

Westport Public Schools



BEDFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL  
HANDBOOK 2023-2024



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## WELCOME TO BEDFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL IN WESTPORT!

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. The role of families is vital to student success; when parents and teachers work together in partnership, students benefit. On behalf of the faculty and staff, we are looking forward to working with you and your child. Please feel free to contact your child's teaching team leader, school counselor or grade-level administrator regarding questions or concerns you may have.

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

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
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

### 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.

### Our Middle School Philosophy

We seek to develop a sense of community, trust and shared responsibility among 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 well-developed and rigorous programs in our core academic and special-area programs, guided by well delineated learning outcomes. Embedded within each subject area are a variety of differentiated instructional strategies designed to meet the needs of each learner.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our school community aspires to be emotionally and socially aware; we strive to...

- be aware of our own emotions and learning styles.
- value ourselves and look to make positive connections with others.
- be empathetic when considering the experience of others.

Our school community aspires to be kind with sincerity; we strive to ...

- be genuine in our compassion towards others.
- value and accept others

Our school community aspires to be principled in thought and action; we strive to ...

- act with integrity.
- act responsibly.

Our school community aspires to be learning always; we strive to ...

- be curious, inquisitive, and joyful about learning new things.
- persevere when solving challenging problems.
- view mistakes as part of the learning process.
- bounce back and recover from setbacks or failures.
- be flexible and test possibilities within tasks.

School & District Link

[Bedford Middle School Homepage](#)

[Westport Public Schools Homepage](#)

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 Connections at BMS, these are scheduled throughout the school year to discuss and explore topics relating to students' social-emotional wellbeing and executive functioning.

### Contacting BMS

- The regular school day for students Monday through Friday is 8:30am to 3:15pm
- Early dismissal school days are scheduled and appear on the district calendar; the early dismissal time for Middle School is 1:00pm
- Students may arrive before 8am if they are part of a special music performing group
- The middle school main office is open from 7:45am-3:45pm during scheduled school days.
- The main telephone number for BMS is 203-341-1500
- 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
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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](mailto: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.

#### Student Handbook/Program of Studies: Courses Taken by Middle School Students

For the classes of 2023 and 2024, Algebra 1, Geometry, and world languages courses taken by middle school students at the middle schools will appear on the Staples transcript with a grade but will not be included in the GPA and will receive no credit. Starting with the class of 2025, Algebra 1, Geometry, and world languages courses taken by middle school students at the middle schools will not be listed on a student's Staples transcript.

For the classes of 2023-2026, Algebra 2 Honors taken by middle school students at the high school will appear on the Staples transcript with a grade and will receive credit. Starting with the class of 2027, Algebra 2 Honors taken by middle school students will not be listed on a student's Staples transcript or receive credit.

#### 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.

## STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

At Bedford Middle School, our goal is to help you experience a love of learning and the joy of discovery. We strive to create a dynamic learning environment that recognizes your unique qualities as a middle school student and helps you to be a successful member of our school community. Every BMS student is expected to adhere to the Golden Rule, which is the principle of treating others as oneself would wish to be treated.

Student behavior expectations include the following qualities:

