

Westport Public Schools



WESTPORT MIDDLE SCHOOLS HANDBOOK 2021-2022



BEDFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL

<https://bms.westportps.org/>

88 North Avenue Westport, CT
Main: 203-341-1500

Adam Rosen, Principal

Denise Emmerthal, Vice Principal

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COLEYTOWN MIDDLE SCHOOL

<https://cms.westportps.org/>

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Main: 203-341-1600

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WELCOME TO MIDDLE SCHOOL IN WESTPORT!

At our middle schools, we encourage creative thinking, critical thinking, global thinking and communication. Our goal is to help you experience the love of learning and the joy of discovery. We want you to respect yourself while learning to care and empathize with your peers and school community. We continually strive to create a dynamic learning environment that recognizes your unique qualities as a middle school student and help you to be successful especially when facing challenges. The middle school community believes:

Students should be happy to be at school; school should be a joyful place

1. 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
2. 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
3. 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
4. Students should be safe at all times — physically, emotionally, intellectually

The Westport Public Schools Mission Statement

The Mission of the Westport Public Schools is to prepare all students to reach their full potential as life-long learners and socially responsible contributors to our global community. We achieve this by fostering critical and creative thinking and collaborative problem solving through a robust curriculum delivered by engaging and dedicated educators. We are committed to maintaining an environment that supports inquiry and academic excellence, emotional and physical well-being, appreciation of the arts and diverse cultures, integrity and ethical behavior.

Middle School Philosophy

Westport's Middle Schools seek to develop a sense of community between our students, staff, and parents. Our mission is to enhance, to the fullest extent possible, the social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of our students. We offer a strong academic and special area program, guided by clearly developed learning outcomes for each subject. Embedded within each subject area are a variety of differentiated instructional strategies designed to meet

the needs of each learner.

Guiding Principles

Westport Public School students, educators, and the WPS team aspire to be:

- emotionally and socially aware,
- kind with sincerity,
- principled in thought and action, and
- learning always.

School Links

Coleytown Middle School Online: <https://cms.westportps.org/>

Bedford Middle School Online: <http://Middle School.westportps.org>

Westport Public Schools Online: <http://www.westportps.org>

This Handbook has been designed to provide our students and families an overview of the school operations, policies and student expectations. Please take a few minutes to familiarize yourselves with this information; the table of contents is linked to each section. We know that when parents and teachers work together in partnership, students benefit. The role of families is vital to student success. There are numerous ways parents can get involved in our learning community including PTA sponsored events, volunteer opportunities, school performances and open houses.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, we are looking forward to working with you and your child. Please feel free to contact us or your child's team leader, school counselor or grade-level administrator regarding questions or concerns you may have. If you need to contact the school after business hours, please leave a message or send an email and your contact will be returned as soon as possible.

Respectfully,

Adam Rosen, BMS Principal and Kris Szabo, CMS Principal

TEMPORARY COVID19 SAFETY MEASURES

NO VISITORS PERMITTED

No visitors are permitted at the middle schools: no parents, guardians, siblings, out-of-town guests/relatives; prospective students may not "shadow" current students.

Only registered students and staff are permitted.

STUDENTS & STAFF MUST WEAR MASKS INDOORS AT ALL TIMES

In accordance with Westport Schools health and safety universal masking policy and protocol, all students and staff are mandated and required to wear protective masks covering nose and mouth while indoors at school; this includes wearing masks at all times while riding on the school buses.

- Where special exceptions to this rule exist, additional health and safety measures will be in place to mitigate exposure and transmission.
 - Lunch: Students take off their masks to eat lunch. To control for Covid19 exposure and allow for systematic and reliable contact tracing, all students will be assigned to a specific lunch table with up to 4 students with clear plastic tri fold shields to minimize student-to-student exposure. This arrangement provides

social distance while unmasked indoors.

PLEASE REPORT POSITIVE COVID19 CASES ASAP

As cases of COVID-19 continue to rise, it is critical that we remain vigilant with our strategies to help prevent transmission in our community and in our schools. Please continue to screen your child daily for signs and symptoms of illness, and keep your child home if they have any symptoms, including;

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

In addition, if your child is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is tested, your child should not come to school until the results are back and are confirmed negative.

Should your child obtain a positive test result for COVID-19, it is critical that the District is notified immediately. To assist with this process the administration has established a dedicated email and a dedicated voicemail for parents to communicate positive results. Either method of communication can be used.

Westport Public Schools Positive COVID-19 Student Case Report Line 203-341-1016

Westport Public Schools Positive COVID-19 Student Case Report Email:

PositiveCovidReport@westportps.org

Include the following information when reporting a positive COVID-19 test result for your child:

1. Name of Person Making Report
2. Contact Phone Number of Person Making Report
3. Name of Student with Positive COVID-19 Test Results
4. Grade of Student with Positive COVID-19 Test Results
5. School of Student with Positive COVID-19 Test Results
6. Date Positive COVID-19 Test Results were shared with the Student
7. For any concerns or questions please don't hesitate to reach out to your school nurse for guidance.

Academic Life

Middle School Teaching Team Structure

Teaching teams is the organizational foundation of Westport's Middle Schools. All students are organized into teams; teams consist of four core teachers with support staff who deliver the core curriculum through instruction geared toward the middle level learner (language arts, math, science, social studies). Core teachers work with the students assigned to their teaching team; each team meets daily to discuss all issues related to student learning. Grade-level school counselors are assigned to each grade level; the counselor tracks with their cohort throughout

their middle school experience.

Teams provide a positive social structure for students and ensure the delivery of a challenging and coordinated curriculum. The development of positive relationships with students is the goal of all teams. Through teaming, students develop trust in their teachers. These trusting relationships are critical as students develop intellectually, physically, and emotionally, while searching for more autonomy.

