

Westport Public Schools



Bedford Middle School

Student & Family Handbook

2025-2026

This handbook is designed to provide students and families with an overview of 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. We look forward to working with you and your child.

Feel free to contact your child's teaching team leader, school counselor, or grade-level administrator if you have questions or concerns.

At BMS, we encourage creative, critical, and global thinking and communication. Our goal is to help 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 members of our school community. We continually strive to create a dynamic learning environment that recognizes the unique qualities of students and helps them succeed, especially when facing challenges.

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Welcome to Bedford Middle School in Westport!

This handbook is designed to provide students and families with a comprehensive overview of school operations, policies, and student expectations. We encourage you to familiarize yourselves with this important information; the table of contents provides active links to each section for easy navigation.

We firmly believe that the role of families is vital to student success. When parents and teachers collaborate in partnership, students thrive. We eagerly anticipate working with you and your child throughout their middle school journey.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teaching team leader, school counselor, or grade-level administrator.

At BMS, we cultivate creative, critical, and global thinking and communication. Our primary goal is to empower students to experience the love of learning and the joy of discovery. We strive to instill in our students a deep respect for themselves and others, fostering empathy and care for their peers and all members of our school community. We are continuously committed to creating a dynamic learning environment that recognizes the unique qualities of each student and provides the support needed for them to succeed, particularly when facing challenges.

Our Core Beliefs for Student Success

The Bedford Middle School community is founded on a set of core beliefs that guide our approach to fostering a positive and enriching environment for every student:

- **Joyful Learning:** We believe that school should be a joyful place where students are happy and engaged in their learning.
 - **Strong Relationships:** Every student deserves to feel connected and have a positive, meaningful relationship with at least one adult within the school community.
 - **Sense of Belonging:** We strive to ensure that no student feels "lost." Every student should have a sense of belonging and actively participate in at least one aspect of school life.
 - **Fairness and Respect:** Students should feel treated fairly by adults in the building. We recognize that fairness is essential, and active listening from adults is fundamental to achieving it.
 - **Comprehensive Safety:** Our commitment is to ensure that students feel safe at all times—physically, emotionally, and intellectually.
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The Westport Public Schools Mission Statement

The Mission of the Westport Public Schools is to prepare all students to reach their full potential as lifelong 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 strong 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 subjects, guided by clearly defined learning outcomes. Embedded within each subject area are a variety of differentiated instructional strategies designed to meet the diverse needs of every learner.

Our Guiding Principles

Our school community aspires to exemplify specific principles in thought and action, striving to be:

- **Emotionally and Socially Aware:**

- Aware of our own emotions and learning styles.
 - Valuing ourselves and seeking to make positive connections with others.
 - Empathetic when considering the experiences of others.
 - **Kind with Sincerity:**
 - Genuine in our compassion towards others.
 - Valuing and accepting others.
 - **Principled in Thought and Action:**
 - Acting with integrity.
 - Acting responsibly.
 - **Learning Always:**
 - Being curious, inquisitive, and joyful about learning new things.
 - Persevering when solving challenging problems.
 - Viewing mistakes as a valuable part of the learning process.
 - Bouncing back and recovering from setbacks or failures.
 - Being flexible and testing possibilities within tasks.
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Academic Life

Middle School Teaching Team Structure

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

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 a primary goal for all teams. Through teaming, students build trust in their teachers, which is 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, empowering teachers to flexibly use assigned teaching time to better meet student needs.

- **Grade 6:** Students are grouped in teams with four teachers for core subjects: language arts, math, science, and social studies. Grade-level special subjects include: World

Language, physical education, health, art, computer, drama/presentation skills, design & engineering, and a choice of general music, band, chorus, or orchestra.

- **Grade 7:** Students are grouped in teams with four teachers for core subjects: language arts, math, science, and social studies. Grade-level special subjects include: World Language, physical education, health, art, computer, drama/presentation skills, design & engineering, and a choice of general music, band, chorus, or orchestra.
- **Grade 8:** Students are grouped in teams with four teachers for core subjects: language arts, math, science, and social studies. Grade-level special subjects include: World Language, physical education, health, art, design & engineering, and a choice of general music, band, chorus, or orchestra.

Middle School Social-Emotional Learning Block (Connections)

These sessions are scheduled throughout the school year to discuss and explore topics relating to students' social-emotional well-being and executive functioning skills.

Contacting BMS

- **Regular School Day:** Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.
- **Early Dismissal Days:** Please refer to the dates on the district calendar.
- **Student Arrival:** Students may arrive before 8:00 a.m. if they are part of a special music performing group, scheduled to meet with a specific teacher for extra help, or attending a planned meeting for a school club/organization.
- **Main Office Hours:** 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. during scheduled school days.
- **Main Telephone Number:** 203-341-1500

Standardized Testing at the Middle School Level

The following standardized tests are mandated by the State of Connecticut and the federal government (Every Student Succeeds Act) and administered at the middle school level:

- **Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA):** Mathematics, English Language Arts (grades 6, 7, & 8; administered in spring).
- **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) Assessment:** Science (grade 8 only; administered in spring).
- **Connecticut Physical Fitness:** Physical Fitness (grades 6 & 8; ongoing throughout the year).
- **National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP):** Subjects may include Arts, Civics, Economics, Geography, Math, Reading, Science, U.S. History, Writing (grade 8; administered in winter).

- **Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA):** This is a benchmarking assessment administered twice per year for math and reading to monitor student progress.
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Homework

At Bedford Middle School, homework is considered an essential and valuable component of the educational journey, applicable across all subject areas. Our approach to homework is guided by the Westport Board of Education's core beliefs regarding student development and learning.

Homework Philosophy

Our stance on homework is rooted in the belief that:

- **Continuous Learning:** Education is a dynamic, ongoing process that extends beyond the classroom walls, with homework providing opportunities for learning at home.
- **Skill Development & Independence:** Homework plays a crucial role in fostering diverse interests, nurturing creativity, cultivating increasing independence, and reinforcing positive work habits in students.
- **Knowledge Reinforcement & Acquisition:** It serves to solidify skills and content learned in school. Through activities like assigned reading (e.g., in social studies or language arts), students can deepen their knowledge and prepare more effectively for class discussions.
- **Intellectual Growth & Lifelong Learning:** Homework offers opportunities for quiet intellectual immersion, self-discovery, and the pure enjoyment of independent learning, thereby preparing students for future academic pursuits and careers.