- **Courtesy and respect for everyone**
  - Well-behaved students show courtesy and consideration for all members of the school community.
  - Do not harass or embarrass/tease other students or staff, i.e. bullying.
  - Do not sexually harass other students or staff. Unwanted verbal or physical advances will not be tolerated.
  - Do not threaten or intimidate other students or adults verbally, physically, or in writing.
  - Do not engage in kissing, hand holding, hugging, or any other physical displays of affection.
  - Use appropriate and respectful language at all times.
- **Concern for the safety of everyone**
  - Well-behaved students act responsibly so they and no one else is in danger.
  - Do not bring/possess dangerous objects (i.e. weapons, fireworks, etc.) to/at school.
  - Do not run, trip, play-fight, fight or act in a rowdy manner.
  - Responsible students find and tell an adult when there is an emergency and/or a student in need.
- **Respect for personal and school property**
  - Well-behaved students treat everyone's personal belongings with respect.
  - Do not litter or vandalize personal or school property.
  - Do not steal or possess stolen property.
- **Respect for the right to learn and teach without disruption**
  - Well-behaved students are not disruptive to the learning of others.
  - Do not chew gum in school.
- **Responsibility for being in the right place at the right time**
  - Well-behaved students attend school and classes punctually.
  - Do not skip classes, appointments, or detentions.
- **Appropriate response to reasonable directions of staff members**
  - Well-behaved students follow the directions of the adult members of the school community.
  - Do not argue about or ignore a staff member's request.
- **Appropriate cafeteria behavior**
  - Good behavior and proper manners are very important in our cafeteria so that all students can eat and relax in a comfortable, safe and orderly environment.
  - Students should walk in the cafeteria; running is unsafe and not permitted
  - Students should line up in order to be served. No cutting the line.
  - Proper manners should be observed while eating as a courtesy to others. No fooling around, throwing food, or yelling/screaming;
  - After eating, students are responsible for throwing away their refuse in the proper containers. Tables are to be left clean.
  - Students must be in the cafeteria during their assigned lunchtime only.
- **Safe bus riding practices**

- Your behavior affects the safety of everyone on your bus, as well as other vehicles on the road. Therefore, students transported in a school bus must follow the reasonable directions of the driver. Students should:
  - Follow all school rules when riding the bus.
  - Always remain in your seat and keep your head and arms inside the bus.
  - Remain quiet and orderly
- Demonstrate academic integrity
  - A student who shows academic integrity is honest.
  - Do not cheat, plagiarize, alter records, or assist another student in these actions.
  - Do not submit someone else's work as your own.
  - Students using computers at BMS must follow the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Banned items
  - Vaping products (cartridges, devices), Illegal drugs, tobacco or any related products, alcohol, guns, facsimiles of guns, weapons, prescription medications, over the counter medications are all strictly prohibited and may be subject to strict disciplinary sanctions including possible recommendation of expulsion.
  - 'Fidget' devices and related toys can distract and impede the instructional environment and are subject to confiscation. In some specific cases, individual students are granted access to using such devices during instruction based on a verbal agreement or documented plan shared with teachers and parents; in these instances the school supports the use of such devices.

#### ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND DRUGS

- The Westport Public schools have a strict, no tolerance position with regard to the use of drugs and alcohol in school buildings and on school grounds, at school-sponsored events and on school buses or other school vehicles used to transport students to school or school activities.
- Students who use or possess alcohol or drugs are subject to penalties including loss of privileges, suspension and/or expulsion. State law requires that the Board of Education begin expulsion proceedings for any student who sells a controlled substance, whether on or off school property.
- All Others: The rule applies to adults as well as students, and to other organizations using school facilities for any purpose. This prohibition also applies to use or possession of alcohol in religious ceremonies and other programs.

#### SMOKING IS PROHIBITED

- The Board of Education strictly prohibits smoking (including the carrying of lighted cigarettes, pipes, electronic nicotine delivery system (e.g. e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, etc.) by anyone, including students or adults, in school buildings, on school property, in school vehicles or at school-sponsored activities. This prohibition is in effect 24 hours per day, 12 months of the year. It also applies, thereof, to Continuing Education and to other organizations using school facilities. Students are also prohibited from possessing cigarettes or other tobacco products in school buildings or on school grounds. This prohibition applies also to so-called "herbal cigarettes," the use of which is also prohibited in the Drug/Alcohol Policy.
- Violators of the no-smoking regulation are subject to corrective action noted in Board of Education policies, and individual school rules, up to and including transfer to other classes or schools, suspension and/or expulsion.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

All students must demonstrate academic integrity by not engaging in any form of cheating or plagiarism. Examples include, but are not limited to:



