



# BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Parents/Guardians

When I sat down to write this very unique welcome letter, I reflected upon my years of experience in education, and the common theme I know to be true; we want the very best for our children... as parents, teachers, administrators, and the school community as a whole.

I recognize that as we enter this new school year, it is a time when there are many different feelings, opinions, and viewpoints. Yet within our Bridgewater-Raritan community, it has been encouraging to see how acceptance far exceeds judgement, and how so many are lifting each other up in big and small ways.

We want our children to feel safe and understood. We want them to be engaged and learning, as well as building peer relationships and self-esteem. We want each student to have their needs met as individuals; to experience success, and when not successful, to learn from mistakes, to persevere and to be resilient.

To accomplish this, we at Bridgewater-Raritan Middle School have been focused on planning a strong start to the school year. Although September will look different, as may the months that follow, I am confident that this 20-21 school year has the potential to offer wonderful experiences and opportunities.

We are committed to supporting students in every way we can. We know that attitude and outlook play such an important role in their lives as middle schoolers, and therefore our job as role models is to stay positive, project confidence, and demonstrate resilience. These tools will not only help them this year, but well into the future. We invite you to join us in a commitment to be positive and provide our students with a sense of optimism and belief that we can, and will, persevere through this pandemic. Please see important information below.

## **The parent portal opens today, September 1, 2020!**

The first day of classes for students is Tuesday, September 8th. It will be an A day so students will have their period 1-4 classes. All students, regardless of whether you were assigned an A day or B day cohort, should log in to virtual instruction starting September 8th. The Middle School schedule is below and can be found on our [BRMS website](#) :

## **Virtual Only Schedule September 8, 2020- October 9, 2020 Half Day Schedule**

Time	A Day	B Day	
8:30-9:35	TB 1	TB 5	Synchronous
9:38-10:43	TB 2	TB 6	Synchronous
10:47-11:52	TB 3	TB 7	Synchronous
11:55-1:00	TB 4	TB 8	Synchronous

Classes are 65 minute classes with 3-4 minutes between classes. Students will meet with their period 1-4 classes on an A day and periods 5-8 on a B day. Below is a schedule of A/B days through October 9, 2020. We will also post the A/B calendar on our website. If your child is having difficulties, please contact his/her teacher, counselor, or assistant principal.

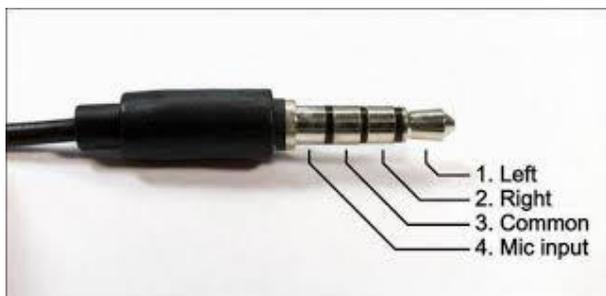
Week 1	Monday	Tuesday-9/8	Wednesday-9/9	Thursday-9/10	Friday-9/11
8:30-1:00	No School	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8
Week 2	Monday-9/14	Tuesday-9/15	Wednesday-9/16	Thursday-9/17	Friday-9/18
8:30-1:00	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4
Week 3	Monday-9/21	Tuesday-9/22	Wednesday-9/23	Thursday-9/24	Friday-9/25
8:30-1:00	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8
Week 4	Monday-9/28	Tuesday-9/29	Wednesday-9/30	Thursday-10/1	Friday-10/2
8:30-1:00	No School	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8
Week 5	Monday-10/5	Tuesday-10/6	Wednesday-10/7	Thursday-10/8	Friday-10/9
8:30-1:00	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4	B Day Period 5-8	A Day Period 1-4