Defining "Homework"

Our definition of homework is broad, encompassing not only written assignments or academic tasks but also a range of related activities designed to be completed outside of class. These can include:

- Viewing specific video programs.
- Reading publications and periodicals.
- Engaging in discussions with others on particular topics.
- Following news reports.
- Collecting materials for classroom use.
- Reading for pleasure.
- Other activities connected to classroom learning.

Assignment Principles

The volume and nature of homework assignments are carefully aligned with the curriculum, are appropriate for middle school-aged students, and reflect teachers' informed judgment of their students' individual needs and abilities. Consequently, the amount of homework assigned will

gradually increase as students advance through the grades, mirroring the escalating demands of the academic program and facilitating a smooth transition to higher educational levels.

Partnership Between Home and School

Parents and teachers share a vital role in a child's education, and homework serves as an essential link between the home and school environments. Bedford Middle School (BMS) is committed to clearly communicating the school's expectations regarding homework to parents. Similarly, teachers will consistently inform students and parents about the specific homework requirements for their respective courses.

General Homework Guidelines

The quality and nature of homework assignments are designed to support the curriculum, align with students' ages, and reflect a teacher's judgment of student needs and abilities. High-quality homework:

- Motivates and engages students.
- Promotes student agency in initiating, strategizing, and problem-solving.
- Offers real-life, authentic transfer of skills and concepts learned in school.
- Reflects various abilities, interests, and learning styles.
- Provides students with immediate, task-based feedback that leads to improvement.
- Provides parents with insights into student learning.

Homework Guidelines for Middle Schools

Daily Homework Allotments:

Time allotments 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.

Note: Next-day homework assignments are not given on holidays or during school vacations.

Student Responsibilities:

Students are expected to:

- Keep track of their assignments in a systematic way.
- Manage their time effectively 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.

Teacher Responsibilities:

Teachers will:

- Clearly communicate directions, expectations, and due dates for homework and post them online in a timely manner.
- Articulate the purpose for each homework assignment.
- Inform students about the type of feedback they will receive and provide that feedback within a communicated timeframe.
- Offer additional support on homework assignments if students request assistance (e.g., conferencing with a student on a writing assignment).

Parent Responsibilities:

Parents are encouraged to:

- Provide a supportive environment and dedicated time for homework.
- Encourage their children to ask for help when necessary.
- Encourage students to communicate with their teachers regarding homework issues.
- Contact their child's teacher if they believe their child is spending too much or too little time on homework.
- Ensure that homework authentically reflects the student's work, allowing teachers to accurately assess their actual skill level, knowledge, mastery, and progress.

Make-Up Work After Absence

- **Excused Absences (1-2 days):** Students absent for illness or other legitimate reasons for no more than two consecutive days are usually not given special homework in advance. Instead, they should check online for assignments and will receive help from their teacher upon their return to school (either in class, or before/after school at the teacher's discretion). Students will be allotted extra time to make up missed work (e.g., homework, tests) at the teacher's discretion.
- **Excused Absences (3+ consecutive days):** When a child's excused absence extends beyond three consecutive days due to illness, injury, or other legitimate reasons, special homework may be provided if requested or deemed necessary for continued 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.
- **State Law Compliance:** In cases of extended absence due to illness or injury, the school will provide instruction at home in accordance with Board policy and state law.

Extended Unexcused Absences for Family Vacations, etc.

- Parents should provide teachers with timely notice if a student will be absent for a family vacation.
- Teachers are not required to provide lesson material, assignments, class notes, or generate special assignments or projects for family vacations that occur during

scheduled school days. However, children may access assignments that have been previously published and scheduled.

- While students are not academically penalized for absences due to family vacations (i.e., they are not given zeros for work missed), students are expected to complete all missed assignments, projects, homework, and assessments.
- If a child needs extra help as a result of such absences, teachers are not required to provide it on their own time. If special tutoring is needed due to an elective absence, any incurred cost is the responsibility of the parents, not the school.

Scheduling Homework and Tests Near Religious Holidays

- Normal school activities may proceed on religious holidays that are not designated school holidays. However, students are not required to attend and will not be penalized for missing practices, rehearsals, or other activities due to religious observance.
- **Homework and Tests:** Students observing religious holidays may make up tests or homework due on the day after a holiday, with the exception of assignments given weeks in advance. Tests will not be scheduled on religious holidays.
- The expectation for students to plan ahead for assignments given weeks in advance is appropriate. During any lengthy period, students may encounter various diversions due to family obligations, temporary illness, extracurricular activities, after-school jobs, and religious observances. Students are expected to manage their time to complete their work on time despite these demands.

Respect for Religion

The public school should be a place where all children feel comfortable, valued and included, regardless of their ethnic or religious identification. The schools must neither advocate nor disparage the practice of religion or the beliefs or any particular religion. The material below summarizes our guidelines regarding study or religion, display of religious holiday symbols, use of religious music, and grant of accommodations for children who miss school for religious observance.

Religious Holiday Symbols: Symbols such as Santa Claus, Hanukkah menorahs, dreidels, Easter eggs, Christmas trees, etc., may be used in an educational context only and must reflect cultural and religious diversity. Decorations in public areas should be minimal, and should not use the symbols of one religion exclusively or dominantly, or display them so as to suggest that the school is celebrating a particular religious holiday.

Art, Literature, and Music: Some of the world's greatest art, music and literature were developed in connection with religion. They may be studied in a neutral manner with emphasis on its educational significance. Performance material must be chosen based on educational merit and alignment with district guidelines. At the elementary level, sacred music will be limited to ensure age-appropriate content, while middle and high school programs may include sacred music more extensively, always balanced with secular works and representing diverse faiths and cultural traditions. All art, literature, and music chosen for use in schools aim to foster understanding and appreciation of the rich diversity of human cultures and artistic expressions.

The inclusion of sacred materials is solely for educational purposes, presented objectively under teacher guidance, and does not endorse or promote any particular religious belief or practice.

SCHEDULING 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.

Extra Help

Each teacher provides extra help sessions; teachers will communicate their extra help schedule with students. Teachers will post their extra help schedules on their individual webpages. If your child is unable to attend the scheduled sessions, they should make arrangements with their teacher for an alternative time.

