

Family GUIDE

For current
STUDENTS & FAMILIES
2025–2026

Welcome to the 2025 - 2026 Boston Public Schools (BPS) Family Guide, a helpful resource for parents and caregivers that summarizes the laws, policies, regulations, and practices that are important to students.



SY25-26 BPS District Calendar

August 2025						
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July 2026						
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- ▲ Starting School Date
- * Teachers/paras report
- ▼ Last Day of School

- School Buildings closed
- ◆ Central Offices and School Buildings closed
- ◆ Early release

Reviewed on 07.18.2025

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[Find the downloadable format of the school calendar in our website](#)

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A Message from Our Superintendent

Dear BPS Community,

Welcome to the 2025 - 2026 Boston Public Schools (BPS) Family Guide, a helpful handbook designed to provide students, parents, and caregivers the important information they need for a successful school year.

Our goal is to support our school communities both inside and outside of the classroom. That means ensuring the district's policies and procedures are up-to-date and available in a clear, concise, and publicly accessible format. The BPS Family Guide is organized to answer questions about many topics including health, safety, attendance, assessments, specialized programs, transportation, and much more.

The guide also highlights our non-discrimination policies and students' civil rights and includes links to additional resources.

It is our hope that you will continue to use this guide as a handy reference throughout the school year. Where needed, we have provided links to more information and the newly revamped BPS website: bostonpublicschools.org. The guide is also translated into the nine BPS languages and is formatted for the visually impaired.

Thank you for your continued partnership in creating safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Mary Skipper
Superintendent
Boston Public Schools

1. About Boston Public Schools

City of Boston

Michelle Wu, Mayor

Boston School Committee

Jeri Robinson, Chair

Michael O'Neill, Vice Chair

Dr. Stephen Alkins

Rafaela Polanco Garcia

Brandon Cardet-Hernandez

Rachel Skerritt

Quoc Tran

Boston Public Schools

Mary Skipper, Superintendent

1.1. How to stay connected

In this guide you will find a list of resources and information that will be useful to you as you navigate BPS, including instructions on how to access the [ParentSquare](#) and [Zūm](#) platforms, the district's primary communication tools. You will also find instructions on how to access the [BPS Student Information System\(SIS\) Family Portal \(SIS\)](#) - also referred to as ASPEN.

Please familiarize yourself with these resources and the information provided to maximize your opportunity to participate in shared decisions.

ParentSquare

ParentSquare automatically generates an account for each parent or caregiver using their preferred email address and phone number. This allows the individual to receive emails, texts, and/or app notifications. The district encourages parents and caregivers to register for an account so that they can begin receiving classroom, school, and district updates. Families should ensure that the contact information on file with their child's school (email address and/or phone number) are up-to-date to ensure they are receiving all school and district updates.

ParentSquare allows users to:

- Receive all communications from the district, schools, classrooms and activity groups in one centralized place; and
- Track school and district news, activities and events; and
- Direct messages to teachers, staff and other parents; and
- Choose your preferred mode of communication (text, email, app); and
- Choose a preferred language (with improved translations features); and
- Participate in group messages; and
- And Sign-up for parent-teacher conferences.

Student Information System (SIS) or ASPEN

BPS families can go online to view current grades and assignments for their children and check daily attendance. To register for the SIS Family Portal, visit sis.mybps.org. There is a step-by-step guide to help you set up your account or you can review [this help document on how to create an account](#). Additional training opportunities may be available through your child's school

Zūm Platform

The Zūm platform allows parents and caregivers to track their student's school bus. We encourage BPS families and caregivers to download the Zūm App for parents/caregivers to track rides at app.ridezum.com.

The first time parents/caregivers login they will be asked to verify their credentials by answering a few simple questions about their student (e.g. what school they attend, what street they live on). Parents and caregivers cannot edit contact information and/or login details directly on the Zūm App - they must update their information through a [BPS Welcome Center](#).

If you experience any trouble using the site or have questions about your login information, please email schoolbus@bostonpublicschools.org or call the BPS Transportation Hotline at 617-635-9520 and we will help resolve the issue.

1.2. Why is this guide important?

Our policies have one goal: to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments that prepare every student for success. We can reach that goal with your support, feedback, and involvement.