### Technology Information

- The PowerSchool Parent Portal allows a parent/guardian to access information specific to his/her child. Parents/guardians will use this access to find teacher placement, confirm emergency contact information, review student attendance throughout the year, and access report card information. Please be sure to verify that your Emergency Contact information is accurate. Information about how to access PowerSchool was sent out yesterday from Central Office. [Parent Letter 8/31](#). This letter can also be found on the district website.
- SchoolMessenger is a system that provides parents with the ability to view and listen to messages sent from the school or district. Parents/guardians can provide contact information for communication matters, and it allows for customization of how messages are received from the school or district. Please review [School Messenger Notifications](#) for more information.
- As part of the STAR initiative, all students at the middle school will be issued a chromebook for the school year. Information about the program including insurance for your child's chromebook can be found here [BRMS STAR Program](#) or on the district website [BRRSD STAR Program](#)
- It is important that students have a quiet learning space that is comfortable with limited distractions. More information and recommendations can be found here. [Guide to Virtual Learning](#)
- Students are expected to log in to each class at the start of the class when attendance will be taken by the teacher. Teachers will be taking attendance and parents do not need to complete a Google attendance form. Parents should follow regular procedures for reporting an absence which can be found on our website. [Reporting an Absence](#)

- Students should remain on the Google Meet for the entire period in order to be marked as present for the class. Students should have their cameras on during the class and be reminded that all school rules about appropriate behavior is expected.
- If you are having technical difficulties with your chromebook, email [DLDTech@brrsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:DLDTech@brrsd.k12.nj.us)
- Information regarding technology and virtual learning can be found on the middle school and district website. [Guide to Virtual Learning](#) You can also find this information and the FAQs under the Virtual Learning tab on the District website. It will be updated frequently with new information and resources. This will include a video and instructions explaining how to access your child's Google account and how to join your child's Google Classroom
- Chromebook Headset-Your Chromebook is equipped with a combo headphone/microphone connection. It is located on the side of your device.

When selecting a headset, please ensure that it is a headset that uses only one trrs connector like the image below:



(Notice the 3 black rings)

Another option would be to use a USB headset. Although Bluetooth headsets will work, we do not recommend them because of connectivity and battery issues.

You can find information about insurance for your child's chromebook on our website. [Chromebook Insurance Information](#)

- The middle school Back to School Nights are scheduled for 7:00 PM Wednesday, September 9th for 7th grade and Thursday, September 10th for 8th grade. Back to School Nights will be live through google meets. More information to follow.

### **Nurses' Corner**

The following information is intended to educate students about good hygiene practices and to prepare all students for attending school confidently and safely. These recommendations are in line with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for safely returning to school. Please review this information with your child prior to the start of school.

### **HAND HYGIENE**

Regular handwashing is the best way to remove germs, prevent the spread of germs to other people, and avoid getting sick yourself. Viruses and bacteria can get on your hands when you touch contaminated surfaces or when you are around someone who is sick. Germs can then enter your body when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Your child should be instructed to:

- Wash hands before leaving home in the morning.

- Use hand sanitizer and rub hands for 20 seconds when soap and water are not available. Follow the specific instructions on the sanitizer label.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth throughout the day.
- Wash or sanitize hands before eating, after using the bathroom, or whenever hands are soiled.
- Cough or sneeze into the elbow or a tissue to reduce the spread of germs and follow up by sanitizing hands.

Please click on the following links to review good handwashing practices including a great video reminder from Baby Shark for younger children.

[Handwashing Steps](#)

[Did You Wash Your Hands?](#)

[Wash Your Hands with Baby Shark](#)

### **WEARING A FACEMASK** (Once we return to in-person learning)

Students are required to wear a mask on the bus and at school. Masks should not be removed after getting off the bus outside of the school due to the difficulty of controlling social distancing while students are entering the school building. It is important that students practice wearing a mask for longer periods of time NOW since they will be away from home for approximately 6 hours each in-school day. The following are a few things that you can do to prepare your child for wearing a mask at school:

- Face masks must cover both the nose and mouth.
- Face masks may not be shared.
- Face masks may not have a vent.
- Face masks should be labeled with first and last name.
- Cloth masks must be washed daily in hot water.
- Three-ply surgical type masks or two-layer cloth masks have been shown to be best in minimizing viral spread through the mask.
- Face shields are not permitted as a replacement for a face mask.
- All requests for face mask exemptions must be submitted to the school nurse for review by our school physician.
- Face masks, like other clothing worn at school, must be appropriate and adhere to the dress code.
- Masks that are not acceptable: Vented masks, gaiter-type masks, bandanas, scarves, or a face shield without a mask.
- Have multiple masks for your child so that you can wash them daily and have a back-up ready.
- Have your child practice putting on and taking off the mask while only touching the straps.
- Provide your child with a container to store the mask when not wearing (e.g., when eating a snack).

