BEN STEELE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Home of the Wildcats
2025 – 2026

5640 Grand Ave.
Billings, MT 59106
Phone: (406) 601-1600 Fax: (406) 652 - 3228

School Communication at this location:
PowerSchool - School Bulletin - Newsletter emails - ParentSquare
Facebook page: Ben Steele Middle School
Instagram: bensteelems
bensteele.billingsschools.org

ADMINISTRATION

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COUNSELORS

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8th Grade (M - Z)

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6th Grade (All)
8th Grade (A - L)

NOTE: Please read and review this entire handbook

Welcome to Ben Steele Middle School

Est. 2017

MISSION

Our mission is to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students are supported, challenged, and inspired.

EXPECTATIONS

Ben Steele was a man of honor, integrity, responsibility and hard work. We expect the best out of all of our students, but do not expect perfection. We expect a solid effort in everything you do, and will promise you the level of support you require. This staff is committed to helping you achieve excellence academically and socially. We expect you to make choices that support a warm, welcoming, respectful environment so that you display pride in yourself and Ben Steele. It is our goal that all students reach their full potential and make a positive contribution to our school and the greater Billings community. Create your own outstanding experience, leave a positive mark and let's have another great year together.

"We are…Like Steele" – Mr. Steele lived his life in a way that should cause each one of us to want to emulate his example. One of the primary rules by which he lived was, "Be positive, no matter what life offers you; negativity gets you nowhere."

At Ben Steele Middle School, students will demonstrate three learning characteristics daily:

Engage - we are excited about learning
- I choose to manage distractions
- I make good choices about my learning
- I am organized and ready to learn daily
- I can work independently or as part of a team

Persevere - we continue to try even when things are difficult
- I believe I can do it
- I never give up
- I accept challenges
- I stay positive

Take Ownership - we are responsible for our own learning
- I use learning intentions and success criteria to help me learn
- I seek feedback to improve my learning
- I set goals and make a plan to move my learning forward

At Ben Steele Middle School, students will follow our Big 3:

Respectful

Responsible

Safe

The ways in which we follow the Big 3 are found in the Ben Steele Middle School Student Expectation Matrix on page 17

4/19/25

BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Inspire Educate Empower

JUNE 2025

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	T	T	T	19	20	21

AUGUST 2025

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	N	N	P	P	P	30
31						

SEPTEMBER 2025

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	*	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2025

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	T	T	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER 2025

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	PTC	22
23	PTC	T	*	*	*	29
30						

DECEMBER 2025

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	*	*	*	27
28	*	*	*			

JANUARY 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
				*	*	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	P	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	SD	*	*	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	*	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	T	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY 2026

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					*	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	*	26	27	28	29	30
31						

GRADUATION

SUNDAY, MAY 24TH, 2026

Skyview 10:00 am

Senior 2:00 pm

West 6:00 pm

◯	First and Last Day of School. September 2nd: K-6th, 9th & all new 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, & 12th grade students. September 3rd: All K-12 students in session. The last day of school is May 29 for all grades. Last day of school for seniors is May 22nd.
*	Vacation or Holiday
T	PIR/Trade Days (Trade Professional Development for Teachers) - No school.
P	PIR Days (State Required Pupil-Instruction-Related Training for Teachers) - No School.
N	NPR Days (Professional Development Non-Pupil-Related Training) - No School.
PTC	Elementary Parent Teacher Conferences - Elementary Early Release. **Note**: Nov. 25 is Parent Teacher Conferences for Elem. and 6 week grading for MS & HS, and end of trimester for Elem.
SD	Snow Day - This will be a vacation day unless we are required to make-up a school day lost due to poor weather earlier in the year. If we are required to make-up a day, this vacation day will become a required day of attendance.
	Wednesday - PLC (Professional Learning Community) - Dismissal 1 hour early
	Middle School Early Release - October 23rd & 24th
	High School Sememster Testing - HS Early Release
☆	Elementary End of Trimester
✦	Six-Week Grading Period for MS & HS

Ben Steele Middle School Class Schedule:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 8:00 - 3:20

Time	6th Grade	Time	7th Grade	Time	8th Grade
8:00 - 9:04	Period 1	8:00 - 9:04	Period 1	8:00 - 9:04	Period 1
9:08 - 10:12	Period 2	9:08 - 10:12	Period 2	9:08 - 10:12	Period 2
10:16 - 11:20	Period 3	10:16 - 11:20	Period 3	10:16 - 11:20	Period 3
11:24 - 11:54	**6th LUNCH**	11:24 - 11:54	Period 4 (SPLIT)	11:24 - 12:30	Period 4
11:58 - 1:04	Period 4	**11:54 - 12:24**	**7th LUNCH**		
		12:28 - 1:04	Period 4 (SPLIT)	**12:34 - 1:04**	**8th LUNCH**
1:08 - 2:12	Period 5	1:08 - 2:12	Period 5	1:08 - 2:12	Period 5
2:16 - 3:20	Period 6	2:16 - 3:20	Period 6	2:16 - 3:20	Period 6

Wednesday 8:00 - 2:20

Time	6th Grade	Time	7th Grade	Time	8th Grade
8:00 - 8:54	Period 1	8:00 - 8:54	Period 1	8:00 - 8:54	Period 1
8:58 - 9:52	Period 2	8:58 - 9:52	Period 2	8:58 - 9:52	Period 2
9:56 - 10:50	Period 3	9:56 - 10:50	Period 3	9:56 - 10:50	Period 3
10:54 - 11:24	**6th LUNCH**	10:54 - 11:24	Period 4 (Split)	10:54 - 11:50	Period 4
11:28 - 12:24	Period 4	**11:24 - 11:54**	**7th LUNCH**		
		11:58 - 12:24	Period 4 (Split)	**11:54 - 12:24**	**8th LUNCH**
12:28 - 1:22	Period 5	12:28 - 1:22	Period 5	12:28 - 1:22	Period 5
1:26 - 2:20	Period 6	1:26 - 2:20	Period 6	1:26 - 2:20	Period 6
2:30 - 3:30	**PLC**	2:30 - 3:30	**PLC**	2:30 - 3:30	**PLC**

Every Wednesday throughout the school year, Ben Steele students will dismiss at 2:20, to allow for Professional Learning Communities with our teachers and staff.