The Guide

Explains many of the policies and procedures that directly impact students, including:

- What students must complete to be promoted to the next grade;
- The district's expectations for maintaining a safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environment for students and staff; and how we help students when they do not meet these expectations;
- How families can support their children's learning at school and home;
- The many rights guaranteed by law to students and their parents/caregivers, such as:
 - The right to be treated equally, regardless of race or disability;
 - The right to participate in school decision making;
 - The right to know the qualifications of a child's teacher;
 - The right to privacy regarding student records; and
 - It also advises parents/caregivers and students about what to do if they think their rights may have been violated.
- Helpful information on many topics, such as testing, transportation, health services, and school cancellations; and
- Contact information for our schools and offices, a checklist for solving problems, education resources for families, and the [school-year calendar](#).

1.3. School-Based Rules

In addition to state and federal laws and the district's [Code of Conduct](#), each school has its own set of policies, approved by the School Site Council or governing board. School-based rules may not conflict with any [Superintendent Circular](#) or the Code of Conduct. Your school leader will give you a copy of the School-Based Rules.

1.4. Non-Discrimination Policy

BPS, in accordance with its nondiscrimination policies, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, criminal record, physical or mental disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions, homelessness, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, genetics, natural or protective hairstyle, military status, immigration status, English language proficiency, or any other factor prohibited by law in its programs and activities. BPS does not tolerate any form of retaliation or bias-based intimidation threat or harassment that demeans individuals' dignity or interferes with their ability to work or learn. Individuals can report Title IX concerns to titleix@bostonpublicschools.org. Information about [Parent/Caregiver Rights](#) and the [Title IX Grievance Procedures](#) are available in multiple languages.

1.5. School Access for Visitors

BPS extends a warm invitation to parents/caregivers and others to visit our schools. At the same time, we must ensure that our students and staff are safe and that learning is not disrupted. Schools must be aware of who is in the building and why they are there. All schools have a video buzz-in system so that no one can enter the building without the knowledge of the office staff. K-8/7-12 schools have security professionals on-site. In addition, we have developed the following guidelines for school visitors. "Visitors" include parents/caregivers, school department employees, and others.

- All visitors must identify themselves, show photo identification, and give the reason for their visit before being granted access to the building. If they do not have a photo ID, a school administrator or their designee should be advised and talk with the individual requesting access. Additional information can be found in (Superintendent [Circular SAF-12](#) School Access);
- After being granted access, all visitors must sign in and show their photo ID again. Visitors must sign out before leaving. Some schools have a desk near the main entrance where visitors may sign in and out. If no one is at the desk, the visitor must go to the main office. The staff granting access to the visitor must ensure they follow sign-in procedures; and
- All visitors will receive a visitor's pass when they sign in. They must return it to the office or sign-in desk when they leave. Please be sure the pass is visible while you are in the school or on school property; and

- For the safety of our students and staff, we will consider visitors who do not sign in and cannot show a visitor's pass to be trespassing. A school staff member may ask them to leave the building and school property; and
- Visitors who want to meet with a teacher or administrator must make an appointment. Any staff expecting a visitor should notify the office with the individual's name and reason for the visit; and
- Sometimes there may be a problem between a parent/caregiver and a teacher or other staff member. If a meeting is scheduled to address the problem, it will occur in the office or a conference room—not in the classroom. The parent/caregiver must follow regular access/sign-in procedures and report to the main office; and
- If parents/caregivers must pick up their child before the regular dismissal, they should first call the school office. They should pick up their child in the office or other location named by the school. Parents/caregivers may not go directly to the classroom to pick up their children. The school will not release a student to anyone other than a custodial parent without the parent/caregiver's consent and proper ID; and
- Occasionally parents/caregivers or other visitors have disrupted school activities by insisting on visiting classrooms unannounced, harassing staff, shouting, or using inappropriate language. If such disruptive behavior continues, the school administrator may restrict the individual's visits or deny future access to the building and school property.

Please note: For the purposes of this guide, BPS uses both “parent and caregiver” and “parent and guardian.” However, certain rights and responsibilities only apply to legal guardians. In addition, some BPS forms can only be signed by legal guardians.

This guide also includes references to Massachusetts General Laws which are available at malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws.