Please click on the following links to learn about wearing a facemask properly as well as tips for parents from the American Academy of Pediatrics regarding face coverings for children.

[Facemask Do's and Don'ts](#)

[Cloth Face Coverings and Mask Demo](#)

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Social distancing, or physical distancing, means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your own household. It is known that COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact (within 6 feet) for a prolonged period of time (10 minutes or longer). Respiratory droplets deposited in the air after a person coughs, sneezes, or talks can be inhaled by other people nearby, potentially causing germs to spread. While in school, students will be instructed to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other students and staff as much as possible.

Please click on the following link for social distancing information.

[Social Distancing](#)

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

Your child should stay at home if feeling sick. Students will not be allowed to remain at school if any of the following symptoms are present: fever, chills, cough, and/or shortness of breath. Other symptoms may warrant exclusion from school and will be at the discretion of the School Nurse. In addition, if your child or any other member of your household tests positive for COVID-19, your child must stay at home even if not experiencing symptoms. It is important to understand that the exclusion policy for illness is for the health and safety of all students and staff.

Please click on the following link for helpful ways to manage symptoms.

[Managing COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

## OTHER WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL

- **Make sure that you update your contact information and provide a reliable, trusted emergency contact who will be able to pick up your child promptly (within 30 minutes) if needed.**
- Talk with your child about how school will look different (e.g., desks spaced farther apart, teachers maintaining physical distance, eating a snack in the classroom, possibly less changing of classes, early dismissal).
- Talk with your child often about how school is going and how your child is feeling.
- Watch for behavior changes such as sadness, crying, worry, change in eating or sleeping habits which may be signs of stress and anxiety; reach out to your child's teacher or counselor with any concerns.
- Try to attend meetings with school staff when requested.
- Be a role model for your child by taking care of yourself, wearing a mask in social situations, and practicing physical distancing in group situations.

Please click on the following link for more information from the CDC about returning to school.

[CDC Link](#)

## VACCINE AND PHYSICAL EXAM REQUIREMENTS

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All requirements for vaccines and physicals remain the same this year for all students, including students who are attending our virtual school program. The value of vaccines is even more important during this pandemic and will not be waived or extended for the current school year per the New Jersey

Department of Health. The Bridgewater-Raritan School District must comply with this state mandate, and therefore, appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Also, please remember that flu season runs from October to May, with a peak from December through February. It is highly recommended that your child get a flu vaccine this year to reduce the risk of becoming ill from COVID-19 and the flu virus at the same time. Even mild respiratory symptoms, such as cough or congestion, will result in your child's exclusion from school. The flu vaccine may provide additional protection for potential co-infection, as well as reduce absences from school.

Please make sure that your child's required vaccines are submitted to the School Nurse prior to the start of school. Remember that updated vaccine records must be submitted for new students to our district as well as 6th grade students (Tdap and MCV4). **Your child will not be allowed to attend our in-school programs nor our virtual programs if vaccines are not up-to-date.** In addition, new students to the district must submit a current physical exam (completed within the last 365 days) within 30 days of enrollment.

[NJ Vaccine Requirements](#)

I am excited for this school year, and appreciate the teamwork of the BRMS staff, and the unity of our home-school partnership. We look forward to a successful start to the new school year! Welcome back!

Warm regards,



Chris Steffner

*And once the storm is over you won't remember how you made it through...  
You won't be the same person who walked in.  
That's what this storm is all about...Haruki Murakami*