teacher

Follow the reasonable directions of teachers, school administrators, or other school employees. Respectful, responsible behavior is expected in the classroom, the halls, cafeteria, at recess, in the auditorium, on field trips and on school buses

Trespassing is prohibited in unsupervised classrooms, lavatories of the opposite sex, locker rooms and staff offices

Comply with school rules, classroom procedures and requirements. Students should:

Be in school every day. Regular school attendance is essential to educational success. If you are absent, you are not permitted to participate in after school activities including music performances, i.e. 'concerts.' Attendance is checked daily, and parents/guardians will be notified when their child is absent from school or class. If a student is going to be absent, parents should leave a message on our Attendance Hotline, 341-1599 before 8:00am

Be on time for school.

Students who arrive to school after 8:00 am are considered tardy. Late arriving students shall report to the main office to sign-in and receive a written pass to have their names removed from the absence list (automated call list). The only acceptable excuses for tardiness are signed notes by the parent or guardian. All tardies will be recorded and will appear on the student's permanent records. (Students arriving on a late bus are not considered tardy.)

- Be on time for class. The responsibility for being on time to class rests with each student
- Be prepared for class. All teachers will discuss with their classes specific requirements.
- Be in their scheduled class

Respect and assume responsibility for school and personal property.

- Destruction of property and acts of vandalism, graffiti, and theft - including books and other learning materials, without explicit permission of the owner are prohibited
- Do not litter anywhere in the school building, on school grounds, or on school buses

Dress in a manner that does not interfere with the work of the school or create a safety hazard to themselves or others.

- Westport Schools encourage students to dress in a manner that demonstrates pride in themselves and in their school. The school system requires that attire be safe, appropriate to the activity, and not distracting or disruptive to the educational program
- For more specific guidelines on student attire as approved by the Westport Board of Education, see the section titled, "Guidelines for Appropriate Attire for School." Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item, and if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. School staff may contact a parent during the school day to provide appropriate attire.

Demonstrate academic integrity.

A student who demonstrates academic integrity is honest. Students shall not engage in any form of academic misconduct, i.e., plagiarism, cheating, copying, altering records, or assisting another student in these actions. Do not submit someone else's work as your own. Students shall abide by the Westport Board of Education's Acceptable Use Policy. Comply with state, local and school health, safety and attendance statutes, local laws and regulations. Students shall:

- Have physical examinations in accordance with Board of Education policy
- Comply with Board of Education policy regarding use of medication
- Attend school regularly unless legally excused
- Not possess, sell, or use tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or drugs
- Not possess, sell, or use weapons (knives, guns, etc.)
- Not possess, sell, or use fireworks, explosives or other incendiary devices

Be a responsible bus rider.

- Students transported in a school bus are under the authority of and respond directly to the driver of the bus. It is crucial for students to behave appropriately while riding on the bus to

ensure their safety and that of other passengers, and to avoid distracting the bus driver. Students are required to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behavior. Excessive noise, pushing, shoving and fighting will not be tolerated

- Students shall: (see under heading “Daily Routines”)

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

The administration has established the following consequences to ensure compliance with the standards stated above. Appropriate action may include, although it is not limited to, one or more of the following:

- Conference with student and/or teacher and/or school counselor that includes a review of the school policy that deals with the given infraction
- Assignment of lunch detention or after-school central detention
 - After three accrued lunch detentions with a single marking period ($\frac{1}{4}$ the school year), students shall be assigned a central detention to be served after school from 2:45 pm - 3:30 pm.
- Conference with parent or guardian
- Requirement of financial restitution for damaged or lost school property
- Removal of privilege of participation in extracurricular activities or school events
- Removal of other privileges such as field trips, assemblies, graduation, etc.
- Dismissal of the student for the rest of the day
- Assignment of an in-school or out-of-school suspension for a specified period of time
- Referral to social and community agencies, as applicable
- Referral to police and/or fire departments, as applicable

MOBILE ELECTRONIC DEVICES: THE CELL PHONE POLICY

Use of cellular ‘smart’ phones by students is not permitted during school hours 8 am - 2:45 pm. Upon arrival to school, students are expected to lock their mobile device (ex. smartphone, tablet) in their locker before homeroom, which starts at 8 am. Bedford’s student lockers are carefully inspected and all combinations are changed every summer to make certain the lockers are 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.