Report Cards

The school year is divided into four marking periods of approximately nine weeks each.

- **Accessing Report Cards:** Report Cards are available online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents wishing to receive a hardcopy should contact the main office. You can access the PowerSchool Parent Portal using this link:
<http://powerschool.westportps.org>.
- **Accountability Holds:** If a student has any outstanding accountability (e.g., overdue library books, lost textbooks), Parent Portal access to the report card may be denied until the issue is resolved.
- **Incomplete Grades:** Any student who has received a grade of Incomplete (I) should work directly with their teacher and attend extra help sessions as needed; teachers will help students plan a schedule for completing incomplete work or tests. An Incomplete becomes a Failure (F) if the student does not make up the work or tests as scheduled.
- **Key Dates:** Please refer to the School Calendar for Marking Period and Report Card release dates.
- **Mid-Marking Period Updates:** Mid-marking period progress reports are not formally generated. Instead, all parents have access to the PowerSchool GradeBook feature through the Parent Portal. In lieu of progress reports, parents will receive an email

alerting them that it is mid-marking period and prompting them to check their child's grades online.

- **Parent Concerns:** 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.
- Calculation for Grade Six Honors begins in the second marking period.
- No grade in any class shall be below a C- for honors eligibility.
- Students receiving an Incomplete (I) are not eligible for honors until the incomplete is made up.
- **First Honors:** Awarded for an average of 7 points (A-) or above.
- **Second Honors:** Awarded for an average of 4 points (B-) or above.

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

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

Field Trips

School-sponsored field trips are valuable extensions of classroom instruction, specifically designed to enrich and enhance our educational program.

- **Participation Requirements:** All students must submit a parent-signed permission slip to participate in any field trip.
- **Fees:** Most field trips involve an associated fee, which parents are responsible for covering.

- **Food Guidelines:** Snacks and other food items brought on field trips must be free of peanuts and tree nuts to ensure the safety of all students with allergies. For health and safety reasons, students are strictly not permitted to share food items with others during field trips.

Financial Assistance for School Activities

The Westport Public Schools system is committed to providing every student enrolled in our schools with the opportunity to participate fully in all school activities, regardless of their family's ability to pay.

- **Seeking Assistance:** 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 rental, etc., please contact the Westport Department of Human Services for confidential assistance.

Working with Private Sector Providers

The Westport Public Schools highly values the dedication and expertise of its faculty members who educate students in Westport's classrooms. Our teachers' primary responsibility is to focus on the students attending our schools.

To ensure our educators can devote their full time and energy to their students, please note the following guidelines regarding private service providers:

- **Direct Communication:** Teacher time and energy can be diverted when private service providers attempt to communicate directly with Westport teachers to seek student information, assignment details, or request classroom visits during school hours.
- **Teacher's Role:** In recognition of the invaluable resources Westport teachers bring to their work, they are not required or expected to communicate with or provide information to private service providers.
- **Classroom Visits:** Similarly, visits to Westport classrooms by private service providers and/or agencies are generally not permitted. The only exception is when such a visit is an essential part of the process for determining or developing programming for a student with special needs; visits of this nature must be approved by the school administration in advance.

Standards of Behavior & Discipline

At Bedford Middle School, our primary goal is to foster a positive, safe, and productive learning environment through proactive and responsive discipline. We guide students in making responsible choices, emphasizing personal growth and healthy social development.

Key Links

For a comprehensive understanding of our conduct policies, all BMS students, parents, and guardians should review the following resources:

- **Code of Conduct:** Pay particular attention to the introduction on pages 1-12 and the grades 6-8 section on pages 27-48: [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Connecticut School Climate Policy](#)
- [Challenging Behavior Reporting Form](#)
- [Investigation Form](#)
- [Response Process\(es\) Notification Form](#)

Backpack & Locker Policy & Expectations

As we begin the 2025–2026 school year, we are reinstating important school expectations regarding backpacks and lockers. These guidelines are designed to support student wellbeing, organization, and focus throughout the school day.

Backpack & Locker Expectations

- Backpacks:
 - Students may not carry backpacks during the school day, except in specific, approved cases based on individual student needs.
 - All backpacks must be stored in assigned hallway lockers before homeroom.
- Before Homeroom:
 - Students should place backpacks in their lockers and bring only essential materials—such as a fully charged Chromebook—to class.
- During the Day:
 - Students may visit their lockers at designated times to retrieve or return class materials as needed.

Locker Maintenance & Organization

Students are responsible for keeping their lockers clean, organized, and functional:

- Remove leftover food, wrappers, and open containers daily to prevent pests and odors.
- Arrange books, folders, and supplies neatly to support academic success.
- Students may not decorate their own or other students' lockers for birthdays or other special events; students may not apply stickers to the exterior or interior of their lockers.
- Students may affix pencil holders or small white boards to the interior of their locker using magnets.

Locker Training & Support


Teachers will:

- Demonstrate how to operate lockers.
- Establish routines for locker visits.
- Reinforce strategies for staying organized and independent.

Locker Security & Assistance

- All lockers are inspected annually to ensure proper function.
- Students should never share locker combinations.
- Any locker issues (malfunctions, security concerns, etc.) should be reported to a homeroom teacher or the main office immediately.

Helpful Resource:

 A BMS Locker Opening Video will be shared to support students in building locker routines:
[BMS LOCKER OPENING VIDEO](#)

Addressing Misconduct

Any actions that undermine our school community will be addressed with seriousness and care. This includes, but is not limited to: discriminatory behavior, mean-spirited comments, inconsiderate or disrespectful conduct towards peers or staff, defacing or damaging school property, and all violations of our code of conduct. Our approach involves thorough investigation, policy review, and the implementation of restorative practices.

Consequences for misconduct may include restorative measures aimed at repairing harm, as well as formal disciplinary actions. We employ a progressive discipline model, meaning responses will vary based on the frequency and seriousness of the offense. Initial interventions may include, but are not limited to:

- Peer mediation with direct staff supervision and guidance.
- Phone calls to parents/guardians.
- Written and verbal apologies.
- Classroom-level detention assigned by individual teachers.
- Suspension (in-school or out-of-school).
- Recommendation for expulsion (in severe cases).