1.6. School Attendance Requirements

In addition to meeting academic requirements, students must meet state laws and BPS requirements for school attendance. Excellent attendance and school success go hand—in—hand. Students who are chronically absent—missing 10% or more of school days for any given time period or 18 days in a full school year—are more likely to fall behind in their classes and have difficulty staying on track academically over the long term. In addition, students with consistent attendance are more likely to show proficiency on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). To ensure schools can assist chronically absent students, parents must fill out the Student Information Update form annually for each enrolled student, which can be found at bostonpublicschools.org.

BPS Attendance Policy

A student must attend school for at least a half-day to be marked “present.” Check with the school leader, principal, or head of school for each school’s definition of a half-day. In most schools, a half-day is:

- 3 hours and 20 minutes in elementary schools and K-8 schools; and
- 3 hours and 25 minutes in high schools (including high schools with grades 6, 7, and 8).

Students who arrive after the beginning of the day must follow the school’s tardy procedures in order to be considered present for the day. Please note that the Boston School Committee approved a revised attendance policy in the 2022-2023 school year.

Key changes include:

- Schools may no longer convert tardies to an absence, including high schools;
- To facilitate competency-based grading across the district, schools may no longer assign grades of “No Credit (NC)” to students. The following guidance has been provided regarding credit recovery for students:
 - Passing grades should be competency-based, which may be impacted by attendance due to missed assignments or schoolwork, but should not be tied exclusively to attendance or participation;
 - It is essential that schools outreach early and often to students at risk of a failing grade; and

- As an alternative, schools may mark a student with an “incomplete” grade to enable equitable learning recovery; and
- In all cases, a student not earning a passing grade must be given the opportunity and responsibility to equitably recover any learning loss or make up the work missed within a marking period to earn a passing grade.

Early Dismissal

It is important that your child is in school for the duration of the school day. Early dismissal should only occur in the event of an emergency, and a note should be provided to school administrators to verify and approve the reason for the early dismissal.

Excused Absences

Certain absences may be excused, meaning they will not be considered as it relates to a referral to truancy court by a supervisor of attendance under Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. c.119).

However, it is important to understand that all missed instructional time has the potential to negatively impact student outcomes. In addition, all absences are included as they relate to chronic absenteeism, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused. For an absence to be excused, students must bring in a note after each day they are absent. A note can also be provided electronically in response to the automated daily absence notifications sent through ParentSquare.

The note must:

- Include the date absent, the reason for the absence, a phone number where a parent or caregiver can be reached, and the parent or caregiver’s signature;
- Be provided upon returning to school, no later than seven school days after the absence.

Absences that do not meet the criteria below will be considered unexcused. In all instances of student absence, students must be given the opportunity to equitably recover any missed work or learning loss during a marking period. Excused absences may include:

- An illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school:
 - If the illness or hospitalization results in absence for three or more consecutive days, a note from a health care provider documenting the health problem or hospitalization should be attached to the parent/caregiver note;
 - Parents/caregivers are not expected to have a note from a health care provider for an illness of fewer than three days; and
 - These requirements may be adjusted based on specific public health guidance. Contact your school nurse regarding any questions or changes to this policy based on specific circumstances.
- A death in the immediate family (parent/caregiver, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal or family crisis;
- Suspension: Students should be marked as suspended. In suspension cases, the school will provide an opportunity for the student to maintain academic standing in school by being provided a list of assignments and other services that might enable the student to use the time out of school productively;
- Students assigned to Succeed Boston shall be assigned work by the school of assignment and shall be marked;
- Court appearances: Students should present evidence of the requirement of the court appearance;
- Medical or psychological tests during the school day: The parent/caregiver must show evidence (such as a note from the health center) that the tests could not be scheduled after school;
- Visits to special education schools in some cases for students with disabilities;
- Other situations: From time to time, situations over which the school, parent/caregiver, and student have little or no control may cause absences (for example, transportation that does not operate during inclement weather). These absences are excusable. The school leader may determine that the students impacted shall be marked with an excused absence;
- Other extraordinary situations, such as a family emergency, as approved by the school leader;
- Cultural holidays and religious holy days.

What Is an Unexcused Absence?