There will be two teams per grade level. Each grade level will work within a flexible block schedule, which will empower teachers to flexibly use the teaching time assigned to them to better meet student needs.

GRADE 6 - Students are grouped in teams with four teachers for the core subjects: language arts, math, science and social studies. Grade level special subjects are: World Language, physical education, health, art, computer, drama/presentation skills, design & engineering and a choice of general music, band, chorus or orchestra, music and technology.

GRADE 7 - Students are grouped in teams with four teachers for the core subjects: language arts, math, science and social studies. Grade level special subjects are: World Language, physical education, health, art, computer, drama/presentation skills, design & engineering, and a choice of general music, band, chorus or orchestra, music and technology.

GRADE 8 - Students are grouped in teams with four teachers for the core subject: language arts, math, science, and social studies. Grade level special subjects are: World Language, physical education, health, art, design & engineering, and a choice of general music, band, chorus or orchestra, music and technology.

Middle School Social Emotional Learning Block: Referred to as Prime Time at CMS and Connections at BMS, these are scheduled throughout the school year to discuss and explore topics relating to students' social-emotional wellness and executive functioning.

Middle School Hours

The school day for students: 8:30am to 3:15pm

Early dismissals (commonly referred to as 'half days') are scheduled and appear on the district calendar; the early dismissal time for Middle School is 12:45 pm

Students may arrive before 8am if they are part of a special music performing group

The middle school main office is open from 8am-4pm during scheduled school days.

The telephone number for BMS is 203-341-1500 and for CMS 203-341-1600.

Students may not arrive prior to 8am unless scheduled to meet with a specific teacher for extra help, a planned meeting for a school club/organization or attend a specialty music performance group rehearsal.

Standardized Testing at the Middle School Level

The Following standardized test are mandated by the State of Connecticut and the federal government (Every Student Succeeds Act) Mandated Test Subjects Grades Administered Time Frame:

- Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) Mathematics, English Language Arts (grades 6-7-8; spring)
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment Science (grade 8 only; spring)

- Connecticut Physical Fitness Physical Fitness (grades 6 & 8; ongoing)
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Subjects may include: Arts, Civics, Economics, Geography, Math, Reading, Science, U.S. History, Writing (grade 8; winter)

Homework

The Westport Board of Education considers homework to be a valuable and necessary part of the educational process, appropriate for all subject areas, not just those traditionally considered academic. This position is based on the beliefs that:

- Education is a continuous process that takes place out of school as well as in school. Homework promotes a wide range of interests, encourages creativity, fosters increasing independence and supports the development of good work habits.
- Homework can reinforce skills and content taught in school. Through their reading of assigned material, e.g. for social studies or language arts, students may acquire additional knowledge as well as prepare for class discussion.
- Homework can be a time for quiet immersion in intellectual pursuits, for self-discovery, and for the pleasure of independent learning, thus preparing students for further education and future careers.

In support of its position, the Board sets forth the following policies:

- A broad definition of "homework" includes not only written work or other assignments clearly academic in nature, but also related activities such as viewing a specific TV program, reading the newspapers or periodicals, talking to people about particular topics, news reporting, collecting material for use in class, reading for pleasure and other activities which are related to the classroom work but assigned to be done out of the classroom.
- The quantity of homework and the nature of the assignments should support the curriculum, be appropriate to the children's ages and reflect teachers' judgment of their students' needs and abilities. Therefore, the amount of homework assigned is to gradually increase as students progress through the grades, reflecting the increasing demands of the program, and facilitating transition to higher levels.
- Parents as well as teachers have an important role in children's education, and homework can be a vital link between home and school. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to find ways to involve parents in their children's work, referring to the suggested "Role of Parents," attached.
- It is the responsibility of each school to communicate to parents the school's expectations with regard to homework, and of teachers to inform students and parents of the homework requirements of specific courses.
- No matter how carefully teachers may plan homework assignments, they face the issue of individual differences among children in ability, in work habits, and, particularly with younger students, in stamina. Therefore, the Board encourages teachers and parents to communicate with one another freely when children seem to be spending too little time on homework - or too much.

General Homework Guidelines

The quality of homework and the nature of the assignments should support the curriculum, be appropriate to the children's ages and reflect teachers' judgment of their students' needs and abilities. High-quality homework:

- Motivates and engages students
- Promotes agency for students to initiate, strategize, and problem-solve

- Offers real-life authentic transfer of skills and concepts students are learning in school
- Reflects the various abilities, interests, and learning styles
- Provides students with feedback that is immediate, task-based, and results in improvement
- Provides parents with information about learning

Homework Guidelines for the Middle Schools

Daily Homework: The time allotments below are based on a typical school night; exceptions will occur and individual circumstances may warrant additional time.

- Grade 6: Average 60 minutes per day; additional daily reading strongly encouraged
- Grade 7: Average 70 minutes per day; additional daily reading strongly encouraged
- Grade 8: Average 80 minutes per day, additional daily reading strongly encouraged
- *Next day homework assignments are not given on holidays or during school vacations.*

Students will:

- Keep track of their assignments in a systematic way.
- Manage their time in a way that allows for successful homework completion.
- Advocate for their individual needs and ask for help when necessary.
- Complete homework after absences within a reasonable and agreed upon amount of time as determined by the classroom teacher and student.

Teachers will:

- Clearly communicate directions, expectations, and due dates for homework and post online in a timely manner.
- Articulate the purpose for homework assignments.
- Inform students what kind of feedback will be received and return that feedback within a timeframe communicated with students.
- Provide students with additional support on homework assignments, if students request assistance and additional support can be provided (i.e. conferencing with a student on a writing assignment.)