Core Expectations for a Positive Learning Environment

To maintain an environment that is safe, healthy, and conducive to learning, Bedford Middle School, in cooperation with parents, expects all students to:

- **Comply with Regulations:** Adhere to all state, local, and school health, safety, and attendance regulations.

- **Show Respect:** Demonstrate courtesy and consideration for all members of the school community at all times.
- **Maintain Focus:** Behave in a manner that does not disrupt the educational process for themselves or others.
- **Follow Procedures:** Comply with classroom procedures and requirements.
- **Care for Property:** Respect and take responsibility for both school and personal property.
- **Appropriate Dress:** Maintain a clean, neat appearance and dress in a manner that does not interfere with school activities or create a safety hazard (e.g., clothing with lewd messages, innuendo, or promotions of alcohol/tobacco/drugs are prohibited).

Specific Student Conduct Expectations

Responsible students are integral to a thriving school community. Students are expected to:

- **Report Concerns:** Immediately find and inform an adult when there is an emergency or a student in need of help.
- **Respect Property:**
 - Treat everyone's personal belongings with care and respect.
 - Refrain from littering or vandalizing personal or school property.
 - Never steal items from classrooms, the cafeteria, peers, or possess stolen property.
- **Respect Learning:**
 - Ensure their behavior does not disrupt the classroom learning environment, the teacher, or other students.
- **Be Punctual and Responsible:**
 - Attend school and all classes punctually.
 - Arrive on time and never skip classes, appointments, or detentions.
- **Respond Appropriately to Staff:**
 - Follow the directions of all adult members of the school community.
 - Refrain from arguing about or ignoring a staff member's respectful request.
- **Exhibit Appropriate Cafeteria Behavior:**
 - Be considerate of other students, the cafeteria staff, teachers on duty, the cafeteria space, and the recess area and equipment.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of students is strictly forbidden. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other conduct of a sexual nature that

has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's ability to learn or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Sexual harassment can include conduct that is verbal, such as suggestive comments, insults, jokes, etc.; nonverbal, including pictures, gestures, whistling etc.; or physical, including pinching, kissing, touching, assault or coerced sexual intercourse. Complaint procedures for students may involve personal contact or verbal or written complaints.

Personal Contact: If the offender is another student, the complainant tries telling the offender that the behavior is unwelcome and asking that it stop. If a student feels uncomfortable talking to the offender, or if the personal contact is ineffective, the student should follow up with an informal or formal complaint. The student should always make a complaint if the offender is an adult.

Informal (verbal) Complaint: The student should discuss the behavior with any staff member with whom he or she feels comfortable. If the offender is an adult, the staff member should refer the complaint to the principal; if the offender is a student, the staff member should report it to his/her supervisor.

Formal (written) Complaint: A formal written complaint may be used as an initial procedure or as a follow-up to informal procedures. The student should submit a written complaint to a staff member who will refer it to the principal. A copy of every formal complaint, as well as the follow-up report, is submitted to the Superintendent.

Such a formal complaint should state:

- Name of the complainant
- Date of the complaint
- Date(s) of the alleged harassment
- Name(s) of the harasser(s)
- Location where such harassment occurred
- Names of any witness(es) to the harassment, and
- Detailed statement of the circumstances constituting the alleged harassment.

Investigation/Remedial Action: All complaints will be investigated promptly. The investigator will file a written report with the Principal, with copies to the complainant and the alleged offender and their parents, and the Superintendent. If it is established that harassment has occurred, the administrator shall take steps to assure that the behavior will not continue. Disciplinary measures may be imposed up to and including suspension (students) and discharge (employees).

Due Process/Right of Appeal: Either side may appeal the decision to the District's Title IX Coordinator. Such appeal must be filed within ten business days of receiving the report with the Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

The District's addresses discipline for students with disabilities under the IDEA or Section 504, as applicable, and consistent with [Board Policy 5114](#). Upon the administration's decision to recommend expulsion or impose a suspension that would constitute a change in educational placement under the IDEA, the administration shall promptly notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and provide them a copy of the special education procedural safeguards. The District will immediately convene the student's planning and placement team ("PPT"), but in no case later than ten (10) school days after the recommendation for expulsion or the suspension that constitutes a change in placement was made. The student's PPT shall consider the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that led to the recommendation for expulsion or the suspension which constitutes a change in placement, in order to determine whether the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability. If families have specific questions regarding discipline for their child with a disability, the family should contact the student's Assistant Principal or Principal.

If the Administration recommends for expulsion a student identified as eligible for educational accommodations under Section 504 who has violated any rule or code of conduct, the administration shall notify the parents of the recommendation for expulsion. The Section 504 team shall convene and for the purpose of reviewing the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that led to the recommendation for expulsion and the team will determine whether the student's behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability. For students eligible under Section 504, when a student with a disability is recommended for expulsion based solely on the illegal use or possession of drugs or alcohol, the 504 team shall not be required to meet to review the relationship between the student's disability and the behavior that led to the recommendation for expulsion.

The complete [Code of Conduct](#), [student discipline policy](#) and [administrative regulations](#) are available online and should be reviewed by all families.

Prohibited Items

For the safety and optimal learning environment of all students, the following items are strictly prohibited on school grounds and during school activities:

- Vaping products (cartridges, devices), illegal drugs, tobacco, or any related products.
- Alcohol.
- Guns, facsimiles of guns, or any other weapons.
- Prescription medications and over-the-counter medications (unless administered by the school nurse with proper documentation and authorization).

Consequences for Prohibited Items: Possession of these items will lead to strict disciplinary sanctions, including possible recommendation for expulsion.

"Fidget" Devices and Toys: While we understand their potential use, fidget devices and related toys can often distract and impede the instructional environment. Therefore, their use is generally restricted during instructional time and they are subject to confiscation if disruptive. In

specific cases, individual students may be 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 their appropriate use.

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

The Westport Public Schools maintains a strict, no-tolerance policy regarding the use or possession of drugs and alcohol. This policy applies to all school buildings and grounds, school-sponsored events, and school buses or other school vehicles used for student transportation.

Middle School Academic Integrity Policy

At Bedford Middle School, we are deeply committed to fostering a culture of honesty, responsibility, and profound respect for the learning process. Academic integrity is the cornerstone of trust and fairness within our vibrant school community. We expect every student to complete their work truthfully and independently, always acknowledging the intellectual contributions of others.