Students found using a cell phone or 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 may 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.

DRESS GUIDELINES

The following guidelines apply to all regular school activities:

- Shoes appropriate for school activities must be worn at all times. Footwear standards are maintained for the prevention of accidents and injury. High-heeled shoes or sandal styles that make walking, running or other activities less safe for students are discouraged.
- Clothing and jewelry should be safe and free of writing, pictures, or any other insignia which are crude, vulgar, profane, or sexually suggestive or which advocate violence, racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice, or the use of drugs or alcohol.
- No clothing, article of clothing, or manner of wearing clothes that is inappropriately revealing is permitted. Underwear should not be visible.
- Clothing or jewelry which is distracting, or disruptive to the educational program, or which is gang-related, or which poses a threat to the physical well-being and safety of the students or others, shall not be worn on campus or at school activities.
- The principal and staff at each school may establish additional dress and grooming regulations, when necessary, for regular school activities and/or for times when students are engaged in extracurricular or other special school activities.
- Coaches and teachers may find it necessary to impose more stringent dress requirements to accommodate the special needs of certain sports and/or classes.
- Principals may confiscate inappropriate attire and provide a suitable substitute if available, and/or phone home to inform parents that a change of attire must be provided.
- Parents are advised to be sure that students have outerwear appropriate to the weather and to the activities in which they will engage, e.g., warm clothes for recess, rain/snow boots when needed and appropriate clothing in inclement weather.

REQUIRED ATTIRE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students are required to change clothes for physical education class. Items include: sneakers and socks, athletic shorts and a white crew-neck T-shirt (short or long sleeved). Students are expected to bring home their PE attire to launder on a regular basis. Long athletic pants and sweatshirts are recommended for colder weather. For safety, jewelry should not be worn and long hair should be secured back.

ACADEMICS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Every school wrestles with issues of academic integrity. In Westport, as elsewhere, we realize scholastic dishonesty has been made easier—and so much more tempting—with the advent of

the internet and of technology which brings a broad range of information within effortless reach of everyone.

To combat cheating we have adopted a range of consequences for students who violate the rules against unethical behavior. (These are enumerated both in the parent handbook and in the handbook of each individual.) But the outcome of soul-searching staff discussions is the recognition that our primary aim as a school system is not to catch and punish perpetrators, but to help children develop the appropriate degree of competence, learn to think analytically, value ethical behavior and take responsibility for their own actions. There is no doubt in our minds that values and academic goals are inseparable. Because, after all, who are the cheaters cheating? They are cheating themselves. If students do not truly learn and do their own work, but resort to subterfuges, they may, if undetected, look good on paper-but they will not have acquired the knowledge and skills needed for a successful life, or developed the confidence that accompanies the competence.

While the problem may seem more acute in the upper grades, the mind-set that either allows students to cheat, or protects them from the temptation, starts much earlier and is influenced not only by what we teach them at school, but what they see all around them, in their families and the world at large. Even as parents and teachers encourage students to get good grades and develop their transcripts, we need to help them see that the real value of education lies not in the grade, but in the learning it represents. At the start of this new school year we invite you, our partners in your children's education, to share the responsibility of reinforcing the attributes of diligent work, academic integrity and personal honesty that we all value.

CURRICULUM

Information pertaining to the curriculum can be found on the district website (<http://www.westport.k12.ct.us/>) under the district tab, link to "Curriculum and Program Information."

CONNECTIONS PROGRAM

Students and staff members meet in homerooms on a daily basis to accomplish the following goals:

- Communicate daily information regarding special events, schedule changes, etc.
- Promote positive self esteem
- Support and enhance academic success
- Promote improved peer relationships and social skills
- Strengthen student/teacher relationships
- Improve home/school communication
- Promote organization/study skills
- Once a week the homeroom period is extended to twenty five minutes so students and faculty may discuss topics relevant to student life in middle school.