- Copying from another student's work
- Making your own school work available for another student to copy
- Having another person do your schoolwork (friend, parent, sibling, tutor, etc.) and submitting it as your own work
- Collaborating with other students on an assignment or assessment, either in person or remotely/electronically, unless teacher has specifically directed students to work together
- Quoting another person's words, sentences, paragraphs, or entire work without crediting the source, which includes:
  - Copying and pasting from websites
  - Copying the sentence structure but changing the words of a source without giving credit
  - Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theory without crediting the source
  - Using notes/written material or accessing information on an electronic device when not permitted to do so
  - Making up research/data for a project, essay, etc. and passing it off as factual

#### Student Responsibilities

- Make choices that show academic integrity
- Ask the teacher for clarification if unsure whether an action would be cheating or plagiarizing in a certain situation.
- Pay attention to and understand all instruction from teachers about plagiarizing, cheating, and academic integrity.
- Tell a teacher or guidance counselor if you become aware of a situation where cheating or plagiarizing has occurred.

#### Teacher Responsibilities

- Be very clear and concise with students about what constitutes an academic integrity violation.
- Ensure students understand when it is okay for them to collaborate with others and when they must work on their own.
- Provide students with instruction about academic dishonesty situations and how to avoid/prevent them

#### Administrator/Grade Level Counselor Responsibilities

- Support teachers in addressing academic integrity violations
- Support teachers with educating students about academic integrity
- Maintain records of academic dishonesty

#### Parent Responsibilities

- Support students in following the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy and reference/utilize provided learning materials

#### Investigation and Resolution Process

When a teacher suspects that academic integrity has been compromised, the following steps will be taken:

- The teacher will investigate the suspected academic integrity incident, inform the student/s involved and, as deemed necessary, include the team leader, grade-level counselor or administrator in the process.
- The teacher will reach out to communicate and speak directly with the student/s parents to discuss the misconduct and the consequence(s)
- The teacher may further communicate with the student/s school counselor and grade level administrator to
  - Determine if other offenses/violations have occurred previously
  - Determine if counselor support and/or intervention is appropriate
  - Discuss appropriate consequence for given academic integrity violation

- The teacher will conference with student and/or school counselor about the academic integrity violation
- The teacher will document the incident for their records

#### Range of Consequences

- A grade reduction on the assignment in question.
- Redoing the assignment, with reduced or restored credit
- A grade of zero (0) for the assignment in question with no opportunity to make up for that work in any way, including extra credit work.

#### Additional Considerations

- Previous incidents of academic integrity violations may lead to referrals for counseling or other restorative measures.
- Repeated violations may also lead to increased severity of consequences.
- Additional consequences may be administered under the school's Code of Conduct

#### Selling Items in School

- Personal commerce is prohibited in our public school and on our school buses. Students may not sell items in school, ex. Students may not bring candy into school to sell to students; ex. students may not bring collectible items such as footwear or trading cards into school to sell to others.
- All fundraisers associated with BMS are required to have prior approval by the principal or their administrative designee.

### BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

The Westport Board of Education is committed to creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds; at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop; on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education; or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education. The Board also prohibits any form of bullying behavior outside of the school setting if such bullying

- I. creates a hostile environment at 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 or teen dating violence shall be subject to school discipline, up to and including expulsion, in accordance with the Board's policies on student discipline, suspension and expulsion, and consistent with state and federal law. For purposes of this policy, "Bullying" means an act that is direct or indirect and severe, persistent or pervasive, which:

1. causes physical or emotional harm to an individual;
2. places an individual in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm; or
3. infringes on the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying shall include, but need not be limited to, a written, oral or electronic communication or physical act or gesture based on any actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, 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 one or more of such characteristics.