Ben Steele Middle School at a Glance

Colors
Forest Green and Gold
Mascot
Wildcats

Hours
7:30 Main office and Attendance open
7:30 Students eating breakfast or getting teacher help may enter the building
7:45 All students may enter building
8:00 First class begins
3:20 Regular School day dismissal
***2:20 Wednesday Early dismissal**
4:00 Main office is closed

Visiting the School

Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit Ben Steele. Upon arrival, you may need to display a current photo ID, or driver's license. Once inside, please sign in with the main office. Visitors must obtain a Visitor's Pass from the school secretaries. The campus is closed to all student visitors from other schools.
Only people listed in the student's contact list will be able to visit with that student, or pick them up from school.

Items NOT allowed at Ben Steele:

- Guns of ANY kind, or any weapons
- Firecrackers/explosive devices
- Tobacco/Nicotine products of any kind – Possession or use of said products WILL result in a Minor in Possession charge
- Items containing latex or balloons
- Laser pens or shock pens

Items NOT allowed in classrooms:

- Electronic devices - cell phones, Air pods, earbuds, smart watches etc.
- Hats or head coverings (Except on Spirit Days)
- Coats/Backpacks in the classroom
- Skateboards/Rollerblades/scooters
- Bags, purses (except trapper keepers, pencil bags)

Expectations for Students

It is expected that students will display appropriate conduct. Good behavior is appreciated and rewarded.

- Follow all school and classroom rules
- Use appropriate language
- Settle conflicts respectfully – ask for help if needed
- Promote a caring community by including others, refusing to be part of hurtful talk and stopping bullying
- Arrive to class on time with necessary materials
- Be respectful and cautious when moving throughout the building
- Use your classroom's hall pass with teacher's permission if leaving class – go only where approved
- Follow Commons policies and procedures
- Respect school property and the property of others
- Wear clothing appropriate for a school setting – *See Dress Code
- Take school correspondence home to parents and return signed materials
- No PDA (Public Displays of Affection) with others at any time on school grounds
- Display good manners and respectful behavior while at Ben Steele, and when off campus for school events

Flowers and Gifts

Any flowers, or gifts delivered to the school must be paid for prior to delivery. Students may pick up these items from the office at the end of the school day. They will not be delivered to students, or taken into classrooms.

What should I do if….

I arrive early?
Students may come inside to eat breakfast at 7:30. If they have made prior arrangements with a teacher for extra help, they may go to their classroom at 7:30. All other students may enter the building at 7:45.

I am late?
Bring a note from home and report to the Attendance Office to get a pass.

I must leave early?
Bring a note from home and give it to the Attendance Office upon your arrival in the morning.

I have a personal problem?
Talk to a teacher, see your school counselor, or come to the Main Office to visit with an administrator.

I have trouble in a class?
Talk with your teacher or your counselor, and always let a parent know.

My parents want a conference?
Contact specific teachers by email unless you want more than one teacher in the conference. Parents may call

your counselor to set up a parent/teacher(s) conference or call the main office to set up a conference with administration.

I must leave the classroom?
Ask your teacher for permission and take the appropriate hall pass or call slip.

My parents' telephone number has changed?
Call the Main Office at 601-1601 to report any changes.

I am moving or withdrawing?
Parents should call the Main Office to update current records or arrange for proper check-out. Students who are transferring out of Ben Steele will be required to take a withdrawal form to every class and get each teacher's signature.

I need to use the telephone?
Students should make arrangements for rides **before** coming to school. If an emergency arises, you may ask the attendance office to use the student phone. ****Please check with the office before asking your parents to come pick you up from school.**

Report Cards

Our middle schools operate on a semester grading period. Every six weeks, as indicated on the school calendar, grades will be reflected in PowerSchool for parents to view. Formal report cards are issued twice a year for each semester, and are mailed to the current custodial address listed in PowerSchool.

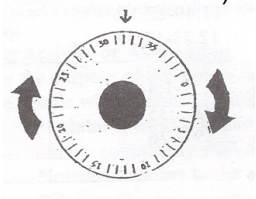
Cat Cafe

It is crucial that students complete academic work in a timely manner to demonstrate their understanding of content, gain necessary knowledge and build a habit of organization, self-management and timeliness. Students have many opportunities to get assistance from staff before, during, and after school.

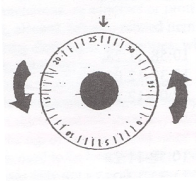
Students struggling to complete work in a timely manner will be required to attend Cat Cafe, a homework completion room during their lunch. Students will continue to attend Cat Café until they have completed all of their missing assignments and are showing adequate progress. We define adequate progress by completing at least 5 assignments within a two week period. If this does not occur within a two week window, after school detention will be assigned to provide more time to complete the missing assignments.

How to Operate a Lock:

Step 1
Turn the lock dial twice in a clockwise direction. After the second full turn, stop when you get to your first number
(Example: First number 32)



Step 2
Next, turn the dial in the opposite direction (counterclockwise) one full turn. After a full turn, stop when you get to your second number.
(Example: Second number 26)



Step 3
Finally, turn the dial slowly clockwise until the knob engages to open the locker door.

Locker Rules and Expectations

1. A hallway locker is assigned to each student at the beginning of the school year, and will only be changed due to mechanical failure. The lockers remain under the authority of the school and are the property of the school, not the student. However, the school is NOT responsible for items stolen from the locker, or for any materials left in the locker overnight.
2. Please do not build or install shelves in lockers that are difficult to remove quickly and easily. If you do install shelving, it must be removed by you or it will be discarded.
3. Students are expected to **keep combinations confidential** and are **not** to share lockers.
4. Students are expected to **leave other people's lockers and locks alone – All lockers are monitored by video surveillance.**
5. Students are protected from unreasonable searches and seizures. However**, school officials have the right to conduct a search of a student's locker as long as there is reasonable cause to do so.**
6. Any items found within the locker are assumed to be the property of the person to whom the locker has been assigned. Students will be held accountable for all items contained within their locker.
7. Gym lockers are available, but can only hold a pair of shoes and clothes. All backpacks, coats, etc. should be left in your hallway locker

School-issued materials
The school furnishes individual school issued materials including textbooks, Chromebooks, Chromebook chargers, and novels. Students are responsible for these items and must pay for lost, damaged or stolen materials. Fines and/or fees will be entered into PowerSchool.