HOMEWORK

Homework is designed to relate specifically to subject area and grade level content to support student:

- Development of skills
- Mastery of concepts associated with curricular essential questions
- Reinforcement of learning through practice, preparation and extensions

General Homework Guidelines for Parents

Homework may be assigned approximately for:

- o Grade 6: 1 – 1 ½ hours
- o Grade 7: 1 ½ - 2 hours
- o Grade 8: 2 – 2 ½ hours

If your child is unclear about homework assignments, we encourage you and your student to check the online Schoology site frequently for updates, your child's assignment book, or have your child contact a classmate. If homework is not assigned, students may always read a book for 30 minutes and practice organizational and study skills.

If a student is absent for more than three days due to illness, parents may contact the team leader and request that homework assignments be sent home. Teachers will provide homework assignments in a timely fashion after notification by a parent. All required assignments are expected to be completed and will be checked by the teacher.

Please Note:

- Homework will not be provided in advance for students taking vacation during school time. Upon returning from these unauthorized vacations, a student is obligated to meet with their teachers and make up missing assignments.
- Homework may be given over weekends to accommodate long term projects or as preparation for activities the following week. School and religious holidays must be taken into consideration when planning long term assignments or general homework assignments.

REPORT CARDS

- The school year is divided into four marking periods of approximately nine weeks each.
- Report cards will be available on-line after each marking period.
- If a student has accountability, i.e. money owed due to missing library books, missing textbooks, etc., the report card will be withheld until the problem is resolved.
- While teachers will generally work with students to plan a schedule for completing missing work, this is not a requirement of teachers.
- Students may receive an 'incomplete' ('I' on the report card) due to excessive missing work; an 'incomplete' may become a 'failure' ('F' on the report card) if students do not make up required work.

INTERIM PROGRESS REPORTS

All parents have access to the live eSchool gradebook feature through Home Access Center (HAC), as such, Interim Progress Reports (IPRs) are not generated. In lieu of IPRs, a ConnectEd email is sent to all parents with an alert that it is mid-marking period and a prompt to check their child's grades online. Parents with questions or concerns about their child's grades should contact the classroom teacher first, and then the counselor for additional assistance.

PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Westport Public Schools recognizes the value of its faculty as they work with students in Westport's classrooms. Their primary responsibility is to teach the students of Westport who attend our schools. Teacher time and energy is diverted when private service providers attempt to speak with Westport teachers to seek student information and/or request a visit to the classrooms of Westport students when school is in session.

In recognition of the valuable resources Westport teachers bring to their work with Westport students in our classrooms, Westport teachers are not required or expected to communicate with or provide information to private service providers. Similarly, visits to Westport classrooms by private service providers and/or agencies will not be permitted unless as part of the process necessary to determine or develop programming expressly specified by a qualified school official or central office official.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Conferences with teachers or school counselors can be initiated by parents, students, teachers, counselors, or the administration at any time during the school year.
- Please go to the on-line phone directory listed under "About BMS" for faculty and staff telephone numbers. Email addresses are generally formatted as the first letter of the staff member's name followed by their last name and the district email address. i.e. John Smith would be jsmith@westport.k12.ct.us.

LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER

The library is the "Information Hub" for Bedford Middle School. Students and staff can use a wide variety of resources to solve their information problems. Computers are available for word processing, database research and general internet use that complies with the district's Acceptable Use Policy.

The library is open every school day from 7:35am until 3:30pm. The Bedford librarian can be reached at 203-341-5110. Students are welcome at any time to select and borrow reading materials. Books may be borrowed for three weeks and may be renewed if needed for a longer

period of time. There is a limit of 5 books a student may borrow at one time. If a student has overdue materials, they will have their report card held until the materials are returned.