For purposes of this policy, "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. For purposes of this policy, "Teen Dating Violence" means any act of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, including stalking, harassing and threatening, that occurs between two students who are currently in or who have recently been in a dating relationship. Consistent with the requirements under state law, the Westport Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or designee(s), along with the Safe School Climate Coordinator, to be responsible for developing and implementing a Safe School Climate Plan in furtherance of this policy. As provided by state law, such Safe School Climate Plan shall include, but not be limited to provisions which:

- 1) enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to school employees and require students and the parents or guardians of students to be notified at the beginning of each school year of the process by which students may make such reports;
- 2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying;
- 3) require school employees who witness acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying to orally notify the safe school climate specialist, or another school administrator if the safe school climate specialist is unavailable, not later than one school day after such school employee witnesses or receives a report of bullying, and to file a written report not later than two school days after making such oral report;
- 4) require the safe school climate specialist to investigate or supervise the investigation of all reports of bullying and ensure that such investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written reports made under this section and that the parents or guardians of the student alleged to have committed an act or acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of the student against whom such alleged act or acts were directed receive prompt notice that such investigation has commenced;
- 5) require the safe school climate specialist to review any anonymous reports, except that no disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report;
- 6) include a prevention and intervention strategy for school employees to deal with bullying and teen dating violence;
- 7) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying;
- 8) require each school to notify the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed not later than forty-eight hours after the completion of the investigation described in subdivision (4), above (A) of the results of such investigation, and (B) verbally or by electronic mail, if such parents' or guardians' electronic mail addresses are known, that such parents or guardians may refer to the plain language explanation of the rights and remedies available under Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-4a and 10-4b published on the Internet website of the Board;
- 9) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student against whom such act was directed to a meeting to communicate to such parents or guardians the measures being taken by the school to ensure the safety of the student against whom such act was directed and policies and procedures in place to prevent further acts of bullying;
- 10) require each school to invite the parents or guardians of a student who commits any verified act of bullying to a meeting, separate and distinct from the meeting required in subdivision (9) above, to discuss specific interventions undertaken by the school to prevent further acts of bullying;

- 11) establish a procedure for each school to document and maintain records relating to reports and investigations of bullying in such school and to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and annually report such number to the Department of Education and in such manner as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education;
- 12) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline;
- 13) prohibit discrimination and retaliation against an individual who reports or assists in the investigation of an act of bullying;
- 14) direct the development of student safety support plans for students against whom an act of bullying was directed that address safety measures the school will take to protect such students against further acts of bullying;
- 15) require the principal of a school, or the principal's designee, to notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such principal, or the principal's designee, believes that any acts of bullying constitute criminal conduct;
- 16) prohibit bullying (A) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the local or regional board of education, and (B) outside of the school setting if such bullying (i) creates a hostile environment at school for the student against whom such bullying was directed, or (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;
- 17) require, at the beginning of each school year, each school to provide all school employees with a written or electronic copy of the school district's safe school climate plan; and
- 18) require that all school employees annually complete the training described in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10- 220a or 10-222j related to the identification, prevention and response to bullying. The notification required pursuant to subdivision (8) (above) and the invitation required pursuant to subdivisions (9) and (10) (above) shall include a description of the response of school employees to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. Any information provided under this policy or accompanying Safe School Climate Plan shall be provided in accordance with the confidentiality restrictions imposed under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the district's Confidentiality and Access to Student Information policy and regulations. The Board shall submit its Safe School Climate Plan to the Department of Education for review and approval. Not later than thirty (30) calendar days after approval by the Department, the Board shall make such plan available on the Board's and each individual school in the school district's web site and ensure that the Safe School Climate Plan is included in the school district's publication of the rules, procedures and standards of conduct for schools and in all student handbooks. As required by state law, the Board, after consultation with the Connecticut Department of Education and the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative, shall provide on the Board's website training materials to school administrators regarding the prevention of and intervention in discrimination against and targeted harassment of students based on such students' (1) actual or perceived differentiating characteristics, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, academic status, physical appearance or

mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability, or (2) association with individuals or groups who have or are perceived to have one or more of such characteristics.