Student Chromebook expectations

- Take care of your Chromebook and charger like it is your own
- At the end of the school year, you will be fined for damages - damaged body, broken screens, broken keyboards, lost chargers
- Carry your Chromebook with both hands (not up in the air) and place it on a solid surface when using it
- Take your Chromebook home to finish assignments and charge it at night
- Place it in your locker when you do not need it and in a safe way so that it does not fall out
- Do not bring your Chromebook to the cafeteria or eat or drink by your Chromebook
- You can put your Chromebook in a sleeve or case, but do not mark or put stickers on it
- If you forget your charger or Chromebook, we have a few spares that can be checked out in the main office, but they must be returned by the end of the day

***Students/parents are responsible to cover the cost of lost/stolen/damaged supplies checked out or loaned to students.**

Library Media Center
The Library Media Center is the hub for reading and study activities and the library staff strives to maintain a friendly, supportive and welcoming environment. Students and staff access information in a variety of formats including books, magazines, and multimedia computers. Students can visit the library in the mornings, during free time, after lunch and after school, and teachers frequently schedule library time for class projects.

Library Rules
- Let the librarian know when you arrive in the library and get permission before leaving.
- Food/drinks/candy/gum are not allowed in the library or computer lab.
- Be respectful of other students by being quiet. Return items to their appropriate area or to the librarian.
- Allow others to have access to quality, well-maintained equipment by treating books, computers and furniture with care and respect. Failure to do so may result in loss of library privileges.
- Only one student out at a time with the bathroom pass.
- Show pride - clean any messes and push in chairs before you leave.

Book Check Out
Students may have up to five items checked out at one time. Books are due back within three weeks of the checkout date, magazines and reference materials are due back the next day. Students are responsible for returning all library materials on time. Students should respond to overdue notices as soon as they are received. If library materials are lost/stolen, they must be paid for. Report Cards will be withheld until all Library fines are paid, if applicable.

Webcat is the "card catalog" for all School District 2 libraries. Students and parents may access Webcat at school or at home by clicking on the Webcat link on the School District's home page.
Ask a librarian for help to borrow books from other schools.

Computer Use
Students who choose to misuse a computer, Chromebook or iPad, by accessing or attempting to access inappropriate sites, or make changes to computer settings without specific, prior permission, will lose computer privileges or have restricted access using GoGuardian.

Citing Resources
Students must remember to cite work that they have used from other sources. When work is not cited, it is considered to be plagiarism and falls under the offense of cheating. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also a form of cheating/plagiarism and will be handled in the same manner.

Cheating/Copying
Students are expected to do their own work unless specifically communicated by the teacher. Students who copy off of another student's paper, use resources but do not cite and credit the original author, re-use another student's paper or lend their paper to others will be disciplined for academic dishonesty.

* **1st Offense –** Student will receive a zero on the assignment and parents contacted
* **2nd Offense –** Student will receive a zero on the assignment, will be assigned a detention, and parents contacted
* **3rd Offense –** Student will receive a zero on the assignment, will be assigned a day of ISS, and parents contacted
*** Further Offenses – Continued zeros and OSS / Truancy Center.**

Care of the Building
Everyone should take pride in our school building and school grounds by doing everything they can to keep it clean and attractive. Please be thoughtful citizens and pick up paper and trash when you see it instead of walking by it. Students marking or damaging school equipment/property in any way will be required to clean the damaged item, if possible, and/or reimburse the school for damages. Parents and students are responsible for materials loaned to students. Food items should not be taken out of the Commons in the morning or at lunch time.

Vandalism
Ben Steele Middle School prohibits writing/graffiti on any items that do not solely belong to the student. Any personal writing or artwork is subject to school rules and standards of good taste/appropriateness. Vandalism is a punishable offense and may include law enforcement involvement.

Marking skin
Students are not permitted to write, draw, or mark on their own or other's skin during the school day. This includes using pens, markers, paint, or any other writing tools. Marking on skin can be distracting, unhygienic, and inappropriate for the school environment. Students are encouraged to use paper or notebooks for expression and note-taking.

Perfume or body spray in hallways/classrooms
For the health and comfort of all students and staff, body spray, perfume, cologne, and other scented products may not be sprayed in hallways, classrooms, or other indoor areas. Some individuals may have allergies or sensitivities to fragrances. If needed, apply these products at home or in the restroom before class, using them sparingly and respectfully.

Personal Grooming Policy
Students are not permitted to do their makeup or hair during class time. Hair products, makeup, and grooming tools should be kept in lockers and not brought into classrooms. Class time is for learning, and personal grooming should be done at home or in the restroom during passing periods..

Bags
To maintain a safe and clutter-free learning environment, students are not allowed to carry backpacks, bags, fanny packs, crossbody bags, or purses during the school day. Only Trapper Keepers and small pencil bags are permitted in classrooms and hallways. Please plan accordingly and store all other bags in your locker.

Hall Passes/Passing Time
We ask students to take care of personal needs (bathroom, getting needed items from lockers, using the office phone, etc.) during passing time. Class time is instructional time and is very important, therefore bathroom passes will be issued at a teacher's discretion using an electronic hall pass system. At every class change, students are given four minutes to pass. Each student is expected to follow the traffic patterns. Running, pushing, "dunking", and shoving in the halls will not be tolerated and students may receive school consequences if the behavior is continued or considered dangerous. Teachers and staff will be expected to monitor hallway behaviors during each passing time, and greet students as they walk into their classroom each period.

Gum/Seeds/Candy
Shelled nuts are not allowed during the school day at BSMS. Gum is never allowed in the music rooms, library and any lab area. Some teachers do not allow gum or candy in the classroom, and it is your responsibility to know & follow each classroom's guidelines.