Library resources include:

- Computers for student use
- A wide variety of database subscriptions and instructional DVDs
- 16,000 volume fiction & nonfiction collection
- Internet/Web access with protections
- Print and full text computer based periodical collection
- Electronic card catalog and circulation system
- Audiobooks
- Video cameras and tripods
- Photocopier
- Library resources may be accessed from home by going into the BMS Library web page <http://blackboard.westport.k12.ct.us>

Students may use the library independently (with a pass from a teacher) or with a class or small group. Students are discouraged from using the library to socialize but are always welcome when working on projects or just browsing.

COMPUTER INSTRUCTION AT BMS

- The computer technology program serves all students in the school. Students will receive direct instruction relating to information technology literacy (ITL), related computer skills, competencies and a variety of classroom-integrated technology opportunities.
- The two ITL teachers and our Library Media Specialist deliver a program of skills instruction which includes word processing, digital photography, database, spreadsheet, presentation software, multimedia authoring, web page design, digital, video and still image editing.
- The programs used are Google Apps for Education, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, FrontPage, Access, PhotoShop, iMovie, and Web 2.0 tools, Sketchup and additional apps and programs new to the marketplace.
- Students use additional programs for special projects and as resources for assignments.
- Students will be introduced to Internet research and web page construction.
- Assessment in the ITL curriculum is integrated into the core subjects as the ITL curriculum and instruction follows a 'push-in' model. Students do not attend a separate computer class; the ITL teachers come into the core academic classes to teach skills and competencies needed to produce products and deliverables in the core academic programs.
- We do our best to monitor Internet use and we encourage dialogue at home regarding appropriate use of this medium.

STUDENT PROMOTION PROCEDURES

Before being promoted to the next grade, student achievement criteria must be met. The student must have a passing grade in each core academic subject. Core academic subjects are Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and World Language.

Students who earn a final grade of F in any core academic subject will be expected to complete one of the following options:

- Pass a course(s) in the Westport Summer School program in the same subject area.
- Pass an alternative course offered by Westport Summer School.
- Successfully complete an alternative educational experience determined in conjunction with the middle school and/or the high school principal, Superintendent of Schools, and the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum. One of these alternatives, at the parent's expense, must be completed before the child is promoted to the next grade.

Each case will be reviewed individually after the student completes the summer course work to best plan for the following school year. The program review will involve a special meeting with the student, the parent(s), the counselor, and the principal to plan the child's next school year.

Students who do not attend an appropriate summer school or alternative educational program, will be required to meet with the school principal and other selected staff in August before the next school year begins. At this time, retention in the prior grade will be considered for the student, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools.

Student grades will be reviewed at the end of each marking period. At that time, the parents of students in danger of failing a core academic course will be notified. The notification letter will list the options outlined in the above paragraph.

Promotion to ninth grade

Eighth graders are expected to achieve a passing grade in each core academic subject (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies). Their grades will be reviewed at the end of the third marking period in eighth grade.

- The parents of a student in danger of failing a core course will be notified and directed to enroll the student in a summer school course.
- If the student passes the regular course, summer enrollment may be dropped, but if the student fails the regular course he/she will be expected to take the summer course.
- If the student does not pass the summer course, there will be a mandated program assigned to the student in ninth grade at the high school.

COUNSELOR/PSYCHOLOGIST SUPPORT

- All students are assigned to a school counselor. The school counselor follows students through their three years at Bedford.
- Counselors are affiliated with grade level teams and as such provide small group support to address academic and social needs.
- When students are referred for individual assessment due to serious questions about performance in class, the psychologist administers and interprets individual tests to determine how best to address the student's learning needs. The results of these tests are combined with other data in a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting in order to make recommendations for an appropriate program. Parents are a part of this process.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Bedford offers special services for:

- Gifted and talented students- Challenge Program
- Students with special needs, physical or learning-related- Special Education (More information can be obtained through your child's counselor)
- Students for whom English is not their native language- ESL
- Students who are experiencing academic difficulties through support from the Student Support Team (SST).

FIELD TRIPS

- School sponsored field trips are an extension of classroom instruction designed to enhance the educational program.
- Students must return a parent signed permission slip in order to participate.
- Families who require financial aid should contact the grade level school counselor.