Parents will:

- Provide a supportive environment and time for homework.
- Encourage their children to ask for help when necessary.
- Encourage students to communicate with their teachers regarding issues of homework.
- Contact their child's teacher if they feel their child is spending too much or not enough time on homework.
- Make sure that homework authentically reflects the work of the student and allows the teacher to assess the student's actual level of skill (knowledge, mastery, progress.)

Make-Up Work After Absence

When a child's excused absence extends beyond three consecutive days, special homework will be provided if requested or necessary. Parents may arrange for special homework by notifying the child's teacher of the need. When the work is ready, parents may pick it up at the school office or it may be delivered through other means.

In accordance with State law, in cases of extended absence due to illness or injury, the school will provide instruction at home according to Board policy.

Children with unexcused absences for no more than three 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.)

Extended unexcused absences for family vacations, etc.

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.

Children are not penalized by the school for absences due to family vacations. That is, they are not given zeros for work missed. Depending upon the teacher's judgment of the value of 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 such 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 is the responsibility of the parents, not the school.

Scheduling Homework and Tests Near Religious Holidays

Normal activities may proceed on religious holidays that are not school holidays but students are not required to attend and may not be penalized for missing practices, rehearsals, etc., because of religious observance.

Special Programs/New Material: Whenever possible teachers should avoid introducing new material or scheduling special programs or activities at times when some students may be absent for religious observance.

Homework and Tests: Students observing religious holidays may make up tests or homework due on the day after a holiday, except for assignments given weeks in advance. Tests should not be given on religious holidays.

Note: The homework caveat need not apply to assignments established weeks in advance. During any lengthy period, many students encounter diversions due to family obligations, temporary illness, extra-curricular activities, and after school jobs, as well as religious observances. It is appropriate to expect students to plan ahead, so that they can complete their work on time despite those other demands.

Extra Help

Each teacher provides extra help sessions before or after school. Teachers will post an extra help schedule on the web page. If your child is unable to attend the scheduled sessions then he/she should make arrangements with his/her teacher for another time.

Report Cards

6th, 7th, & 8th Grades: The school year is divided into four marking periods of approximately nine weeks each. Report Cards are available online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents wishing to receive a hardcopy should contact the Guidance Secretary. Parents can access the PowerSchool Parent Portal by using this link: <http://powerschool.westportps.org> If a student has any accountability, i.e. outstanding library books, lost textbooks, etc., Parent

Portal access to the report card will be denied until the issue is resolved.

Any student who has received a grade of Incomplete should attend extra help sessions. Teachers will help students to plan a schedule for completing back work or tests. An Incomplete becomes a Failure if the student does not make up the work or tests as scheduled. See the School Calendar for Marking Period and Report Card dates.

Interim Progress Reports (IPRs) are not generated. All parents have access to the PowerSchool GradeBook feature through the Parent Portal. In lieu of IPRs parents will receive an email alerting parents it is mid-marking period and prompting them to check their child's grades online. Parents who have questions or concerns about their child's grades should contact the teacher first.

Scholastic Recognition

Criteria to determine honors are outlined below:

Classes will be weighted based on the number of times they meet per week per year.

Note: Calculation for Grade Six Honors begins in the second marking period. No grade shall be below a C-. Students receiving an Incomplete (I) are not eligible for honors until the incomplete is made up. First honors is awarded for 7 points (A-) or above. Second honors is awarded for 4 points (B-) or above. To compute honors, numerical equivalents are assigned to letter grades as shown below

Letter Grade	Points	Letter Grade	Points	Letter Grade	Points
A+	9	B+	6	C+	3
A	8	B	5	C	2
A-	7	B-	4	C-	1

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. Most field trips require a fee as well as encourage and/or require parent participation as volunteer chaperones. Financial assistance is available for families who qualify. Parents should contact Westport Department of Human Services at 341-1069 or hsyouth@westportct.gov for more information. Snacks and other food items brought on field trips should be free of peanuts and tree nuts; students are not permitted to share food.

Financial Assistance for School Activities

The Westport Public Schools system is committed to providing every Westport resident's child enrolled in our schools with the opportunity to participate fully in all school activities, regardless of their family's ability to pay. Therefore, if your personal financial situation changes for reasons related to employment, marital status, health, or other unexpected circumstances, and you are unable to provide your children with the funds necessary for participation in field trips, musical instrument rentals, or other school-related events and activities, you are urged to contact your child's guidance counselor to advise him/her of your need for their assistance. All requests will be held in strict confidence.

Promotion to Ninth Grade

To be promoted to high school, eighth grade students are expected to achieve a passing grade in each of these core academic subjects: English, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. If, at the end of the third marking period, a student is failing one or more of these subjects for the year, the student's parents will be notified, and a meeting will be held with the student, his or her parents, grade level counselor and a school administrator to determine the following:

- If any of the student's course recommendations for high school should be changed
- If a RTI meeting needs to be called to discuss the student's difficulties and possible supports
- If the student should pursue opportunities to bolster his/her skills through a summer course

Distribution of Materials to Students or Parents

Materials that are not part of the approved curriculum may not be distributed by anyone to students in school, on school grounds or on school buses that are owned or leased by the Board of Education.

Library Media Center (LMC)

Students and staff can use a wide variety of resources; computers are available for student work and research. The LMC is open every school day from 8am-3:15pm. Please visit your school's LMC webpage for more information about our extensive resources. Students are welcome at any time to select and check-out materials using their student ID. Books may be borrowed for two weeks and may be renewed as needed. Library resources include:

- Internet-ready devices
- Extensive collections (fiction, non-fiction, media)
- WiFi
- Magazines; Graphic Novels
- Electronic card catalog and circulation system.
- Video viewing, editing, video cameras, tripods, microphones, associated equipment for digital video production
- Library resources may be accessed from home by going to the library page on our website.