Energy drinks
To promote student health and wellness, energy drinks and other highly caffeinated beverages are not allowed on campus. This includes energy shots, energy drinks, pre-workout drinks, and similar products. These items will be confiscated if brought to school. Students are encouraged to choose water or other healthy beverage options during the school day.

Cafeteria
Students are to report to the Commons/cafeteria for lunch on time. Students may not eat in hallways, pods, or classrooms. There will be staff assigned to the Commons for supervision. The Commons will be as clean as you make it. Be sure to dispose of your trash and recycle when appropriate, when finished with your lunch. Failure to do so may result in clean-up duty. Repeated infractions of the rules will result in eating lunch in isolation or long-term removal from the Commons. Students should **dress for the weather** and bring their coats to lunch, when needed. After eating, all students are expected to go outside unless it is raining, below zero, or at the discretion of supervisory staff. While outside, students are expected to remain on campus, and stay in areas designated by school staff. Rough play will not be allowed. **Students may not take food or drinks outside. Due to time constraints, teachers and staff may go to the front of the serving line.**

School Deliveries
Ordering food for students or students ordering food through delivery services is prohibited. Parents may bring in food for their student to the main office. Any flowers or gifts delivered to the school must be paid for prior to delivery. Students may pick up these items from the office at the end of the school day.

Closed Campus
All six middle schools in Billings are closed campuses. **Once students arrive on campus**—whether by bus, car, or on foot—they must remain on school grounds for the entire school day. Students are not allowed to leave campus for any reason unless accompanied by their class for a school-approved activity or checked out through the office by their parents or legal guardian. Students may not go to lunch with other students or their friends' parents and are not permitted to visit nearby coffee shops, restaurants, or businesses during the school day.

***Students are to use designated crosswalks when crossing Grand Ave., 56th, 58th, and any other busy road before and after school.**

First Aid - Illness and Medications - Nursing
In case of an accident or illness at school, the student should go directly to, or send for help from, the Main Office, Counseling Office or Attendance Office. The school nurse is shared with several other schools and is NOT in our building on a regular basis. Students, who need to consult with the nurse, should make an appointment through the Secretary. Parents must maintain updated emergency telephone numbers and medical information. If a student needs to leave school, they must check out with the Attendance Clerk.

Medications – All medications should be taken at home if possible. If it is necessary to take medications during school hours, please comply with the following:

1. A consent form must be signed by parents and physician for the supervision of all prescription medication to be taken by students.
2. Medication must be in the original bottle with a current prescription label for instructions.
3. The student is responsible to come for medication and take it independently in the presence of designated school personnel.
4. **Non-prescription** medication may be kept in the student's locker for self-administration as per parent's instructions.
5. Students may carry individual inhalers following a consent form and labeling instructions.

As per district policy 3416-P1

Dance Rules
- Students should make arrangements **prior** to the dance to be picked up by 4:45 PM.
- Dances will begin at 3:30 PM and end at 4:45 PM.
- Gates close at 3:45 - Students will not be admitted after that time.
- Only students currently enrolled at Ben Steele will be permitted to attend - guests will not be allowed.
- Since all dances take place at Ben Steele, all school rules apply.
- Respectful behavior is expected. Mosh pit, circling, grinding, chasing, pushing, shoving or lifting people into the air is not allowed.
- Students with unacceptable behavior will be removed from the dance with no refund.
- Once you leave the dance, you may not return.
- Student backpacks and other materials will be stored in the Commons during dances.

Spirit Days
Throughout the year, Spirit days are planned for student involvement and enjoyment. The elected Student Council officers will form committees with representatives from each class. They will be responsible for planning the Spirit Days, dances, and several assemblies.

Enriched Classes
Students who qualify and are admitted to enriched classes must maintain a "B" or better in those classes. If a student is earning less than a "B", they will be placed on probation and are expected to raise their grade to a "B" by the next reporting period. Students who continue to earn less than a "B" may be removed from the class. Academic dishonesty may affect a student's placement in an enriched class at any time in the school year.

Ben Steele Awards and Activities/Contests
Throughout the year, students will have many opportunities to participate in a wide variety of contests, such as:

Middle School Math Day
Math Counts Competition
MCTM Math Competition
AMC Math Competition
Spelling Bee
Any other open contests sponsored by teachers

Extracurricular activities

Students are encouraged to broaden their skills, knowledge, and citizenship by participating in extracurricular activities. All students have several

opportunities to participate in a variety of after-school activities.

Sports Programs:
Football (7 - 8th only)
Basketball (6 - 8th)
Wrestling (6 - 8th)
Softball (6 - 8th)
Cross Country (6 - 8th)
Volleyball (6 - 8th)
Track & Field (6 - 8th)

Math Clubs
Student Council
Music Clubs (Choir, Band, Orchestra)
*Other student initiated clubs in place

**Students may seek permission from the Principal to start a club, but must have a sponsor teacher to supervise the club.

Sportmanship
We encourage all students to support their classmates in academic and athletic endeavors by attending scheduled events at our school and neighboring schools. You are expected to display good sportsmanship and show your support by cheering positively for our participants, NOT against other teams/participants. If you choose to display unsportsmanlike behavior, you may be asked to leave the gym/school and may have further disciplinary action.