Academic Integrity Violations

Maintaining academic integrity is crucial. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- **Plagiarism:**
 - Copying and pasting content from websites or other sources without proper citation.
 - Paraphrasing a source (changing words but maintaining sentence structure or ideas) without acknowledging the original author.
 - Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories without giving credit to the source.
- **Cheating:**
 - Using unauthorized notes, written materials, or electronic devices during tests, quizzes, or assignments.
 - Fabricating research, data, or citations for any academic work.
 - Submitting work completed by someone else as your own.
- **Unauthorized Use of AI:**
 - Utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) tools to complete assignments without explicit permission from your teacher.

Student Responsibilities

Every student plays a vital role in upholding academic integrity. Students are expected to:

- **Make Ethical Choices:** Consistently make honest and ethical decisions when completing all academic work.
- **Seek Clarification:** Proactively ask their teachers for clarification if they are ever unsure whether an action constitutes cheating or plagiarism in a given situation.
- **Follow Guidelines:** Adhere to all instructions provided by teachers regarding collaboration, citation, and appropriate resource use.
- **Report Concerns:** Inform a teacher or school counselor if they become aware of any instances where cheating or plagiarism has occurred.

Teacher Responsibilities

Our teachers are committed to supporting students in understanding and practicing academic integrity. Teachers will:

- **Communicate Clearly:** Provide clear and concise explanations of expectations and what constitutes academic dishonesty.
- **Discuss Consequences:** Communicate the potential consequences for academic integrity violations.
- **Address Incidents:** Confer with the student and/or school counselor when incidents of academic dishonesty occur.
- **Document and Inform:** Document academic integrity violations for their records and inform parents/guardians as appropriate.

Consequences for Violations

Consequences for academic integrity violations will be determined based on the severity and frequency of the offense. These may include, but are not limited to:

- A grade reduction for the assignment in question.
- The requirement to redo the assignment, which may be for reduced or restored credit.
- A grade of zero (0) for the assignment, with no opportunity to make up for that work.
- Detention or up to five (5) days of in-school suspension (ISS).
- Participation in restorative practices (e.g., reflective writing, a formal apology, or counseling support).
- Referral to school administration for repeated offenses.

Important Note: Repeated or serious violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may also result in further disciplinary action in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct and Westport Board of Education Policy 5131.911. We are dedicated to ensuring a fair and equitable learning environment for all.

Selling Items in School

To maintain a focused and appropriate learning environment, students are strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of personal commerce or selling items within the school community. This policy applies to all school premises, school buses, school-provided transportation, field trips, and any school-sponsored activities.

Prohibited Items

Students may not sell any items in school. Examples of prohibited items include, but are not limited to:

- Candy
 - Gum
 - Food items
 - Fidget devices
 - Trinkets
 - Sneakers or other clothing
 - Any other personal goods.
-

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy

Bedford Middle School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment free from bullying and harassment.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined under Connecticut law (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d) as any direct or indirect act that is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and that:

- Causes physical or emotional harm to an individual;
- Places an individual in reasonable fear of harm;
- Infringes upon the rights or opportunities of an individual at school.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to, written, oral, or electronic communication, or physical acts or gestures, based on 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 association with others who have such characteristics.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying refers to bullying conducted through electronic communication including the Internet, mobile phones, or other digital technologies.

School Responsibilities

Bedford Middle School implements a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention and intervention:

- **Safe School Climate Plan:** Our school adheres to a Safe School Climate Plan, aligned with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 10-222d, which incorporates prevention, identification, and response strategies to address bullying, including restorative practices.
- **Parent Notification:**
 - Parents/guardians of a student who has been the target of bullying will be invited to a meeting to review safety measures and prevention steps.
 - Parents/guardians of a student who commits a verified act of bullying will be invited to a separate meeting to discuss school interventions.
- **Recordkeeping and Reporting:** The school maintains thorough documentation of all bullying reports and investigations. Verified incidents are logged and reported annually to the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- **Designated School Climate Specialist:** Each school designates a trained School Climate Specialist responsible for overseeing bullying reports, leading restorative practices, and coordinating with the School Climate Committee.
- **School Climate Committee:** A representative committee comprised of students, staff, and families supports the implementation and review of school climate initiatives and distributes annual notice of the bullying complaint form.
- **Statewide Training Mandate:** In accordance with state law and Public Act 23-167, training materials for school administrators addressing discrimination, harassment, and bullying prevention are provided and reviewed annually by the Board of Education.
- **Student and Community Awareness:** Students and parents are informed annually about their rights and remedies, the complaint process, and available supports. The handbook includes clear procedures for reporting bullying, and the district website provides access to training resources and policy details.

Policy Reference

For further details, please refer to:

- Westport Board of Education Policy: 5131.911 – Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Guidelines for Appropriate Student Dress at School

The Westport Public Schools are committed to maintaining a school environment that is conducive to learning and respectful of all students. Student dress and grooming should support a positive educational environment and shall not interfere with the health, safety, or welfare of any student.

General Dress Expectations

Students must adhere to the following dress standards during the academic school day:

- **Footwear:** Shoes must be worn at all times for health and safety. Footwear that impairs safe movement, such as excessively high heels or flip-flops, may be deemed inappropriate.
- **Prohibited Clothing and Accessories:**
 - Clothing or accessories with vulgar, obscene, or sexually suggestive language or imagery.
 - Items that promote or depict drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other substances prohibited in schools.
 - Attire or accessories that display or imply violence, intimidation, or hate speech, including but not limited to items with the Confederate flag or Nazi swastika.
 - Clothing that exposes the abdomen, chest, buttocks, or undergarments.
 - See-through garments or camisoles worn as outerwear without appropriate layers.
- **Disruption and Safety:** Clothing or accessories that substantially disrupt the school environment, or pose a safety risk to students or others, are not allowed.

Application and Enforcement

Students who do not comply with the dress code will be subject to disciplinary measures consistent with the Board's student discipline policies, up to and including suspension or expulsion, in accordance with Policy 5132. This policy is aligned with state law and aims to balance student expression with school safety and a focus on learning.

Required Attire for Physical Education (PE)

Students are expected to wear clothing and footwear appropriate for physical activity during physical education (PE) classes. This typically includes athletic shoes and attire that allows for safe movement.