Music

Middle School's music program offers a wide variety of musical experiences for students through its band, orchestra, chorus and classroom programs.

Instrumental opportunities include: String Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra and Stage Band for grades 6, 7 & 8. Students are scheduled for classes and pulled out for small group lessons.

Singing opportunities include: Grades 6, 7, & 8 Chorus and Camerata.

Performances for these groups include: Winter and Spring grade level and select group concerts for grades 6, 7, 8.

Townwide Festivals are scheduled annually in the district and school assemblies. The Band will march in the Memorial Day Parade.

Support Services

The Middle Schools offer special services for:

- Gifted and talented students.
- Students with special needs, physical or learning-related (More information can be obtained through your child's counselor).
- Students requiring special accommodations under 504.
- Students for whom English is not their native language (ESOL).
- Response To Intervention (RTI) services for math, literacy and organization needs.

School Counselor & School Psychologist Support

All students within a grade level are assigned to one grade-level counselor; each grade-level counselor rotates up with their cohort of students for all 3 middle school years.

School counselors are affiliated with grade level teams and provide individual and small group support to address academic and social needs.

The student, parent, teacher or administration may initiate contact with the school counselor.

Grade 8 Moving Up Ceremony

At the end of the school year a ceremony is held to recognize the 8th grade class moving up to 9th grade. Students receive a certificate acknowledging their completion of the middle school program.

Private Sector Providers

The Westport Public Schools recognizes the value of its faculty members 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 for a student with special needs.

High School Courses Taken By Middle School Students

High school level courses taken by middle school students in middle school, will appear on the high school transcript with a grade but will not be included in the GPA and will receive no credit.

High school level courses taken by middle school students at the high school will appear on the high school transcript with a grade which will be included in the GPA and will receive credit.

World Language taken for three years at middle school is equivalent to high school world language level 1.

Standards of Behavior & Discipline

Title IX: Westport Schools Non-Discriminatory Practices

In compliance with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Westport schools do not discriminate in employment or in educational opportunity on the basis of sex, handicap, race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status or sexual orientation.

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for coordinating efforts to implement these non-discriminatory practices. The phone number is (203) 341-1004. The statute requires annual posting of the statement of non-discrimination on the basis of sex and handicap since the

population of both students and employees changes each year.

Expectations for Student Conduct

Westport Schools middle school community values positive character traits including respect, personal responsibility, honesty, integrity, compassion and acceptance for all.

Students are expected to show respect for one another, our school and his/herself. Students are expected to take responsibility for doing what is right, to try his/her best and to accept responsibility for their actions (including learning from mistakes). Students are expected to show compassion and kindness towards others, to be sensitive and tolerant of one another's differences and to learn to resolve conflict on his/her own. Students are expected to tell the truth, keep his/her word, to avoid spreading rumors or gossip and to always stand up for what is right.

To provide an environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to learning, the school - in cooperation with parents - expects that students will:

- Comply with state, local, and school health, safety and attendance regulations.
- Show respect, courtesy and consideration for all members of the school community at all times.
- Behave in a manner that is not disruptive to the educational process.
- Comply with classroom procedures and requirements as designed for their individual needs.
- Respect and assume responsibility for school and personal property.
- Maintain a clean, neat appearance and dress in a manner that does not interfere with the work of the school or create a safety hazard to themselves or others, e.g. T-shirts with lewd messages, innuendo, and/or promote alcohol/tobacco/drug products are unacceptable and not permitted.
- Maintain honesty and integrity in academic work and in dealing with fellow students and teachers.

School Rules & Standards of Behavior

The following school rules address our standards of behavior in school, on school grounds, or on buses:

- Use of cell phones, cameras, and other personal handheld devices is prohibited during the school day. These items will be confiscated.
- Hats may not be worn in the building.
- Backpacks must be kept in students' lockers at all times and are used only as students arrive at school and leave school.
- Gum chewing is not allowed.
- Skateboards are not allowed.
- Roller blades or wheelie sneakers may not be used on school grounds except in PE classes.
- Potentially disruptive objects, such as laser pens, and electronic devices or toys are not allowed.
- Sale of any items by students is unacceptable.
- Carrying or self-administering any medication is not allowed unless prior arrangements have been made with the office. (See Health and Safety).
- Dangerous and/or illegal items (firecrackers, matches, lighters, tobacco, vaping devices, or alcoholic substances and paraphernalia) are forbidden on school property or at school.

- sponsored events.
- Bullying and/or threatening behavior is unacceptable.
- Weapons or any facsimile, regardless of intent, are not allowed on school grounds.
- A "Zero Tolerance" Policy is in effect at all times at the Middle Schools.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to exhibit integrity in carrying out their academic responsibilities. This means always doing their own work; never turning in the work of another person as their own; writing their own reports; never using the words of another without attribution; not plagiarizing work that they find in books or on the internet; and, not cheating on exams. Students who violate these ethical standards will face serious consequences ranging from receiving a lower grade on a test or project, to receiving no credit for the work, to receiving a lower grade for a marking period, to failing the course.

Westport Middle Schools Anti Bullying Policy

"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 the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic communication, such as cyberbullying, directed at or referring to another student attending school in the same school district, or a physical act or gesture by one or more students repeatedly directed at another student attending school in the same school district, that:

- 1.) causes physical or emotional harm to such student or damage to such student's property;
- 2.) place such student in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property;
- 3.) creates a hostile environment at school for such student;
- 4.) infringes on the rights of such student at school; or
- 5.) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying shall include, but not be limited to, a written, verbal or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics such as race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance, or mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or by association with an individual or group who has or is perceived to have on or more of such characteristics.