EXTRA HELP

- Each teacher provides extra help sessions either before school, after school, or during the lunch period.
- Please contact your child's teachers for the day and time of extra help sessions.

HONOR ROLL CRITERIA

- Classes will be weighted based on the number of times they meet per week per year.
- Beginning in the second marking period of 6th grade, students have the opportunity to achieve 1st or 2nd honors.
- No grade shall be below a C-.

- Students receiving an Incomplete ('I') are not eligible for honor roll until the incomplete is reconciled
- First honors are awarded for 7 points (A-) or above.
- Second honors are awarded for 4 points (B-) or above.

To compute honors, numerical equivalents are assigned to letter grades as shown below:

A+	= 9
A	= 8
A-	= 7
B+	= 6
B	= 5
B-	= 4
C+	= 3
C	= 2

<u>Course</u>	<u>Periods/week/year</u>	<u>Credit</u>
Language Arts	5	1
Math	5	1
Science	5	1
Social Studies	5	1
World Language	5	1
PE	3	0.6
Art	2	0.4
Orchestra	2	0.4
Band	2	0.4
Chorus	2	0.4
<u>Other Courses</u>	<u>Periods/week/year</u>	<u>Credit</u>
Full year	1 day/week	0.2
Full year	2 days/wk	0.4
Full year	3 days/wk	0.6

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Bedford Awards

These awards will be distributed in grade 6 only on a periodic basis based on criteria developed by our team of educators.

Scholar Leader Awards

Presented by the Connecticut Association of Superintendents to two eighth grade students (one male, one female) who have demonstrated outstanding academic and civil leadership.

Presidential Award For Academic Excellence

Presidential Academic Excellence Awards will be mailed to eighth graders who have maintained an A- or better average each marking period beginning with the second marking period of sixth grade and through the second marking period of eighth grade. Presidential Certificates will be mailed home to eighth graders who meet the criteria.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOL ISSUED MATERIALS

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

- Average usage and wear are expected.
- Students must pay for damaged or lost books.
- Report cards are held until overdue or lost books are returned or paid for.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- Loss or damage to your assigned musical instrument is the responsibility of the student and parent
- Check your homeowner's policy for coverage, limitations and exclusions; add necessary coverage if applicable

BICYCLES

- Students may not ride bikes to school due to the hazardous traffic conditions on North Avenue.

SCHOOL LOCKERS

- All students will be assigned their own lockers – a hallway locker and a gym locker.
- Students are not to share locker combinations at any time.
- BMS is not responsible for articles stored in lockers.
- Money or valuables may be brought to the main office for safekeeping.
- Broken locks or locker difficulty should be reported to the homeroom teacher or main office immediately
- Defacement of lockers is prohibited; stickers, writing with markers, etc. on interior or exterior are not permitted. Birthday decorating for self/others is prohibited.
- Above rules also apply to gym lockers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

STUDENT WELLNESS

The district recognizes that proper nutrition and adequate physical exercise are related to the well-being and growth of students, and their development and readiness to learn. Health and

well-being can enhance student learning, performance potential, and lifelong success. Further, healthy eating and appropriate physical activity are linked to reduced risk for mortality and the development of many chronic diseases. Therefore, as part of the total learning environment, the Westport Public School System promotes student health by supporting, as integral components of a coordinated approach to student health, good nutrition, regular physical activity, planned sequential health education, health services, counseling, psychological and social services, staff wellness, a healthful school environment, and parent and community participation.

While the primary responsibility for instilling healthy lifestyle choices in children resides with families, the Board of Education backs the family through policies and procedures that support health and wellness practices for students and staff, and discourages practices that do not support health or promote wellness, or which give students contradictory messages. Please visit “Health Services” under the BMS website for more information.

SCHOOL NURSE

- Bedford Middle School’s nurse will be on duty from 7:45am - 3:15pm daily.
- For the safety of the Bedford community, please report all communicable diseases by calling the nurse’s office at 341-1530.
- Parents should encourage students to report accidents which occur in school to the school nurse immediately.
- Parents must fill out and provide the school with a new Student Medical Information Form each year. This form is included in the summer mailing.
- In the event of illness or accidents, parents (or designated person) will be contacted at the telephone numbers listed on the Student Information Form.

