

*We are committed to promoting a positive learning environment that develops safe, respectful, and responsible learners.*



# Riverside Middle School Handbook

# Student/Parent

*Welcome to Riverside Middle School! This handbook contains important information regarding our specific school activities and programs. It also includes the district handbook of expectations, policies, and procedures to ensure the school's safe and orderly operation. Please review both handbooks carefully.*

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Student report card dates for 2025-2026

Date	Report Card	Date	Report Card
9/23/25	3 week grades	2/6/26	3 week grades
10/10/25	6 week grades	2/27/26	6 week grades
10/31/25	3 week grades	3/17/26	3 week grades
11/25/25	6 week grades	4/10/26	6 week grades
12/16/25	3 week grades	4/30/26	3 week grades
1/16/26	1st semester grades	5/29/26	2nd semester grades

### **Middle School Athletic Seasons**

**Football 7/8, Cross Country 6-8, Softball 6-8**  
September 2 - October 15

**Girls' Bball 6-8, Wrestling 6-8**  
October 20 - December 11

**Boys' Bball 6-8**  
January 5 - February 24

**Girls' Volleyball 6-8**  
February 23 - April 16

**Track 6-8**  
April 14 - May 26

### Billings Public Schools K-12

#### Grading Scale

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69
- F 50-59

### Where Students Can Get Help

**Attendance Questions:** Attendance Secretary  
**Class Schedules:** Counselors by grade level  
**Fees, Fines, & Payments:** Office Secretary  
**First Aid/Illness:** School Nurse, Office Secretary, Attendance Secretary

**Lockers:** Main Office

**Lunch Information:** Cafeteria

### **Lockers**

Students: Please DO NOT give out locker combinations or share your locker with a friend. With cell phones and other electronics being brought to school, keeping them in your lockers is unsafe when you are giving out the combinations. If you are not careful when putting in your combination while others are around you, they can get your combination.

### **School Telephone Use by**

#### **Students**

Students may use the telephone in the main office only when it is necessary and with permission. They must keep their calls as brief as possible and use a respectful tone and volume. **A school employee may end the call if students fail to act respectfully.** If attending an after-school or evening activity, please make arrangements in advance.

### **Information for Parents**

When calling in an absence or if you need to get a message to your son or daughter, please use the direct line for attendance **281-6004**.

PowerSchool for Parents is a great way to follow the progress of your student(s) Ex: missing assignments, grades, attendance, etc. Please call the main office if you need help setting up an account.

### **Visitors**

Parents and other adults are always welcome to visit the school. **All visitors must buzz in with a photo ID and check in at the main office before going anywhere else in the building.** If you intend to visit a classroom, please make prior arrangements with the teacher.

### **Title 1 Parent Involvement Plan**

At Riverside Middle School, there is a strong school, home, and family communication component with our Title I students to help them be successful. Parents or guardians begin the school year by being invited to an August open house event. Frequent phone calls are made to report the academic and behavioral progress of Title I students. Parents/guardians are frequently invited to meetings to help determine the best educational plan for their child. In order to build relationships and partnerships, compacting forms, which indicate responsibilities for each party, are signed by school personnel, parents, and students. We encourage parents to contact their child's teachers if they have concerns and also to partner with us in supporting student learning and engagement at Riverside.

### **Counseling**

Grade level counselors provide counseling and information to individual students and small groups. They provide group guidance in a number of classes throughout the year. Our staff has three counselors; they follow the same group of kids for all three years they are at Riverside. Parents may request a meeting with school counselors concerning their children by calling **281-6000**.

### **School Nurse**

Riverside has a school nurse who is in the building on a part-time basis. If students become ill at school, they may report to the nurse, main office, or the attendance secretary. If students need to take medication during school hours, the school nurse or main office secretary must be notified, the appropriate forms must be completed, and the prescription medication must be left in the main office. The school nurse or office staff will not provide medication of any kind, including Tylenol and Ibuprofen.

## **Library Media Center**

The Library Media Center offers students and faculty access to a wide variety of resources, including books and articles in print and on the web. We also carry picture files and provide interlibrary loan services with other schools, as well as Billings Public Library. Students are encouraged to use these materials whenever possible.

The Library Media Center opens each school day at 7:50 am and closes at 3:25 pm. Students are welcome to use the library before and after school to work on class assignments and pursue personal interests, but once regular classes are in session, a permission slip, or pass, signed by a teacher is mandatory. The Library Media Specialist will sign your pass when you are ready to return to class. Each student may check out up to five (5) books at a time. Books and magazines are checked out for a two-week period of time and renewed if no one has placed a reserve notice on the title. Please do your best to return or renew books on or before the due date.