"Cyberbullying" means any act of bullying through the use of the Internet, interactive and digital technologies, cellular mobile telephone or other mobile electronic devices or any electronic communications.

The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment as school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, (ii) infringes on the rights of the student against whom such bullying was directed at school, or (iii) substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. Discrimination and/or retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying is likewise prohibited.

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

<https://www.westportps.org/district/policies>

Consequences of Violations of School Rules

Our goal is to promote proactive and responsive discipline by guiding students to make positive decisions about behavior. Rude, discriminatory, mean-spirited comments, disrespectful behavior towards peers or staff, defacing, vandalizing, damaging our school facility or school materials and similar but not limited to the behavior described will be address through investigation, policy review and action by the school which may include formal disciplinary action including detention, suspension and recommendation for expulsion. We are committed to addressing student conduct issues appropriately with a focus on learning, personal growth and healthy social development. In addition, we practice progressive discipline depending on the frequency and seriousness of the offense. They include but are not limited to:

- Peer mediation with direct staff supervision and guidance
- Phone calls to home to parents/guardians
- Written and verbal apologies
- Classroom-level detention assigned by individual teachers
- Central detention assigned by school administration
- Repair or replacement of damaged or destroyed items.
- Temporary or long-term denial of bus privileges
- Exclusion from field trips or special events.
- In-school suspension: Isolation from classmates and school activities for designated days; school work provided by teachers.
- Out-of-school suspension: Exclusion from school and school activities for a designated period of time; school work provided by teachers.
- Recommendation for Expulsion: Formal complaint submitted to the Superintendent of School by school administration

The following are examples of serious infractions, which warrant more severe consequences, including various degrees of suspension or exclusion:

- Possession, use, or sale of dangerous or illegal items such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, related paraphernalia, weapons, or firecrackers.
- Verbal or physical abuse, harassment, or intimidation of others. Some examples include fighting, sexual harassment, harmful, hateful, teasing ridicule and inappropriate computer or phone messages.
- Disruptive, disrespectful, defiant or dishonest behaviors such as arguing with staff members, use of foul language/gestures, lying and/or cheating.
- Trespassing in inappropriate or unsupervised areas, such as class- rooms, lavatories of opposite sex, locker rooms, and the faculty room.
- Theft, defacement or destruction of property of other students or of the school will also require restitution or replacement.

Guidelines for Appropriate Attire for School

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.

Health & Safety

School Nurse

A school nurse is on duty each day that the school is in session. The middle school nurse and health aide will be on duty from 8am-4pm daily. For the safety of the Middle School community, please report all communicable diseases by calling the school nurse.

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 life-long 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.

The detailed Board Policy and Administrative regulations can be accessed online at:
[https://www.westportps.org/uploaded/site_files/www/health_and_wellness_regulations_6142.101\(a\).pdf](https://www.westportps.org/uploaded/site_files/www/health_and_wellness_regulations_6142.101(a).pdf)

Emergency Medical Contact Information

Accidents or illnesses that occur on the bus or on school property should be reported to the school nurse immediately.

In the event of illness or accidents during the school day, parents (or designated person) will be contacted at the telephone numbers listed on the Emergency Medical Form.

The nurse will administer first aid, and prompt medical attention will be secured when necessary.

Snack & Food Allergies

Students are permitted to bring snacks to school and on field trips. Although the middle schools do not have a designated "snack time" some grades do permit students to eat a small snack during class as long as it does not interrupt instruction (see team leader). Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves and are not permitted to share food with their peers. We kindly request that snacks and foods brought to school or on field trips be free of peanuts and tree nuts. Parents should notify the nurse of any known food allergies their child has. Students with food allergies should take precautions by not accepting food from other students and only eating the foods brought from their home and/or approved by their parents.

No Balloons in School! Latex Allergy Alert; Mylar Pollution Alert

- This ban applies to all school events and school activities taking place in the school building or on school grounds.
- No Latex balloons or products are permitted at school; as some students have severe latex allergies.
- No Mylar Balloons Permitted in School or on School Grounds at Any Time - Westport is situated on the shoreline of Connecticut. Mylar decomposition can take up to four years giving it plenty of time to cause harm especially to shoreline bird species. Mylar balloons are composed of synthetic nylon with a metallic coating; they are non-biodegradable, and therefore altogether banned from our schools.

Communicable Disease and Illness/Injury Management

The school nurse will ask parents/guardians to pick up a student who has symptoms of illness or an injury that, in the professional judgment of the school nurse, needs to be observed at home or assessed by a medical doctor. In an emergency, 9-1-1 will be called for immediate transportation to the hospital. To safeguard the health of all students, we ask parents to monitor their children for possible communicable diseases and to follow these guidelines:

Staying home from school:

- To safeguard the health of all students, we ask parents to monitor their children for possible communicable diseases. Students should stay home if they have:
 - fever over 100;
 - an undiagnosed rash;
 - vomited in the past 24 hours;
 - more than one episode of diarrhea;
 - copious yellow/green mucus discharge from nose;
 - a severe earache, with or without fever;
 - a severe sore throat with symptoms indicating possible strep throat;
 - conjunctivitis (pink eye) with discharge;
 - an active infestation of head lice;
 - a communicable illness;

- an undiagnosed skin wound, sore or lesion that appears infected (is red, swollen or draining fluid).