2025-26 Athletic Season Schedule

Session 1: Sept 2 – Oct 15
Cross Country (6 - 8th girls and boys)
Football (7 - 8th grade boys/girls)
Softball (6 - 8th grade girls)

Session 2: Oct 20 – Dec 11
Girls' Basketball (6 - 8th grade girls) and
Wrestling (6 - 8th grade boys/girls)

Session 3: Jan 5 – Feb 24
Boys' Basketball (6 - 8th grade boys)

Session 4: Feb 23 – Apr 16
Volleyball (6 - 8th grade girls)

Session 5: Apr 14 – May 26
Track and Field (6 - 8th grade girls and boys)

Eligibility Guidelines
In order to participate in extracurricular activities, a student must maintain a passing grade in all courses in which he/she is currently enrolled. However, if a student receives a deficiency (failing grade), he/she may continue to participate as long as there is a grade average improvement. This guideline applies to interscholastic and instructional athletic teams, clubs, and student government. It will be enforced as follows:

1. Each of the five sport seasons is seven weeks long. The first grade check will be on Monday, following the completion of three weeks of practice (which is the instructional/non-competitive portion of the season.) The next grade check will be after week five, unless a student has received a deficiency. Grade eligibility checks for clubs, student government, field trips, etc. will be on the same dates.
2. Staff members will keep students and coaches informed as to the pass/fail status in each class.
3. If a student is deficient (failing in any class), the following will occur:
First deficiency, the student will be put on probation and given one week to achieve eligibility. If the deficiency is not corrected at the conclusion of one week, the student will be allowed to practice but not participate in any contest.
4. Individual cases of eligibility will be reviewed by the coach/ sponsor, associate principal, teacher(s), and principal or his/her designee.
5. A student must be in attendance the last half of the day to be eligible to participate in an activity scheduled for that day or receive approval from an administrator.
6. **A student may not participate in an activity if he/she has been suspended in school or out of school on the day of the activity.**
7. The attendance and suspension rules apply to the previous Friday if there is a Saturday activity.
8. Three unexcused absences from practice will result in the student's suspension from the activity.
9. All participants in athletic activities must have a current physical on file, participation agreement form, concussion form, code of conduct form, emergency medical information form, and media release, other required forms turned in at the main office. Also, you may pay the participation fee starting two weeks prior to the sport beginning in order to participate.

***Participation fees are non-refundable once the student participates in his/her first practice. The fee per activity is $55.**

Chemical Use Policy
It is the position of the Billings Public Schools that participation in co-curricular activities is a privilege extended to the students who are willing to make the commitment to adhere to the rules that govern the

program. It is the school's and district's belief that participation in organized activities can contribute to the all-around development of young men and women and that implementation of these rules will serve the following purposes:
1. To emphasize concern for the health and well-being of the students while participating in activities.
2. To provide a chemical free environment that will encourage health development.
3. To diminish chemical use by providing an educational assistance program.
4. To promote a sense of self-discrimination among students.
5. To confirm and support existing state laws which prohibit the use of mood-altering chemicals.
6. To emphasize standards of conduct for those students who, through their participation, are leaders and role models for their peers and younger students.
7. To assist students who desire to resist peer-pressure that often directs them toward the use of chemicals.
8. Each student who participates on a sports team will receive a full disclosure of the chemical policy.

School Safety

The fire alarm is a continuous ringing of alarms. When necessary, safety demands that the building be emptied quickly, quietly, and as orderly as possible (running, pushing, crowding, or unnecessary talking is not allowed). Each student should know the directions for evacuation drills in each classroom and teachers will assist with exit routes. Each class should completely clear the building and steps to leave space for the last classes to exit the building. The last person out of the rooms and the building will close all doors and windows. In case of an emergency drill, or any other safety situation while classes are passing, students are to enter the nearest classroom, or use the nearest exit. Teachers will be in charge of the area in which they are physically located, at the time the alarm sounds. Students will assemble in predetermined areas, for accountability, upon evacuation. *Not all emergency drills will require building evacuation. Students/staff will remain in classrooms in the event of an alarm, and will be notified by office staff when/if we will be evacuating.

Student Dress Code

Ben Steele's student dress code supports equitable educational access and is written in a manner that does not reinforce stereotypes. To ensure effective and equitable enforcement of this dress code, school staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and in a manner that does not reinforce or increase marginalization or oppression of any group on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, immigration status, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student. Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others.

General Guidelines

1. Basic Principle: Certain body parts must be covered for all students at all times. a. Clothes must be worn in such a way that the abdomen, genitals, buttocks, breasts and nipples are fully covered with opaque fabric. b. All items listed in the "must wear" and "may wear" categories below must meet this basic principle.

2. Students Must Wear, while following the basic principle of Section 1 above: a. A shirt (with fabric that touches the waistband in the front, back, and on the sides under the arms at all times), AND b. Pants/jeans or the equivalent (for example, a skirt, sweatpants, leggings, a dress or shorts), AND c. Shoes.

3. Students May Wear, as long as these items do not violate Section 1 above: a. Religious headwear b. Hoodie sweatshirts (no hoods are allowed to be worn on head) c. Fitted pants, including opaque leggings, yoga pants. d. Ripped jeans, as long as underwear and buttocks are not exposed e. Shorts (no shorter than an inseam of 3 inches) f. Tank tops, including spaghetti straps g. Athletic attire

4. Students Cannot Wear: a. Violent language or images b. Images or language depicting drugs or alcohol (or any illegal item or activity,) hate speech, profanity, or pornography c. Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or consistently marginalized groups d. Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded) e. Swimsuits (except as required in class, field trips, or athletic practice) f. Accessories that could be considered dangerous, could be used as a weapon, or serve no purpose in learning g. Any item that obscures the face or ears (except as a religious observance). The student and parent/guardian may determine the student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the general guidelines set out above.

Hats and hoods are not allowed to be worn in the school building unless on a designated Spirit Day.
As per District policy 3224 and 3203-P1

Personal Electronic Devices - Away for the Day

"Away for the Day" means just that. Student cell phones, iPods, or other electronics with Internet access are put away in backpacks and lockers during the school day.

When students enter the school building at the beginning of the day, personal electronics are turned off and put in backpacks. The backpack is left in the student locker. If students have their phones during the school day, they will be asked by any adult in the building to turn over their phone to that adult. The adult takes the phone to the Main Office, where the student picks it up at the end of the school day.