- **Medical Excuses from PE:**
 - A written note from a parent/guardian may excuse a student from PE for up to two consecutive days.
 - Absences from PE beyond two days require a note from a healthcare provider or evaluation by the BMS Head Nurse, who retains discretion to approve such absences.

Health & Safety

School Nurse & Medications

The school nurse plays a crucial role in ensuring student health and safety during the school day.

- **Emergency Medical Contact Information:** Parents will be asked 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 a medical emergency, 9-1-1 will be called for immediate transportation to the hospital.
- **Administration of Medication:**
 - No medication will be administered to a student unless a written order from an authorized prescriber (other than a parent/guardian) and the signed authorization of a parent or guardian on the official Westport Public Schools medication form are both 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.
 - **Self-Administration Exception:** Students with 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 themselves.
- **Staying Home from School:** To safeguard the health of all students, we ask parents to monitor their children for possible communicable diseases and to follow guidelines for keeping children home from school when ill.

Snack & Food Allergies

- **Field Trips:** Snacks and other food items brought on field trips should be free of peanuts and tree nuts to ensure the safety of all students with allergies. Students are strictly not permitted to share food on field trips. (Note: General school food allergy policy for daily school operations should also be included in a full handbook section here if applicable.)

No Balloons in School!

Latex Allergy Alert & Mylar Pollution Alert

Mylar balloons are strictly prohibited at BMS or on school grounds at any time. Westport is situated on the shoreline of Connecticut. Mylar balloons are composed of synthetic nylon with a metallic coating, making them non-biodegradable. Their decomposition can take up to four years, posing a significant risk, especially to shoreline bird species. For these environmental and safety reasons, Mylar balloons are 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 for staying home from school.

Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is crucial for student success.

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

Parent Responsibilities

Connecticut State Law (Section 10-184) stipulates 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 their student's daily attendance through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Parents are expected to monitor their child's attendance and cooperate with the school policy and rules regarding attendance. Parents are also expected to review the detailed procedures and definitions pertaining to student attendance.

Excused Absences

- **Definition:** An absence is excused for specific legitimate reasons (e.g., student illness, family emergency, religious observance).
- **Repeated Excused Absences:** Cases of repeated parental-excused absences (five or more non-consecutive absences in a marking period) will be reviewed 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.

Unexcused Absences

- **Definition:** Absence for reasons other than those listed as excused are considered unexcused.
- **Truancy:** Four unexcused absences within 4 weeks or 10 unexcused absences within a school year is considered truancy and will be addressed accordingly.
- **Consequences for Excessive Unexcused Absences:** Excessive unexcused absences may result in the following:
 - Conference with the parent and a follow-up letter to resolve the situation.
 - Referral to appropriate agencies including the CT Department of Children & Family Services.

Tardy (Late to School) Procedure

Any child who arrives at homeroom after 8:30 a.m. must report to the main office to obtain a tardy pass, which they will hand to their classroom or homeroom teacher. This does not apply to students who arrive late to school due to a scheduled special music performing group rehearsal, extra help with a teacher, or a planned meeting for a school club/organization.

Reporting Your Child's Absence, Late Arrival, and Early Dismissal

Reporting a Full-Day Absence

- Submit the absence using the PowerSchool Attendance Monitor.

Reporting a Late Arrival

- Report the late arrival through the PowerSchool Attendance Monitor.

How to Use Attendance Monitor (for Parents/Guardians)

The PowerSchool Attendance Monitor offers several advantages for families, including the ability to report an absence up to 30 days in advance, view all previously reported absences, and see your child's absence summary at any time.

1. Log in to PowerSchool (please note, this feature is not available in the mobile app).
2. Select the child for whom you need to report an absence.
3. On the left-hand side, choose "Attendance Monitor."
4. Click "Report New Attendance."
5. Enter the Absence Date (leaving the second date blank to report for today only).
6. Select a Reason for the Absence from the drop-down menu.
7. Select if this absence is for the whole day: 'Yes' or 'No' (If 'No' is selected, enter the time range).
8. In the explanation field, please provide general information, such as:
 - Fever
 - Cold Symptoms
 - Gastrointestinal Issues (stomach ache)
 - Doctor's appointment
9. Click "Submit."

Parents are welcome to contact the school nurse to discuss concerns or ask questions.

Note: To cancel a submitted attendance report for a future date, click "Edit" to the left of the entry, change the reason to "XX CANCELLED XX" then click "Update."

Early Dismissal Parent/Guardian Procedure

Students should submit a handwritten early dismissal note from a parent/guardian to the main office by 8:30 AM.

- The note must be signed and include a brief explanation for the early dismissal.
- Students will receive an early dismissal pass from the main office.
- The pass allows students to leave class a few minutes early to visit their locker before reporting to the main office for parent/guardian pickup.

Early Dismissal Parent/Guardian Pickup Procedure

- Upon arrival at BMS, use the intercom located outside the main entrance to notify the main office.
- State your name and purpose for the visit; the main office staff will retrieve and dismiss your child to meet you outside the main entrance.
- Parents/guardians are **not** to enter BMS for student pickup.
- **If your child is being dismissed from the Health Office:**
 - Upon arrival, use the main entrance intercom to alert the main office.
 - The main office will notify the health office, and the BMS nurse will escort your child outside to meet you at the main entrance.

What If My Child Doesn't Have an Early Dismissal Note?

- No need to call the main office in advance.
- Upon arrival, use the main entrance intercom to request an early pickup.
- The main office will call your child's classroom for early dismissal.

For any questions or further clarification regarding attendance, please feel free to contact the main office at 203-341-1500 or staccone@westportps.org.

Visitors to BMS

ADULTS

Parents of Future Kindergartners: In the spring, the district has a systematic orientation program for parents, and a "Mini-Kindergarten" experience for preschoolers to visit the kindergarten classrooms for a special program. The schools also arrange special times during the summer for incoming kindergartners to meet their classmates. Because of the large volume of requests and the disruptive effect on the classroom, parents of preschoolers may not visit kindergarten classes.

Parents of Current Students: Each school orients parents through many means, including curriculum materials, PTA meetings, special programs, written communications and Back to School Nights. We hold special parent meetings at transition points into elementary, middle school and high school. Visits to Westport classrooms by parents will not be permitted unless as part of the process necessary to determine or develop programming for a student with a disability.