Students must remain home:

- For 24 hours after an elevated temperature returns to normal without the use of anti-inflammatory medication;
- After a throat culture-until the results are available (regardless of physician advice);
- For 24 hours after their first dose of antibiotic for the treatment of strep throat; For 24 hours after vomiting has ended;
- For 24 hours following treatment for bacterial conjunctivitis or conjunctivitis with discharge;
- Until adequately treated for head lice, scabies, or other infestation, communicable illness or skin infection, and assessed by the school nurse; or have been assessed by a physician and determined to be non-communicable. A physician's note may be required for return to school based on nursing judgment.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication will be administered to a student unless the written order of an authorized prescriber (other than a parent/guardian) and the signed authorization of a parent or guardian Westport Public Schools medication form and both are on file in the school. Parents must provide written permission for the exchange of information between the prescriber and school nurse necessary to ensure safe administration of such medication. Medication must be delivered to the school nurse in the original pharmacy container by a responsible adult. Students may not carry or transport medication or keep it in lockers or desks, except for students who have a chronic health condition requiring rapid administration of a medication (e.g., albuterol, epinephrine, insulin) may have a plan for self-administration if authorized in writing by the (1) prescriber, (2) parent or guardian, and (3) school nurse. Students who have a self-administration plan must transport the medication to and from school each day, maintain it on or in the immediate vicinity of their person at all times, and use it appropriately according to instructions. Self-administration of a controlled drug is never permitted.

School Accident Insurance:

- School accident insurance is available to all students. The insurance envelope will be distributed the first day of school and should be returned to the main office immediately. Should you NOT wish this insurance, print your child's name and check the appropriate box, sign and have your child return the envelope to school. We must have a response from each CMS student; it is important for our records.

Parent Responsibilities

Attendance Policy

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

Daily attendance, timeliness and punctuality are required and essential for your success; consistent school attendance is the law and an integral part of your educational experience. Therefore, our expectation is that you and your family make every effort to attend school regularly, arrive on time, schedule personal and medical appointments after school hours and

avoid taking family vacations when school is in session. The State Board of Education has issued a definition of “attendance” for children attending public schools in Connecticut; a student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at school, or an activity sponsored by the school (ex. field trip), for at least half of the regular school day (4 hours minimum at Middle School).

Absences from school beyond 9 days will require a doctor’s notes to be considered excused. Students attending school for less than four (4) hours on any given school day shall be recorded as absent. Connecticut’s truancy law mandates an active role for schools in ensuring the regular attendance of all school children. This law imposes requirements for greater parental responsibility and obliges boards of education to refer truant students to the courts. Attendance is checked daily; parents and guardians will be notified when you are absent from school. If you are going to be absent, your parents should leave a message on the Attendance HotLine before 9am.

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. Parents have access to student’s daily attendance through PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents are expected to monitor their child’s attendance and cooperate with the school policy and rules regarding attendance. Parents are expected to review the procedures and definitions pertaining to student attendance.

Westport Middle Schools 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.

How to Report a Student Absence

When the school is not notified of a student’s absence, our automated system places a “safe call” to ensure the parent is notified the student is not in school. If you know that your child is going to be absent from school, call the Attendance Line before 8:30am and leave a voice message. 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

BMS Attendance Hotline 203-341-1599

CMS Attendance Hotline 203-341-1699

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 (Late to School) Procedure

Any child who arrives at homeroom after 8:00 am must report to the main office to obtain a tardy pass which he/she will hand into 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 check online for assignments, receive help from their teacher upon their return to school, either in class, before or after the school day per the teacher's discretion. Students will be allotted extra time to make up work (e.g. homework, tests, etc.) missed on account of illness per teacher discretion.

When a student's absence on account of illness, injury or other legitimate reasons extends to three or more consecutive days, special homework may be provided if requested or the situation necessitates additional communication between school and home. Parents may arrange for special homework by notifying the team leader; when the work is ready, parents will be notified to pick it up in the Middle School main office.

In accordance with Westport Board of Education policy, in cases of extended absences due to illness or injury, the district may provide homebound instruction. This is processed directly through the district-level Pupil Service Office.

Extended absences for family vacations are considered unexcused unless approved by the Principal for reasons such as extraordinary educational opportunity. Parents seeking approval for temporary removal from school should contact the Middle School main office. If approved, parents should give teachers timely notice of the absence. While teachers are not required to create special assignments for individual students on temporary leave from school, students and parents may be provided assignments and uninterrupted access to Powerschool.

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.

Nine Excused Absences OR Repeated Unexcused Absences (Four or more unexcused in one month or ten or more absences in a school year) are to be handled by the building administrator in one of the following courses of action appropriate to the situation.

Conference with the parent/student and school staff to resolve the situation, implement supports/consequences or referrals if necessary and follow up with a letter to parent/student with CT State BOE Definitions for Excused and Unexcused Absences. Conference with the parent/student (and other appropriate support staff) to resolve the situation and a follow up letter and CT State BOE Definitions for Excused and Unexcused Absences. May also include:

- Home/School Visit with appropriate support staff.
- Consideration for referral to PPT, RTI/SST, Counseling or 504
- Consultation or referral to other appropriate agencies including CT Department of Children & Family Services.
- Disciplinary consequences (detention or in-school suspension)
- Other strategies appropriate to address attendance issues

Early Dismissal Procedure

If your child needs to leave school during the day, please send your child with a signed note to be delivered to the

main office as soon as your child arrives to Middle School in the morning; the main office will provide your child with a pass to leave their class shortly before the designated pickup time.

Parents and guardians must come into Middle School to sign-out their child in the main office. If your student returns to school after an appointment, they must sign-in the main office; parent presence in the main office is not required for signing a student back into school.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES/INTERNET

Use of Computers; Internet Conduct and Citizenship:

The Board of Education policy on the use of electronic resources holds students responsible for good behavior on school computer networks, and in their use of other electronic resources, in classrooms and other school facilities. Students are prohibited from using the internet or other electronic technology, whether on or off campus, to interfere with the educational process in any way.