Any time a device is confiscated by a staff member, it will be sent to the office with the student's name where the phone will be stored. Consequences will occur with repeated offenses as follows:

- 1st offense: Pick up phone at the end of the day
- 2nd offense: Phone will be picked up at the end of the day along with a lunch detention.
- 3rd offense: Phone will be picked up at the end of the day by parent or guardian along with after school detention.
- 4th offense: Phone will be picked up at the end of the day by parent or guardian along with after school detention. A conference will take place with the family and administration to establish a plan.
- Further Offenses: Subject to Administrator discretion as per the Billings Public Schools District Acceptable Use Policy

Current research shows that students of this age struggle with self-control to avoid looking at and responding to the phone at every ding and chirp throughout the day. The distraction to learning and social development is impeded when devices are readily available. If you would like to research this topic more, please view https://www.awayfortheday.org/ for more information.

Student Discipline

The goal of student discipline is to help students develop self-control, maturity and display socially acceptable behavior. Discipline is not to be confused with punishment. It is our objective to maintain a respectful, safe and orderly environment. Each teacher will establish student behavioral expectations using positive and constructive methods. If a problem is encountered beyond the regular scope of classroom discipline, or is a continued disruption, it will be referred to building administration. The following discipline steps will be used as a guideline with the student and administrator reviewing future referral steps:
As per District Policy 3310

Progressive consequences

1. Intervention / reprimand
2. Kept out of class remainder of period
3. Lunch detention
4. After school detention - 45 minutes
5. Loss of privileges
6. In-school suspension (ISS)
7. Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
8. Administrative due process hearing warning letter
9. Administrative due process hearing

Depending on the severity of the offense an administrator may advance to any level of disciplinary action that is warranted to promote and ensure an orderly and safe educational atmosphere in the school.

Loss of privileges

Any student may be placed on loss of privileges during the year as a result of misbehavior. Students will be assigned to lunch detention, and are prohibited from attending after-school events. Students involved in extracurricular activities may continue to participate if granted permission by administration.
*Each day of OSS results in 3 days of loss of privilege.

Accountability and Honesty:

It is important for students to hold themselves accountable for their actions. A mistake is an opportunity for growth and learning. It is an essential skill for all good citizens to display honesty, own their actions, and learn from their mistakes.

Lunch detention

Students may be assigned lunch detention for various offenses. Students should report directly to the ISS room and **bring study materials with them.** Students have the option of bringing a lunch from home, eating a lunch provided by the cafeteria (students will be charged the regular lunch price) or choosing not to eat. This time is meant to remove students from available free time, give them an opportunity to focus on their behavior choices, consider alternative behaviors and focus on academic activities.
As per District Policy 3350-P1

After school detention

After school detention (ASD) will be from 3:30 to 4:15 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and from 2:30 to 3:15 pm on Wednesdays. Students may be assigned to ASD by the administration. Parents and students will be given 24 hours advance notice of the

detention, but the student may choose to start the detention the same day it is assigned. Students placed in ASD are responsible for their behavior and are expected to comply with the rules posted there. ASD is a silent study hall supervised by an Instructional Paraprofessional. The student is expected to bring enough work to keep them busy the entire time. Failure to comply with the ASD rules will result in further appropriate consequences. Students who fail to attend ASD will have an additional detention assigned. If a student misses ASD again, he/she will be assigned further consequences.
As per District Policy 3350-P1

In-School Suspension
In-School Suspension (ISS) is located in the main office, near the associate principal and SRO offices. A student who has been sent out of a class may be isolated in ISS if the administration deems it necessary and will remain there until released. ISS will be monitored by an Instructional Paraprofessional and will be a silent study hall. The teachers will be asked to send work to ISS when appropriate. Students are required to bring academic material and remain on task with assignments or reading, and are not allowed to sleep.
As per District Policy 3550-P2

Out-of-school suspension
Unfortunately, some students choose to behave in a manner that seriously disrupts the school environment, is disrespectful to staff or students, or shows a continued disregard for school expectations. These students may need a more serious intervention to assist them in developing self-control and self-discipline. Out-of-School Suspensions will be assigned to the Journey Center unless otherwise noted by the school administrator**.**
Parents are responsible for transporting their students to and from the Journey Center (Lincoln Center) on the days assigned.

Students who are serving an OSS are not allowed on any Billings Public School property (except the Journey Center) or any activity from the time of his/her suspension until he/she is allowed to return to school.
As per District Policy 3550-P2

Ben Steele students will follow the Big 3 Expectations (Respectful, Responsible, and Safe) at all times. There are consequences for students whose actions are not respectful, responsible or safe. Continued misbehaviors result in more severe consequences. For clarification on minor and major misbehaviors, please see the table on page 16. Major offense misbehaviors will result in a minimum consequence of a suspension.

Attendance / Missed Work Policy

1. Consistent school attendance is required by law and is absolutely necessary for your child's success.
2. Parents please call the attendance office at 601-1605 if your son/daughter is going to be absent from class. Please call before 10:00 AM, or leave a message if you are calling outside regular school hours.
3. If the office does not have a confirmation of an absence, the student, upon return, will be called to the office. An unexcused absence will be issued to the student until verification with the parent has been made. A note or telephone call may change the absence from unexcused to excused.
4. Our teachers will not be expected to provide work, in advance, for a known extended absence. When possible, teachers will provide work ahead of time, but the majority of work missed must be made up after the student returns to school.
5. Upon returning to school, the student is responsible for making up any assignments or tests that were missed. Adequate time will be given to students who miss work, and that work will be graded accordingly. Some teachers may elect to give "late grades" if work is not turned in within a reasonable amount of time, after an absence.
6. A student may not leave the school without a written note from a parent/guardian. This note must be turned into the attendance office **before** school.
7. The following are **not** excused absences:
    a. Leaving the building without permission
    b. Oversleeping or missing the bus
    c. Disciplinary suspension and incarcerations
    d. Truancy
8. **The administration has final discretion regarding whether a student's absence is considered excused or unexcused**.

Tardy Policy
All students are expected to be in class on time for every class period. Continued inability to arrive on time to classes will result in student consequences. Being on time is a necessary life skill, and we will hold our students to that high standard. A student is deemed tardy when he/she is not in the classroom by the time the bell rings.

- Tardies will be tracked across the student's schedule, not per class.