## **Citing Sources**

Students must remember to cite the information they have used from library sources. When work is not cited, it is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered cheating and will be treated as such. Luckily, the website, Son of Citation Machine (<http://citationmachine.net>), is available on the Riverside web page to help you do this. You will learn how during Library Orientation. Students are expected to do their own work. Copying off another student's paper, using resources without crediting the original author, re-using another student's paper, lending out your own paper or copying information without taking notes and paraphrasing the facts is considered cheating and will be treated as such. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also a form of cheating/plagiarism and will be handled in the same manner.

**Copying = Cheating = Discipline**

## **Guidelines for Sick Students**

STUDENTS MUST REMAIN HOME IF EXPERIENCING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

- Fever of 100 degrees F: remain home until fever has been gone for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Vomiting and diarrhea: must be without vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. This includes two or more episodes of either, in the previous 24 hours.
- New loss of taste or smell: Testing to rule out Covid-19 infection is recommended.
- Frequent coughing (new or unexplained) accompanied by other symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, runny nose, congestion, sore throat): Testing to rule out Covid-19 infection is recommended.

## **Attendance**

Attending school regularly and being on time for classes impacts what students learn and is necessary for success in school and later in life. It is the student's responsibility to find out what work they missed while absent and to complete and turn in that work in a timely manner.

## **Excused Absences**

When it is necessary for students to miss school, a parent/guardian should call the attendance office at 281-6004 by 10:00 am. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies, school-sponsored functions, or other absences approved by a parent/guardian and school administration. If a parent/guardian cannot make a phone call that morning, he/she should write a note to the attendance secretary, and the student should provide the note to the attendance secretary when returning to school. If a student is absent for more than ten (10) days in a semester, medical documentation will be required.

## **Excusing Absences in Advance**

Providing notification of a known absence (ex, trip) in advance allows students to complete classwork ahead of time. A note or call from the parent/guardian must be provided to the attendance secretary. The student will then receive a clearance slip that they must take to each of their teachers to sign after the student and teacher have arranged a make-up work plan. The signed clearance slip should then be returned to the attendance office. In cases where there is an extended absence of three or more days, the attendance clerk will gather assignments and materials when requested by the parent/guardian or student. The request must be made before 9:00 am for a parent pickup by 3:30 pm.

## **Unexcused Absences**

An unexcused absence will be entered into PowerSchool if no contact can be made with the parent/guardian. A note or telephone call from a parent/guardian *on the same day* can change the unexcused absence to an excused absence.

**Unexcused absences are serious, and students will be assigned an hour of detention for each class period missed.**

Examples of unexcused absences (truancy) include, but are not limited to:

- Leaving the building without checking out at the office
- Oversleeping, car trouble, missing the bus
- Not reporting to the assigned area (skipping class)

## **Closed Campus**

Riverside Middle School is a closed campus, meaning students must remain on school grounds from the time they arrive in the morning until school is dismissed in the afternoon. If a student chooses to leave campus without permission, there will be consequences.

## **Appointments**

A parent/guardian must inform the school of any student appointment by phone call or note. If scheduled for a medical appointment, please ensure that a note is provided to the school so that the appropriate absence code may be applied. If there is a recurring appointment and documentation is received by the attendance secretary, absences may be entered into PowerSchool in advance.

## **Tardy Policy**

Students are expected to be in class and follow teacher expectations when the tardy bell rings. When students receive a tardy, the following progressive consequences are assigned.

Any student who is tardy to class will receive a warning on their 3rd tardy

1. 4th - 6th tardy - Lunch Detention
  2. 7th - 9th - 30 minutes ASD\*
  3. 10th - 12th tardy- 45 minutes ASD\*
  4. 13th - 15th tardy- 60 minutes ASD\*
  5. 16th - 18th - 5 days LOP (loss of privileges)
  6. 19th + ISS and Administration intervention
- \*ASD- After School detention

## Student Behavior Expectations

*Riverside students are expected to:*

**BE RESPECTFUL,**

**BE RESPONSIBLE**

**BE SAFE** *everywhere within our building.*

The specific expectations for various areas in the school are clearly defined and posted.