Prohibited uses include but are not limited to:

- Sending any form of harassing, threatening, or intimidating message, at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to computer systems;
- Damaging computers, computer files, computer systems or computer networks;
- Downloading or modifying computer software of the district in violation of the district's licensure agreement(s) and/or without authorization from a teacher or administrator;
- Using another person's password under any circumstances;
- Trespassing in or tampering with any other person's folders, work or files;
- Sending any message that breaches the district's confidentiality requirements, or the confidentiality of students;
- Sending any copyrighted material over the system;
- Using computer systems for any personal purpose, or in a manner that interferes with the district's educational programs;
- Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, contains child pornography, or is harmful to minors, as defined above;
- Transmitting or receiving e-mail communications or accessing information on the Internet for non-educational purposes;
- Cyberbullying
- Accessing or attempting to access social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, etc.) without legitimate educational purpose.

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, e-mail 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.

Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA):

Students and their parents are requested to sign an AUA prior to students' access to the network. This agreement must be renewed when entering grade three, middle school and high school. Student use may be monitored to assure compliance. If you are new to the Westport school system, or if your child is entering grades three, six or nine, you will receive a grade appropriate form from your school. Please return it to your child's school immediately. Students who violate the policy and/or the AUA may be denied access to computers and to the school system network.

Internet Filtering

We have installed filtering software at the elementary and middle school levels that, with a high degree of effectiveness, bars access to inappropriate sites. However, no filtering software is 100% foolproof. Therefore, despite this safeguard, and although students are supervised when using these resources, the possibility still exists that a youngster may gain access to material that school officials and you may consider inappropriate or no of educational value. This contingency is noted on the AUA.

For their protection, students are cautioned never to provide personal information on the Internet. Parents are advised to monitor their children's home use of the internet.

PERMISSION TO AUDIONIDEOTAPE

No audio or videotaping of classrooms or other educational activities for non school-related purposes is permitted, except by prior arrangement, with the express consent of the teacher and the permission of the principal.

CELL PHONES/OTHER DEVICES

Students in elementary school may not display or use communication devices such as cell phones from the time they arrive at school, until the instructional day is over for all students. These devices must be turned off during this period.

At the middle school level, the same restrictions apply, with the exception of special circumstances where a school official approves such use.

Violation of this rule will result in disciplinary measures as well as confiscation of the communications device.

The use of handheld devices such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), ipads and laptop computers may be allowed with the consent of a supervising adult.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Students should take instruments home for daily practice.

Loss or damage to your musical instrument is the responsibility of the student.

Check your homeowner's policy for details

Student Hallway Lockers & Gym lockers

- All students will be assigned their own lockers, which should be kept locked at all times.
- Students are not to share locker combinations.
- The school is not responsible for articles stored in lockers.

- Students should not bring money or valuables to school.
- The school is not responsible for lost or missing items.
- Students are responsible to report broken locks or locker difficulty should be reported to the office.
- Pictures or stickers within the interior or on the exterior are not permitted.

Daily Operations

The School Day

The official school day is 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

Students may enter the building at 7:15 a.m. if prior arrangements have been made with the appropriate teacher(s) and principal.

The office is open from 7:45am to 4pm

Half-day schedule students are dismissed at 12:15 p.m. No lunch is served on half days.

Cancellations, Delayed Openings and Emergency Closing Information

Emergency closings, delayed openings, and cancellation of school for inclement weather and other reasons are:

- Broadcasted on local radio stations and television

- Announced via the School Messenger parent alert telephone and email messaging system

Delivery of Messages or Materials

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

Therefore:

- Parents are urged to remind students of appointments and after-school arrangements before they leave for school.
- Classroom instruction will not be interrupted to deliver messages or articles.
- Please be sure to label all items and messages with the student's name and leave at the designated location at the main entrance
- Students are responsible for checking in at the office to retrieve any items (homework, lunch, instrument, clothing, etc.) dropped off by parents. This will minimize interruptions during instructional time.
- Use of cell phones is not permitted during school hours.
- Students are urged to plan ahead to avoid the need for frequent phone calls.
- Classroom phones are for teacher use only.
- Students can use the telephone in the main office

School Lunch

The Westport Public Schools participate in the National School Lunch Program. Parents who would like further information on free and reduced lunch are asked to contact the school nurse. Applications are available. To encourage good nutrition, a well-balanced lunch is offered at a reasonable price. Students may purchase a hot or cold lunch or bring a bag lunch and purchase a drink and snack. Made to order deli sandwiches and a variety of salad plates, which also include milk. A la Carte items such as pretzels, frozen yogurt and homemade cookies are also available. Students take responsibility for cleaning up after themselves during each lunch period. 6th, 7th, & 8th grades have 41 minutes for lunch/recess. Students will attend lunch/recess or recess/lunch for approximately 20 minutes. During inclement weather they will remain inside.

Lunch Account Code - Online Payment System

Myschoolbucks is a debiting system where students have their own individual school lunch

account. Payments into this system may be made by cash or check with no fees. A major debit or credit card can be used to load funds into your child or children's accounts by following the steps below:

- Simply go to the district website at www.westportps.org
- Click on the Parents link and then the Food Services link.
- Click on the mySchoolBucks.com link. From this site, you will create a new account or enter your existing account and can add money to your child's school meal account. All you need is your child's name, student ID number and school Zip code. The instructions to set up your account can be found on the Food Services web page and will guide you through the easy online account set up process.
- If you have more than one child in the District, you can handle all online prepayments from the same online account.

If there is a negative balance in your child's account he/she will not be allowed to use the debit system for purchasing lunch. Cash, of course, can always be used to purchase lunch until the negative account balance has been paid for and a positive account balance has been created.