- After 4 tardies, students will receive a lunch detention.
- For tardies 5-10, students will receive a lunch detention for each infraction as it occurs.
- For tardies 11-15, students will receive an after-school detention for each infraction as it occurs.
- For tardies 16+, consequences will be administered at administrative discretion.
- This management system resets each semester

Bullying Policy

Ben Steele Middle School has "Zero" tolerance for bullying, harassment and intimidation on school property, to or from school, on a school bus or other school vehicle, at school-related functions or activities, or by electronic communications.

1. "Bullying" means any harassment, intimidation, hazing, or threatening, insulting, or demeaning gesture or physical contact, including any intentional written, verbal, or electronic communication or threat directed against a student that is persistent, severe or repeated and that:

(a) causes a student physical harm, damages a student's property, or places a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or the student's property.
(b) creates a hostile environment by interfering with or denying a student's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or
(c) (c) substantially or materially disrupts the orderly operation of a school.

2. Bullying includes retaliation against a victim or witness who reports information about an act of bullying and includes acts of hazing associated with athletics or school sponsored organizations or groups.
Students who violate this policy will face disciplinary action. Depending upon the severity of the offense, consequences will range from detention, to in - school suspension, short term suspension, or expulsion. (See SD2 Policy 3210 and the Harassment/ Intimidation / Bullying Incident Reporting Form)

School counselors

The school counselors are full-time specialists who provide counseling and informational services. Traditionally, at the middle school level, they have been responsible for some of the scheduling changes, test administration and other such duties. First and foremost at Ben Steele, our counselors will be available to help our students successfully navigate their middle school years. Counselors are assigned to students by last name and make every effort to stay connected. If a student wishes to speak to a counselor, they should make an appointment by stopping in the main office and filling out a request form. Parents may contact the counselors for an appointment or set up a time to meet with their student's team of teachers. Counselors and the staff at Ben Steele are very sensitive to the personal needs of students and families. Please see page one of this handbook to learn who your child's counselor will be during their time at Ben Steele.

School Resource Officer

At Ben Steele, we have a School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to our building every day. Officer Neinhuis works between Will James and Ben Steele, and is here to help our students and staff maintain safety. He is a tremendous asset to our schools, and is available to help any way he can. Officer Neinhuis can be reached at (406) 601-1608.

5 Star Students

Students can earn 5 Star Points by showing positive behavior, participating in school activities, and demonstrating our school values. These points can be tracked through the 5Star app or website. Once students have saved enough points, they can redeem them for rewards such as school merchandise, snacks, special privileges, or event entries. Stay engaged, be respectful, and start earning!

8th Grade Honors / Recognition

Academic Awards

Students are recognized who have maintained high grade point averages during 8th grade, and cumulatively during middle school:

- 8th Grade Honor Roll students (3.5 - 3.99)
- 8th Grade 4.0 GPA & Presidential Award for Educational Excellence
- Cumulative 4.0 GPA & Presidential Award for Educational Excellence

Athlete of the Year

The Athlete of the Year award goes to a boy and girl in the 8th grade who displays great character, leadership, team work, effort and determination. The individual who is honored with this award must compete in at least three 8th grade sports programs to be eligible.

Four Sport Club

The Four-Sport club is for 8th grade boys and girls who have competed in at least four sports throughout the year.

8th Grade Mural and Art Award
Presented to the student(s) who designed and created the 8th grade mural.

Indigenous Student Leadership Award
Presented to a student who showed leadership skills, academic engagement, and integrity

YMCA Principal Leadership Award
This award is designed to honor an 8th grade student who excels in academics, service, leadership and community involvement. This award recognizes the student, the student's family, school, and staff at a luncheon that takes place in the spring of every year at the YMCA.

Billings Elks Student of the Year
This award recognizes an outstanding student for achievements in school and community life - fine arts, hobbies, athletics, church, school, club and community service. The program is aimed at seeking out students whose accomplishments deserve public recognition and praise.

Forged in Steele Award
This award is given to two 8th grade students who demonstrated consistent perseverance and commitment despite hardships / obstacles in their lives.

Like Steele Award
The Like Steele Award is awarded to one 8th grade student who attended all 3 years at Ben Steele, and is given to a student who consistently exemplified the qualities and characteristics of Mr. Steele.

End of the Year Incentives
End-of-the-year incentives are EARNED and participants must meet all of the guidelines for NON-ACADEMIC incentives in order to participate.

These are:
- No major or excessive number of write-ups (subject to administrative discretion)
- No excessive number of absences or tardies
- Not failing any classes
- No missing assignments

In order to help students meet the goals needed to attend end-of-the-year incentives or celebrations, we encourage them to take advantage of the time provided to them for assistance.

Senate Bill 99 (2023) Information
Required instruction (including but not limited to lessons, readings, texts, discussions, etc.) is part of our district curriculum, Billings Public Schools continues to follow Senate Bill 99 as well as board policy 2310 procedure 2 which states that when selecting materials, teachers, and administrators must review their content and consider the issues of violence, profanity, prurient subject matter, cultural concerns, and historical accuracy in the selection process. Objections to lessons and/or materials must be brought to the teacher's attention in writing, using the District Alternative Material Request Form. Alternatives may be available within district guidelines. If an objection is submitted, the teacher will then select an alternative option from the appropriate course/grade level guidelines to provide the students with an independent study opportunity as allowed by state law and local policy. The approved reading list, courses, and units of study are available on the District webpage under curriculum.

McKinney Vento Act
School staff are key team members in helping students dealing with unstable housing or homelessness in getting the tools and support they need to succeed in school. Housing instability and homelessness can cause many struggles for children and teens, especially in school. Because students and families may not want to share information about such difficult situations, school staff members can play an important role in helping to identify and support students who may be experiencing homelessness. Additional information may be found in board policy 3125.

Title IX Compliance
BSMS Compliance officer: Amber Ault

Billings Public Schools affirms that all students, staff, parents, legal guardians, volunteers, visitors, and members of the public shall have an equal opportunity to participate in, and accrue the benefits of all educational programs or activities provided by the district. The District has appointed a coordinator to assist any employee, student, parent, or legal guardian with a Title VII/Title IX/Section 504/Title II ADA concern. Inquiries about these concerns may be referred to Human Resource Services, Billings Public Schools, 415 North 30th Street, Billings, Montana, 59101, or call (406) 247-3874.