Medications

- Students are not allowed to carry any medications, prescriptions or over-the-counter drugs in school, or self-medicate unless authorized by physician and school nurse. (Forms are available in nurse's office.)
- All medications must be provided with written authorization by physician, and must be in original prescription container, clearly labeled.
- Self-administration of inhaler or Epi-Pen is acceptable only with authorization from physician. (Forms are available in nurse's office.)
- New physician's orders are needed each school year.
- Extended excused absences from gym activities need a physician's note submitted to the school nurse.

STUDENT PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF

- Parents can drop off and pick up students only at the designed area located in front of the building outside the main entrance.
- Obey “one way” and “fire lane” signs on school property.
- Cars parked in fire lanes will be ticketed and/or towed.
- All cars must exit via Wakeman at the end of the school day.

SCHOOL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

School accident insurance is available to all students. The insurance information will be included in the summer mailing package; this information is also available to parents in the main office at any time during the school year.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Please check the BMS website for the annually updated clubs and activities booklet. Below are just some of the clubs and activities offered each year at BMS:

Blue Gold Council

The purposes of our Blue/Gold Council are to:

- Provide experience in democratic self-government
- Promote the general welfare of the school
- Enable staff and students to work together
- Members of the Blue/Gold Council help set the tone and spirit of our school.
- The council meets twice a month
- Council members are selected through an application process early in the school year

YEARBOOK

The Yearbook is a "picture remembrance" of Bedford, compiled by students under the direction of staff members. It has won many Columbia Scholastic Press Association awards. The yearbook is issued at the end of the school year and sold to the students.

- Comments written in yearbooks must reflect the standards of respect and responsibility expected in all school activities. Defacing a yearbook with inappropriate language or drawings will result in serious consequences

DRAMA

Bedford's drama program provides opportunities for students at all grade levels in all aspects of theatrical production

- A grade 7/8 musical will be performed in the fall
- A grade 6 play will be produced in the spring
- Participation is encouraged

MUSIC

Bedford's music program offers a wide range of musical experiences through its concert bands and orchestras, as well as, its select string, choral, and jazz ensembles

Grades 6, 7 and 8 concerts are held in December & May

BLUE/GOLD COMPETITION

Blue/Gold competition is a series of exciting events involving all students and faculty at Bedford Middle School.

- The Blue/Gold program involves two teams in academic and sports competitions throughout the school year
- Students are selected to represent their teams in soccer, flag football, volleyball, and basketball games, as well as the Academic Bowl
- During the year, students can contribute to their team's cumulative point score by participating in spirit days

INTRAMURALS

The intramural program gives the student body the opportunity to participate in a variety of sports.

- All intramural activities are held after school from 2:45pm - 4:15pm. A schedule of activities will be posted on the P.E. bulletin board
- Students are required to participate in a responsible, sportsmanlike manner.
- Any student who violates these expectations will not be allowed to participate. Any student under disciplinary action may be excluded from intramural activities.

BMS ANNUAL SPECIAL EVENTS

FALL/WINTER

Back-to-School Nights
School Pictures
Grade 7 and 8 Drama Musical
Winter Concerts
Grade level field trips

SPRING

Grade 6 Drama Production
Grade 7 & 8 Drama Workshop
Grade level field trips
Spring Concerts
Grade 8 end of year Activities
8th Grade Moving Up Celebration
Field Day

Please visit our website for dates and information relating to these events

<http://bms.westport.k12.ct.us/>

PHONE NUMBERS

For BMS Staff direct lines and student/parent numbers, see The Bedford Directory.

Attendance Line 203-341-1599
School Cancellation Line 203-341-1SNO

School offices:

- o Superintendent 203-341-1010
- o Special Education 203-341-1253
- o Curriculum 203-341-1213
- o Continuing Education 203-341-1206
- o Transportation, Buses 203-341-1754