Residents with Children in Private School: Parents may make an appointment with the appropriate school to discuss their child's needs in order to help them decide whether to transfer their children to public school.

Non-Residents: The school system does not take time away from service to enrolled students and their parents during the regular school day by meeting with prospective residents, or discussing potential programs for students who are not yet Westport residents.

STUDENTS

Friends or Relatives of Current Students: No student visitors will be allowed in any school while school is in session. Students visiting Westport for short periods of time may not sit in on classes with friends or relatives. Prospective students may not "shadow" current students.

Former students: Former students:

- may visit school after the school day has ended.
- may enter the building after the final bell has rung for the day and after buses have left the parking lot.
- visiting individual teachers or other faculty members should contact those staff members prior to their visit.
- shall maintain the decorum as prescribed by the student handbook and be respectful of current students and staff.

Visitors at middle schools and elementary schools must have an appointment and have contacted the teacher/s in advance. The teacher/s must notify the office of the expected visitors.

Resident Children in Private Schools: We do not provide tours during school hours or permit visits to classes for children who are considering enrolling in the public schools. However, high school-age students may contact the Staples Guidance Department to discuss potential programs to help them decide whether to transfer to Staples.

Extracurricular Activities: Parents and other adults who assist with extracurricular activities, whether on a formal or voluntary basis, may not have access to school system email and or student names, addresses or telephone numbers to solicit clients for, or distribute information about, private initiatives such as coaching sessions, drama or music organizations or sales of goods or services of any kind.

Electronic Resources & Internet Use

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 settings. This includes, but is not limited to, refraining from:

- Transmitting or receiving email communications or using computer systems for any personal 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.

Electronic Resources/Internet

Use of Computers; Internet Behavior: 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:

1. 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);
 - a. That threaten students, staff or administration;
 - b. That are falsely attributed to others;
 - c. That are intended to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate another student;
 - d. That are intended to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate staff members or administrators;
 - e. That are defamatory of students, staff members or administrators.
2. Gaining or seeking to gain unauthorized access to computer systems;
3. Damaging computers, computer files, computer systems or computer networks;
4. Interfering with the school district's computer systems, including but not limited to unauthorized access into or interference with district computer systems;
5. Interfering with communication by teachers or administrators with parents or guardians, including but not limited to blocking or intercepting email or other electronic communications;
6. 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;
7. Using another person's password under any circumstances;
8. Trespassing in or tampering with any other person's folder, work or files;
9. Sending any message that breaches the district's confidentiality requirements, or the confidentiality of students;

10. 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;
11. Accessing or attempting to access any material that is obscene, contains child pornography, or is harmful to minors;
12. Cyberbullying;
13. 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 is signed when filling out the annual Returning Students Form in PowerSchool. 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.

Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA) [LINK](#)

Students and their parents are required to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement (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 electronic resources.

Permission to Audio/Video Record

Specific permission from the school administration is required for any audio/video recording on school property or during school activities.

Cell Phone & Smartwatch Policy & Expectations

As we begin the 2025–2026 school year, Bedford Middle School reaffirms its commitment to a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment. In alignment with Westport Board of Education Policy 5114 (Student Discipline) and Connecticut school law supporting orderly

school operations, we are implementing clear expectations regarding student cell phone and smartwatch use.

Policy Overview

- Cell phones and smartwatches may not be used or worn during the school day (8:30 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.).
- All devices must be powered off and stored securely in hallway lockers.
- Use of devices in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, or other areas during school hours is prohibited.

Family Communication

- Students should not text or call parents during school hours. If a student feels unwell or needs assistance, they must report to the Health Office, where staff will contact parents/guardians if necessary.
- Parents/guardians are asked not to text or call students during the school day. For urgent matters, please contact the BMS Main Office.

Consequences for Device Use Aligned with Policy 5114 (Student Discipline):

Offense	Consequence
First Offense	Device brought to the Main Office and held until dismissal.
Second & Subsequent Offenses	Device brought to Main Office; parent/guardian must retrieve the device. Additional school-based disciplinary measures may apply.

Why This Policy Matters

Research and local experience show that limiting personal device use during the day improves student engagement, reduces distractions, and supports social interaction and well-being.

Questions?

Please contact the BMS Main Office with any questions or to discuss individual circumstances requiring accommodation.

Thank you for your partnership in supporting a safe, respectful, and academically focused school environment.

Daily Operations

The School Day

- The official school day runs from **8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.**
- Students are permitted to enter the school building starting at **8:00 a.m.**

Cancellations, Delayed Openings, and Emergency Closings

Information regarding school cancellations, delayed openings, and emergency closings can be found through the following channels:

- School and District Websites
- Snow Line: **(203) 341-1766**

Dropping-Off Forgotten Items During the School Day

Specific guidelines for dropping off forgotten items during the school day are available by contacting the main office directly. Please call **(203) 341-1500** for their procedure.

School Lunch

Bedford Middle School's food service offers well-balanced breakfasts and lunches daily at reasonable prices. Students have the option to purchase a hot or cold meal, or bring their own breakfast, lunch, or snack from home. Our school food service continually updates lunch offerings to comply with health standards and students' culinary interests.

- Students are expected to clean up their lunch supplies and tables by properly discarding trash and recycling items.
- During each lunch period, students have the opportunity to stay in the cafeteria, visit the Library Media Center (LMC), or go outdoors for recess.

Specialized Dietary Needs

For students with specialized dietary needs and restrictions, parents must contact **Chartwells Food Dining Services**:

- **Bob Nielsen**, Director of Dining Services
- **Tel:** (203) 341-2431
- **Email:** bnielsen@westportps.org

Lunch Account & Payment

Students can conveniently purchase food and beverages using the online payment system: **myschoolbucks.com**. This is a debiting system that allows students to access their pre-loaded funds for purchases.

Prohibited Food Deliveries

For safety and security, unauthorized food deliveries to students (e.g., from outside restaurants or delivery services) are strictly prohibited.

Free/Reduced Lunch Program

Information regarding the Free/Reduced Lunch Program is available through the school administration or by contacting the food services director.

Telephone Access

Students are not permitted to use personal cell phones during school hours. If a student needs to make a phone call for an urgent matter, they may use a telephone located in the main office.