As required by state law, the Board shall post on its website the plain language explanation of rights and remedies under Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-4a and 10-4b, as developed and provided to the Board by the Connecticut Social and Emotional Learning and School Climate Advisory Collaborative. Legal References: Public Act 19-166 Public Act 21-95 Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145a Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-145o Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-220a Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222g Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222h Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222j Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222k Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222l Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222q Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222r Conn. Gen. Stat. §§10-233a through 10-233f

### Process for Addressing Identity Based Incidents

- Focus on Safety First
  - Attend to the harmed individual
- Get the Facts
  - Investigate the incident
- Educate
  - Educate the student committing the offense - how/why it is problematic
- Inform All Stakeholders
  - Of incident and process
- Implement a Consequence
- Work Towards Restoration
  - Take steps to repair the relationship between both parties
- Debrief with School Based Equity Team
  - Review incident for feedback

### 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 STUDENT DRESS AT SCHOOL

Learning how to dress appropriately is an essential life skill that our adolescent students should acquire; parents play a central role in this development learning process. At BMS, students express personal choice in dress and we ask that our students and families respect the learning environment in our school and standards for attire. At Bedford, we expect students to dress for school by wearing attire commensurate with our safe learning environment.

The Westport Schools encourage students to dress in a manner that demonstrates pride in themselves and in their school. The school district requires that attire be safe, appropriate to the activity, and not distracting or disruptive of the educational program. 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 poses a threat to the physical well-being and safety of the student or others, shall not be worn on campus or at school activities.
- Parents are advised to be sure that students have outerwear appropriate to the weather and to the activities they will engage in, e.g. warm clothes for recess, rain/snow boots when needed and appropriate clothing in inclement weather.
- 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 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.

#### 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 & MEDICATIONS

The school nurse is on duty in the nurse's office from 8:30 am until 3:30 pm daily.

Medication: If you require medication at school, your parents must provide written authorization signed by them and your doctor. Medication must be in the original container. Medication authorization forms are available in the BMS health office, online

(<http://bms.westportps.org/general/health-services>) or at your doctor's office. While students may not carry medications at school, self-administration of inhalers or Epi-Pen are acceptable with authorization from your doctor, parent and school nurse. A renewed doctor's order is required each school year for each medication.

Excuse from Gym and Physical Activities: Excuse from physical education requires a doctor's note submitted to the health office. The note should describe specific limitations and the duration of absence from PE and physical activities. Note, being excused from PE for one or two days may be possible with a note from a parent or guardian, however this is subject to the judgment of the BMS Head Nurse.

#### Student Wellbeing

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 wellbeing, 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 wellbeing practices for students and staff and discourages practices that do not support health or promote wellbeing, 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\\_wellbeing\\_regulations\\_6142.101\(a\).pdf](https://www.westportps.org/uploaded/site_files/www/health_and_wellbeing_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 supplemental accident insurance is available to all students; please contact the BMS main office for further information.

#### 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.

##### Truancy

Any student that accrues 10 unexcused absences within the school year or 4 unexcused absences in one month are considered truant and will be subject to administrative action.

## 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

## 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 8:30 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 NOTES

If you need to leave school early, please deliver a note with a brief explanation signed by a parent or guardian to the main office before 8:30am. The main office will provide you with an early dismissal pass to leave class several minutes before your pickup time; the extra minutes will allow you to visit your locker before reporting to the main office; parents and guardians must come to the main entrance of the school to sign you out of school.

#### ELECTRONIC RESOURCES/INTERNET

##### USE OF COMPUTERS & NETWORK: STUDENT CONDUCT

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 or posting any form of harassing, threatening, or intimidating messages or statements (e.g., website postings, instant message), at any time, to any person (such communications may also be a crime);
- 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 is defamatory of students, staff members or administrators.
- Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to computer systems;
- Damaging computers, computer files, computer systems or computer networks;
- Interfering with the school district's computer systems, including but not limited to unauthorized access into or interference with district computer systems;
- Interfering with communication by teachers or administrators with parents or guardians, including but not limited to blocking or intercepting email or other electronic communications;
- Downloading or modifying computer software of the district in violation of the district's license 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 folder, work or files;

- Sending any message that breaches the district's confidentiality requirements, or the confidentiality of students;
- Transmitting or receiving email communications or using computer systems for any personal purpose or non- educational purposes, 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;
- Cyberbullying;
- Accessing or attempting to access social network sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc.) without legitimate educational purposes.

Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA): Students and their parents are required to sign an AUA prior to students' access to the network. This agreement must be renewed annually. Students' 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 sign and 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's network.

Internet Filtering: We have installed filtering software at the elementary, middle school, and high 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 the school officials and you may consider inappropriate or not 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 AUDIO/VIDEO RECORD

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.

### 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 8:00am if prior arrangements have been made with the appropriate teacher(s).
- The office is open from 7:45am to 3:45pm
- Half-day schedule students are dismissed at 1:00 p.m. 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

### DROPPING-OFF FORGOTTEN ITEMS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

At the middle school level, we encourage parents and guardians to refrain from dropping-off forgotten items during the school day, however sometimes this is unavoidable. At BMS, there are drop-off carts located outside at the main entrance; when dropping-off an item, please use the intercom located outside the main entrance to communicate with main office staff. The main office staff will not interrupt classroom instruction to deliver messages, lunches, assignments; students may not be contacted during classroom instruction to retrieve items that were left at home. All dropped-off lunches will be brought inside school staff and made available in the cafeteria during lunch waves; please be sure to write your child's first and last name and grade level on the lunch. Students are permitted to pick up delivered items during lunch or passing time between classes.

### SCHOOL LUNCH

Well-balanced breakfasts and lunches are offered daily by our food service at reasonable prices. You may purchase a hot or cold breakfast or lunch, or bring a breakfast, lunch or snack from home. The school food service continues to update lunch offerings to comply with health standards and students' culinary interests. Students are expected to clean-up their lunch supplies and tables by discarding trash and recycling items. During each lunch period, halfway



through, there is an opportunity to stay in the cafeteria, visit the library media center (LMC), or go outdoors for recess. For students with specialized dietary needs and restrictions, parents must contact CHARTWELLS FOOD DINING SERVICES, Benjamin Leahey - Director of Dining Services, Tel: 203-341-2431, Email: [bleahey@westportps.org](mailto:bleahey@westportps.org)

Students can purchase food and beverage using the online payment system: [myschoolbucks.com](http://myschoolbucks.com)

#### 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](http://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 teaching 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 then 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](http://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 - Two Locations in BMS

- Student clothing and school materials should be labeled with the student's name.
- The main Lost and Found area is located in the Cafeteria; there is a secondary lost and found located in the main office for wallets, keys and electronics.
- 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.

### Gifts to School Teachers and School Personnel

(adopted September 23, 1985 and modified August 20, 2001)

1. All employees of the Westport Board of Education are to perform their duties according to the highest ethical standards, free not only from all conflict of interest, but also from the appearance of such conflict.

In accordance with this principle, employees are prohibited from accepting personal gifts or favors from any person(s), group(s), or their agents or representatives, doing business with, or seeking or planning to do business with the Board of Education.

2. A. In accordance with this principle, parents should refrain from giving and staff members should refrain from accepting gifts from individuals or groups that are more than modest personal tokens or items of nominal cost.

Gifts from individuals that fit this policy are 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.

Group gifts that fit this policy are the following: a photograph of the group signed by participants, an appropriate book, a scrapbook or other compilation of mementoes of the group, flowers, etc.

B. Staff members should consult with their supervisors if they are unsure whether acceptance of a particular gift would violate this policy.

C. Principals should disseminate this policy among teachers and parents.

D. The Principals should encourage consultation by groups of parents or students planning a gift or recognition for a teacher, coach, advisor or other staff member to be sure that the proposed gift fits these policy guidelines. The Principal should be certain that no one is made to feel obligated to contribute toward a gift.

It is not the intent of the Board of Education in establishing this policy to deny the civil right of any employee to seek political office. Therefore this policy should not be construed so as to prohibit an employee who is a candidate for any office from receiving campaign contributions that he or she would otherwise be legally entitled to accept.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes 7-479 Conflicts of interest

### 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

BMS Main Office (203) 341- 1500

Parent Tech Help Desk Access

E-mail address: [parenthelpdesk@westportps.org](mailto:parenthelpdesk@westportps.org)

Phone: (203) 341-1214

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

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