Consequences and Unacceptable Behavior

Middle school students are in the process of learning appropriate behaviors that ensure the safety of learning for all. Below, you will find examples of behaviors that are addressed by our school staff, and may result in consequences:

Definitions of Minors	Definition of Majors
Arguing Verbal disagreement between peers beyond civil conversation **Cell phone/electronics use between 8:10-3:10 (non-serious)** Includes all wearable devices **Cheating/Plagiarism** Copying something that is not yours and taking credit for it **Chromebooks (non-serious)** Using without permission- games, wrong app/site **Defiance** Arguing with adults Remaining in place/refusing to move Showing extreme emotion (crying, stomping, etc.) Actively not following directions **Disrupting Class** Distracting others Low intensity, brief Unnecessary movement and/or noise Redirectable **Dress code** Cover the 4 Bs Hats off and hoods down in the building Inappropriate language or logos **Leaving seat at inappropriate or unexpected times** Student not in expected physical location but still within the room **Not following directions** Student is unable to recall the direction (didn't hear/understand) Passively not following the directions in a reasonable amount of time **Off task** Not engaging in the task/activity as directed by staff **Physical Contact/Aggression (Mild)** Inappropriate but not serious contact with another student Poking, rough housing, chest bumping **Property Misuse** Low intensity School property is not permanently damaged Bathroom misuse- soap on mirror, leaving a mess, etc. **Sleeping** **Teasing/Deliberately Annoying Peers** Unkind written or spoken comments that make the child feel uncomfortable Not minding your own business Gossip **Other** Inappropriate Language - mild, not directed at another Petty theft	**Serious Concern** **Chronic/Repetitive Minor Infractions** 3 minors in a week **Technology Violation** Looking up explicit material Breaking device Accessing or using other's account/information **Vandalism** High intensity Purposely breaking school property Graffiti **Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying** Sexual contact Repeated, targeted behavior that creates a hostile environment **Abusive Language / Profanity** Targeted swearing directed toward another Threats to others and/or self Sexual content and violence Discriminatory language and/or slurs **Leaving without Permission** Leaving your room or school grounds **Stealing / Theft** Taking an item with a significant monetary value **Physical Aggression / Fighting** Fighting Intent to harm **Disorderly Conduct** Behavior that substantially disrupts the learning environment Not redirectable High intensity **Insubordination** Unwillingness to do what is asked by staff Refusal to respond to a reasonable request

Ben Steele Middle School Student Expectation Matrix

Ben Steele Big 3	Before School	Commons Breakfast / Lunch	Hallways/ Passing Time	Outside Commons	Lockers / Gym Lockers	Bathrooms	Safety Drills	Assembly	Bussing	Cell phone, electronics	Classroom	Chromebooks	In ALL Settings
RESPECTFUL	*Hats must be removed and hoods must be pulled down upon entering the building	*Use conversational voices *Use "Please" and "Thank you"	*If you see garbage in the hallway, pick it up and throw it away * Use appropriate language and volume of voice *Maintain space	*Use kind language * Beverages are to stay in closed containers * When playing with equipment, be respectful of the bulding	*Keep lockers free of stickers, wallpaper, empty cans, garbage, etc.	*Let others have privacy *Throw paper towels in the trash cans *One person in the stall at a time	*Safety drills are serious and no horseplay will be tolerated	*Listen quietly to whomever is speaking *Speak, cheer and/or clap at the appropriate times *Leave all personal belongings like water bottles, notebooks, etc. in your classroom	*Follow the bus driver's directions / rules	*Do not record or take pictures of others	*Use appropriate language *Speak kindly *Speak at appropriate times (allow teachers to teach and students to learn)	*Keep your hands off other students' Chromebooks *Only use your assigned Chromebook and information	*If you see something, say something *Follow dress-code *Take care of yourself physically and mentally
RESPONSIBLE	*Students who arrive before 7:45 am will report to the commons or the courtyard *Hall passes required to access classrooms / lockers	*Get your breakfast / lunch, find a seat and stay in that seat *Clean up after yourself *Remain in commons until released *Exit through door 12	*Walk on the right side of the hallway, being mindful of those at their lockers *Walk (do not run) quietly so others can continue learning	*Throw away all trash/food before exiting the building *Drinks will be in closeable containers *Return equipment to proper storage	*Backpacks, coats, boots, hats, cell phones, Air pods, etc. (turned off) will be stored in your hallway locker *Keep lockers neat and tidy	*Go / Flush / Wash - return to class *Clean up after yourself	*Exit building through designated exits and walk to your designated area *Remain quiet at all times	*Sit in your assigned grade level area; stay with your class *Use stairwells entering and exiting the bleachers	*Enter and exit the bus in an orderly manner *Ride your asigned bus only	*Phones and wearable devices, i.e. Apple Watches, Air Pods and similar devices, are to be turned off and put away when you enter the building until you are outside at the end of the school day	*Use your time wisely. *Come to class with necessary materials, prepared to learn *Be an active participant	*Keep your chromebook charged *Stay on the assigned apps and/or sites	*Follow all adult directions *Be prepared *Be an active participant *Take Pride in being a Ben Steele Wildcat *If you see something say something
SAFE	*At 7:45 AM appropriately proceed to academic wing *Students stay on campus once they arrive	*Keep hands and feet to yourselves, walk to commons *Leave pathway of carpet on ramp clear	*Keep hands and feet to yourselves	* Enter door 13 in two lines when released after break * Stay within the edge of the greenhouse to the bike rack	*Keep your locker combination to yourself	* Wash your hands well *Two feet on the floor at all times	*Follow all adult directions	* Keep your hands and feet to yourselves	*Exit the bus and head directly to the building entrances *Wait on the sidewalk for your bus	*Keep your cell phone, Airpods, and similar devices secured in your locker	*Stay in your seat *Follow teacher directives *When leaving the classroom, sign out on 5Star	*Carry your chromebook closed with both hands	*Keep your hands and feet to yourselves *If you see something, say something