Custody Information

It is essential that school records accurately reflect current custody and visitation privileges in cases where a student's parents are divorced or separated.

- The school requires proof of custody arrangements on file. 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 legal custody.

Change of Address & Contact Information

If there is any change in your residence, phone number, email address, or any other information necessary to reach you in case of emergency, please inform the school promptly. Up-to-date contact information is critical for student safety and communication. Call the **Main Office at (203) 341-1500**.

Parent Conferences

Conferences with teachers or school counselors can be initiated by parents, students, teachers, counselors, or the administration to discuss student progress or concerns.

Parent Concerns: Protocol for Addressing Problems

While specific detailed protocols are not provided here, if you have a concern, it is implied and recommended that initial contact should be made with the relevant teacher, school counselor, or administrator. This ensures your concern is directed to the most appropriate staff member for resolution.

School Buses and Vans

School buses and vans are provided to transport students safely to and from school.

Bus Routes and Assignments

- Bus Routes are developed annually by the Transportation Coordinator.
- Information regarding specific routes and assignments is available online at www.westportps.org

Transportation Concerns

Questions or complaints about school transportation services or safety issues should be directed to the Transportation Coordinator.

- **Transportation Coordinator:**
 1. Room 301, Westport Town Hall
 2. **Phone:** (203) 341-1754
- **Appeal Process:** If a satisfactory resolution is not reached with the Transportation Coordinator, a parent may appeal to the Assistant Superintendent for Business: **(203) 341-1001**. Subsequent appeal levels include:
 1. Superintendent of Schools
 2. Board of Education
 3. State Department of Education

Bus Driver Behavioral Concerns

Any concerns regarding bus driver behavior should be communicated immediately to:

- **Westport Bus Transportation Coordinator:** (203) 341-1754
- **BMS Principal:** (203) 341-1500

Upon receipt of the complaint, the Westport Bus Transportation Coordinator will communicate by telephone and 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, interviews the driver regarding the complaint.

BMS ELECTRIC BICYCLE USE POLICY

BMS Electric Bicycle Use Policy

Purpose: To support safety, compliance with Connecticut General Statutes, and orderly school operations, BMS establishes the following regulations for student use of electric bicycles (e-bikes).

1. Permitted E-Bike Types

Class	Description	Max Speed	Battery Limit	Legal Status at BMS
Class 1	Pedal-assist only	20 mph	≤ 750 watts	✓ Permitted
Class 2	Throttle + pedals	20 mph	≤ 750 watts	✓ Permitted
Class 3	Pedal-assist only	28 mph	≤ 750 watts	✗ Prohibited (Under 16)

Motor-Driven Cycle	No pedals OR >750 watts	Varies	> 750 watts	✗ Prohibited
Motorcycle-Class	High-performance motor	>28 mph	> 3,500 watts	✗ Prohibited

2. Safety Protocols

- Helmet Use: Mandatory for all e-bike riders.
 - On Campus Conduct: Riders must dismount and walk bikes upon entering campus.
 - Designated Parking: All e-bikes must be locked at the designated school bike rack.
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3. Prohibited Use

- No e-bike riding during the academic day.
 - No sharing, racing, or recreational riding.
 - No riding in restricted zones (sidewalks, bus loops, fire lanes, faculty lots).
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4. Consequences

Offense Consequence

1st	Verbal warning and parent contact
2nd	Suspension of e-bike riding privileges for 2 weeks
3rd	Suspension of privileges for the semester; possible school discipline

5. Legal References

- Connecticut General Statutes §§ 14-1 & 14-286: Classification and regulation of e-bikes
- CGS Chapter 248: Motor vehicle safety laws
- Westport BOE Policies:
 - P 5142.4 – *Transportation and School Bus Stop Safety*
 - P 5142 – *General Student Safety and Welfare*


BMS TRAFFIC SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

Ensuring a Safe Campus for All Students and Staff

Dear BMS Parents and Guardians,

For the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and families, we ask all drivers to carefully review and follow the traffic safety expectations outlined below when on the Bedford Middle School campus.

Designated Drop-Off & Pick-Up Zones Only

 Do NOT drop off or pick up students in the staff parking lot.

All student drop-off and pick-up must occur curbside in front of the BMS main entrance.

- Please remain in the designated line and move forward as directed by staff.
- Morning and afternoon traffic generally moves efficiently—thank you for your patience and cooperation.
- Students will be reminded during homeroom that they are not to use the parking lot as a drop-off or pick-up area.

The “Pull Forward” Rule

To keep traffic flowing:

- Always pull your vehicle as far forward as possible in the drop-off/pick-up zone.
- Avoid stopping directly in front of the main entrance if there is space ahead of you.

This small action improves flow and reduces delays for all.

Use Crosswalks – It’s the Law

Connecticut law requires all vehicles to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks.

- Always come to a complete stop when students or staff are crossing.
- Please encourage your children to use the designated crosswalks (“zebra stripes”) on campus.

Let’s model safe behavior together.

Do Not Park in the Emergency Fire Lane

Parking in the fire lane—even briefly—puts students and staff at risk in the event of an emergency. This lane must remain clear at all times.

Handicapped Parking Spaces

Please do not park or idle in the designated handicapped spaces unless you have a valid permit. These spaces must be reserved for individuals who require accessible parking.

Drive Like Your Child Goes Here—Because They Do!

The BMS/SHS campus is heavily trafficked during morning arrival and afternoon dismissal.

- Drive slowly and cautiously at all times.
 - Budget extra time into your commute for drop-off and pick-up.
 - Stay alert, courteous, and patient to help keep our entire community safe.
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Thank you for your cooperation and for helping us maintain a safe and respectful environment for all. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the BMS Main Office.

Lost and Found - Two Locations in BMS

There is a lost and found for clothing, lunch materials, binders and books located in the cafeteria. There is another lost and found located in the main office for small items such as phones, keys and wallets.

Clubs & Activities

Information about clubs and activities is published each fall in a booklet shared with the entire BMS school community.

Parent Tech Help Desk Access

- **Email address:** parenthelpdesk@westportps.org
- **Phone:** (203) 341-1214

Websites

- **Bedford Middle School webpage:** <https://bms.westportps.org/>
- **Westport Public Schools webpage:** <https://www.westportps.org>