Unauthorized Food Deliveries to Students Are Prohibited

Middle School students are prohibited from placing food orders from outside vendors during the school day. Deliveries directly from restaurants or through 2nd party delivery services (ex. UberEats, GrubHub, DoorDash and the like) and similar food delivery services are not permitted during the school day.

Free/Reduced Lunch Program

Westport Public Schools participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) program for Free and Reduced Price Lunch. The program provides economically priced and nutritionally balanced lunches each school day. The USDA has provided Menu Planning Options to meet nutrient standards as outlined in the School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children. Free and Reduced Price Lunch application packets, which determine eligibility for the program, are sent out annually and are available at each school. Only one application is required per household.

Telephone Access

Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school hours.

If students need to make a phone call they may use a telephone in the main office.

Custody

It is necessary that school records be accurate and current regarding custody and visitation privileges in cases where a student's parents are divorced or separated. The school needs proof of custody arrangements on file, so please supply a divorce decree and the current summary of custody arrangements to the school office. The school will dismiss students only to the parent who has documented custody.

Change of Address & Contact Information

If there is a change in your residence, phone, email or other information necessary to reach you in case of emergency, please inform the school promptly so that up-to-date information is on file. Call the Main Office.

Parent 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. For alphabetical listing of teachers, see the school webpage.

Parent Concerns: Protocol for Addressing Problems

Parents are to first contact the classroom teacher to discuss issues that may arise. If needed, parents can reach out to their child's team leader or school counselor depending on the nature of the issue. Parents are expected to follow this stepwise process prior to contacting the team leader, school counselor or grade-level administrator. Teachers can be reached by phone or by email.

School Buses and Vans

Bus schedules are published in a local newspaper a week before school opens in the Fall. For additional information, call the transportation coordinator at (203) 341-1754. For Late, No Show, or Lost Items please contact DATTCO Bus Company at (203) 226-4884. While on the bus, children are under the authority of the bus driver and should cooperate fully. Video monitors have been placed on all buses and are randomly operated to ensure proper behavior. The privilege of riding a bus may be revoked due to inappropriate behavior. Repair of damage to a bus by a student is the financial responsibility of the student and or their guardian. Students are to get on/off at their assigned bus stop.

NOTICE: It is illegal to pass a bus that has stopped to pick up or drop off students on or off school property.

Bus Routes and Assignments

For reasons of safety based on the nature of the Town's roads and lack of sidewalks in most areas, all students in grade K-8 and most high school students are eligible for bus transportation to and from school. Bus Routes are developed annually by the Transportation Coordinator. Information is available online at www.westportps.org

Transportation Concerns

Questions or complaints about school transportation services or safety issues should be directed to the Transportation Coordinator, Room 301, Westport Town Hall, (203) 341-1754. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, a parent may appeal to the Assistant Superintendent for Business: (203) 341-1001. Subsequent appeal levels are:

- Superintendent of Schools
- Board of Education
- State Department of Education

Bus Driver Behavioral Concerns

Should be communicated to the Westport Bus Transportation Coordinator (203-341-1754) and the Principal. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Westport Bus Transportation Coordinator will communicate by telephone and by email to the DATTCO Bus Terminal Manager with specific instructions to remove the driver as soon as possible from service until DATTCO, in the presence of our Bus Transportation Coordinator, has completed its investigation into the concerns.

Safe Riding Practices for Buses

To reinforce our efforts in school; please review the following safe riding practices:

Be at the designated bus stop on time and wait for the bus in a safe place.

Do not board the bus until it is completely stopped and enter the bus in an orderly manner.

Follow the instructions of the bus driver and general school rules.
Keep the aisle clear at all times - remain seated, quiet and orderly.
Keep head and arms inside the bus and never throw anything out of the window.
Be courteous to the driver and to other students.
Be alert to traffic when leaving the bus.
Your child will be removed from the bus for a specified period of time if poor behavior continues.
Remember to take all personal belongings when exiting the bus.
No food or drinks are allowed to be consumed on the school bus.

Lost and Found

Student clothing and school materials should be labeled with the student's name.
The Lost and Found area is located in the Cafeteria.
Students who have lost belongings should check the Lost and Found area.
Articles that are not claimed within a reasonable amount of time will be donated to charity.

Gift Giving Policy

The Board of Education guidelines for gift giving are as follows: "The Board of Education believes that no teacher's competence or worth can be judged by the value or number of gifts that a teacher receives." Gifts from individuals that fit this policy include such items as a Valentine or greeting card, a homemade present, cookies or a personal gift of modest cost. A personal note or letter with a copy to the person's supervisor is an excellent way of expressing appreciation.

Clubs & Activities

The Middle Schools offer a wide range of clubs and activities, which commonly meet before or after school; clubs and activities are open to all current registered students. The availability of programs vary from year to year depending upon staff availability and student interest; updated information is made available to students short after the start of the school year and updated throughout the school year as needed. Visit your home school's website and pay attention to announcements for updates.

Contact Information & Communication

Dattco Bus Company (203) 226-4884
Transportation Coordinator (203) 341-1754
Superintendent (203) 341-1010
Director of Pupil Services (203) 341-1253
Curriculum & Instruction (203) 341-1009
Continuing Education (203) 341-1206
Snow Line (203) 341-1766
BMS Attendance Line (203) 341- 1599
CMS Attendance Line (203) 341- 1699
BMS Main Office (203) 341- 1500
CMS Main Office (203) 341-1600

Parent Tech Help Desk Access

E-mail address: parenthelpdesk@westportps.org
Phone: (203) 341-1214

Bedford Middle School webpage <https://bms.westportps.org/>
Coleytown Middle School webpage <https://cms.westportps.org/>

Westport Public Schools webpage <https://www.westportps.org>