## Student Incentives

Students are eligible for various incentives throughout the year, including Attendance Matters drawings, testing incentives, Big 3 slips, Late Nights, field trips, and end-of-year incentives.

## Attendance Matters

Students are encouraged to be at school "Every Class, Every Day". At Riverside, students receive 5 Star incentive points for meeting attendance goals. For students to be eligible for an Attendance Matters incentive prize drawing, they must be in every class for a month. Two students from each grade level are drawn school-wide.

## Testing Incentives

Students may earn 5 Star incentive points for certain tests given throughout the school year, such as NWEA. Points are assigned for being present on the testing day as well as scoring proficient or advanced. Points are also given per point of growth from one testing period to another. Students are able to redeem points for prizes.

## Big 3 slips

Students caught displaying one of the Big 3 character traits may be recognized by having a staff member fill out a Big 3 slip. Students will then be acknowledged and awarded weekly during their grade-level lunch. Students receiving a Big 3 slip also receive 5 Star incentive points.

## Late Night

Late Night is a program that allows students to return to school between 6 - 8 pm on specific Friday nights to participate in gym activities, games, movies, and more! For a student to participate in Late Night, they must achieve the following requirements:

- Be in attendance every class period\*
- Have no discipline write-ups or push-ins
- Have no missing assignments

*\*students who have recurring medical appointments may be exempt from attendance criteria with administrator approval*

*\*students with medical-related absences may still attend with administrative approval*

Attendance/Behavior Window	Late Night Date
September 8 - September 26	September 26
October 27 - November 14	November 14
January 5 - January 23	January 23
March 2 - March 27	March 27

For each attendance/behavior window, a student's ability to qualify for Late Night starts over. Even if they are not eligible for one Late Night, they may still be eligible for subsequent Late Nights.

### **Field Trips**

The majority of field trips are academically aligned activities. All students attend unless there are specific administrative concerns.

### **End of the Year Incentives**

End-of-the-year incentive activities 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
- Students must be passing all classes with a 70% or higher
- Students must not have any 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 and opportunities provided to them for assistance.

### **Cougar 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 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 Cougar Cafe (a homework completion room). Cougar Cafe is scheduled during lunch, and lunch will be provided.

### **Saturday School**

Saturday School is a study hall and may be used as a chance for students to improve their academic standing. Saturday School may be assigned to students for the following:

- Not attending assigned Cougar Cafe
- Reluctant learners
- Missing assignments

Students will be notified the Thursday prior to Saturday School verbally, and given a Saturday School notice slip with the date of assigned Saturday School. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone or email by school staff. Only parents/guardians may reschedule. Saturday School hours are from 8:00-11:30 am. Students are expected to meet in front of the school to be escorted in. Students who fail to show up by 8:20 am will not be allowed in and will be reassigned.

### **Homework Opportunity Time (H.O.T)**

Additional opportunities for students to receive academic support may be available after school on select weekdays as well.

### **Activities and Leadership**

Riverside has more than twenty co-curricular and extracurricular clubs and activities for students (see Cougar Letters, Pennants, and Pins for a sample list). Participation in activities helps broaden students' knowledge, skills, citizenship, leadership, and teamwork. Students are invited and encouraged to participate, as these opportunities are an excellent way to build connections.

## Cougar Letter, Pennants & Pins

Cougar letters, pennants, and pins may be earned by having a total of 120 points (7th and 8th graders) and 100 points (6th graders).

Certificates and pennants are earned in 6th grade, certificates and pins in 7th grade, and certificates and letters are earned in 8th grade. The guidelines are as follows:

1. Points earned **WILL NOT** be carried over each year.
2. Points can be achieved in the following manner:
  - Honor Roll: 30 points for each semester.
  - Merit Honor Roll: 20 points for raising GPA by .5 percentage points on 3.0 & under
  - Athletics: 20 points for completion of each athletic season (managers are included).
  - Music 7/8: 40 points for each group.
  - Clubs 6-8: 40 points for each group.



<b>Academics</b>	<b>Clubs</b>
Honor Roll	All Nations Club
1st Semester	Art Club
2nd Semester	Builders Club
Top Dawg**	Drama Club
<b>Music</b>	MathCounts Club
Jazz Band	ReAct Club
Swing Choir	Student Council
Honors Band	Yearbook Club
Honors Orchestra	
<b>Athletics</b>	
Basketball	SOTM*
Cross Country	
Football	
Softball	
Track	
Volleyball	
Wrestling	
Managers	
<b>*Student of the Month</b>	

## Top Dawg

This program honors students who maintain a 3.5 or higher GPA for their entire 8th-grade school year. Students and their families are invited to a luncheon and receive a Top Dawg t-shirt and certificate.

## Discipline

Riverside students should follow the Big 3 Expectations at all times. There are consequences for students whose actions are not respectful, responsible, or safe. Continued misbehaviors result in more severe consequences. When students receive an office referral from a teacher, the administration may assign the following progressive consequences for repeated behaviors:

1. Intervention/reprimand: Kept out of class remainder of the period
2. Lunch detention
3. After-school detention- 30 minutes
4. After-school detention- 45 minutes
5. After-school detention- 60 minutes
6. Half-day in-school suspension (ISS)
7. Full-day in-school suspension (ISS)
8. Multiple days of in-school suspension (ISS)
9. 1 day out-of-school suspension (OSS)
10. 2 days out-of-school suspension (OSS), Formal administrative hearing warning letter
11. 3 days of out-of-school suspension (OSS)
12. Multiple days of out-of-school suspension (OSS) pending administrative hearing

Depending on the severity of the offense, an administrator may impose any level of disciplinary action that is warranted to promote and ensure an orderly educational atmosphere in the school and eliminate health and safety risks. All out-of-school suspensions will be served at the Journey Center unless otherwise noted by the administration.

## Removal from Class

If a student is removed from class, they must report to the detention room and remain there until dismissed or until they have spoken to an administrator.

## Push-in

The purpose of the Push-In program is to help teachers manage student behaviors without losing classroom instruction time. The Push-In program is used for a student who needs to have a quick intervention with the teacher/counselor and/or administration to get them back on track.

## Loss of Privileges

Any student may be placed on loss of privileges during the year as a result of misbehavior. This includes morning detention, lunch detention, and exclusion from attending after-school events. Students involved in extracurricular activities may continue to participate if granted permission by the administration. If placed on a loss of privilege plan, students must report to the detention room upon arrival at school.

***\*\*Each day of OSS results in 5 days of loss of privileges.***

## Food and Drinks

Food is not allowed to be taken from the cafeteria. Exceptions are granted for those students traveling to Cougar Cafe, lunch detention, or a teacher's classroom. ***At no time is food allowed in the bathrooms.***

Students are allowed to eat food in class at the teacher's discretion. Students are only allowed to have water in their water bottles.

### Additional notes:

No glass bottles.  
Drink containers must have a lid that secures.  
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.



## **All Electronic Devices**

Students are encouraged not to bring electronics (cell phones, music players, video & hand-held devices, headphones, speakers) to school. The school will not be responsible for the loss or replacement of these items. Per School District policy 8320, No cell phone use is allowed during school time. Phones and wearable devices, i.e. Apple Watches, AirPods, and similar devices, are to be turned off and put in lockers during school time.

***Possession or use of any of the above devices between 7:35 and 3:20 will result in confiscation of the device.***

Consequences apply to both the owner of the device and to the student who used or was in possession of it (If other than the owner). Do not lend electronic devices to others. If parents need to contact a student, they may either call the main office or the attendance office, and a message will be taken and sent to the student in class.

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

- 2nd suspension- 1 month
- 3rd suspension- rest of school year

### **School Bus Discipline**

Appropriate conduct aboard a school bus is essential to maintain a safe environment for transportation. Drivers are authorized to take the following action:

1. Make a specific seating assignment
2. Give a verbal warning
3. Issue written warning (Discipline Report)\*
4. Action to cause revocation of riding privileges may be taken by the Transportation Coordinator or School Principal (or designee) \*

\*A copy of the Discipline Report will be given to the student to take home, and parents will receive a letter from the Transportation Coordinator. If the infraction warrants a suspension, the Transportation Coordinator will attempt to contact the parent by phone.

### **Removal From Bus**

Students should act maturely on all school and public vehicles. Students exhibiting inappropriate behavior may lose their riding privileges, may be suspended, and may also have additional consequences.

### **MET Bus**

Our expectation is that students will show respect to the MET bus drivers and comply with their requests. This includes:

- No yelling or screaming on the bus
- Remain in your seat (if standing, use grab bars)
- Keep hands and feet to yourself
- Comply with all expectations set by the bus driver
- Use school-appropriate language and behavior

Failure to comply with these conditions can result in removal from the MET bus:

- 1st suspension- 1 week