Some parents think that any absence will be excused as long as the parent sends a note. This is not true. Here are a few examples of unexcused absences—even if the parent sends a note:

- Repetitive and chronic absence due to illness or injury without a letter from a healthcare provider verifying that the student was too sick or injured to go to school. Students who will be out for 14 or more days during a school year due to illness or injury should be referred to the [Home and Hospital Instruction Program](#);
- The student needed to babysit;
- Cutting class (including checking in and leaving the building early);
- Family vacation during a time when school is in session;
- Trip to the homeland extended beyond school vacation; and
- Extension of a religious or cultural holiday beyond the designated day or days on the calendar whenever possible, parents should check with the school leader before allowing a child to miss school if they are not sure the absence will be excused. Teachers do not have the authority to excuse a student from school.

Students must be given the opportunity and responsibility to equitably recover any learning loss or make up the work missed within a marking period to earn a passing grade. Students who have excessive absences will be referred to the school's Attendance Team (AT). The AT will review the case and work with the family to develop a plan to help the student improve attendance. Detailed information regarding excused absences can be found in the [Superintendent Circular for attendance \(ACA-18\)](#).

Punctuality

Students who arrive after the beginning of the school day are tardy. They must follow established tardy procedures in order to be considered present for the day. All students are expected to report to school on time every day. Tardy students will be permitted into the school building and should not be excluded.

Supervisors of Attendance

Coordinating with school-based staff, the BPS supervisors of attendance investigate and provide prevention and intervention support to address chronic attendance problems. They work in the community, visit homes, and

counsel students and their families. When necessary, the supervisors of attendance file and represent chronic cases in Boston Juvenile Court.

1.7. Assessments for Learning

Learning is an ongoing process. Throughout the school year, BPS uses a variety of assessments to understand what students know, how they are progressing, and what supports they may need. These assessments are an important part of how we provide strong, responsive instruction and meet each student's needs as part of our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

Assessments in BPS include:

- Screeners to identify early learning needs and provide timely support, especially in reading and math;
- Curriculum-based assessments to measure progress on what is being taught in the classroom;
- Performance tasks, projects, and presentations to demonstrate learning in meaningful ways;
- District formative assessments to check for periodic understanding and monitor academic growth over time; and
- State summative assessments, such as MCAS and ACCESS, to measure proficiency.

For specific assessments' schedules and results, contact your school for information.

District-Required Assessments: MAP and LAS Links

To support student growth and instructional planning, BPS uses the following:

- **MAP Growth:** A computer-based assessment used in reading and math to measure academic growth. Given in fall, winter, and spring to students in grades 3–11;
- **MAP Reading Fluency:** A state-required assessment for all K–3 students that measures foundational reading skills; and
- **LAS Links:** An assessment of English language development for multilingual learners. Starting in SY25–26, students at beginners levels in English proficiency levels will take LAS Links.

These assessments help teachers personalize instruction, monitor progress, and support students in reaching their full potential.

State-Mandated Assessments: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and WIDA ACCESS

→ MCAS

All students in grades 3 - 10 enrolled in a Massachusetts public school are expected to take in spring the statewide standards-based assessments, MCAS, to demonstrate academic proficiency. The subjects tested vary by grade and include English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, civics, and science and technology/engineering (STE).

MCAS assessments are aligned to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and are intended to measure how well students have learned grade-level content and, later in high school, students' readiness for college and career.

MCAS results are provided to educators, parents, and students to:

- Measure academic growth from one grade level to the next;
- Track individual student progress over time;
- Identify strengths, areas for improvement, and instructional gaps;
- Determine which students may benefit from additional academic support; and
- Inform planning at the school and district levels.

→ WIDA ACCESS

As required by federal and state law, all English Learners (EL) students in grades K2 - 12 are assessed each year with the WIDA ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State) assessment. This assessment measures students' English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Parents of EL students are informed of their child's progress in meeting English proficiency benchmarks each year.

1.8. Academic Support Program

Acceleration Academies

Acceleration Academies take place during February and April vacation weeks. They offer intensive instruction to students in grades 3 – 12, most in need of extra support in ELA and math at the district's lowest-performing schools.

Summer Learning Academies

Students in grades K - 12 will be invited to attend the five week Summer Learning Academies based on these priorities:

- Students who have not met BPS grade-level benchmarks or who are in danger of not being promoted to the next grade;
- Students who could benefit from a rigorous summer experience to make gains and be prepared for the next year;
- Students who can reasonably make enough academic gains in five weeks to be promoted to the next grade; and
- Students who do not qualify for or have opted out of ESY and are not enrolled in district-run EL programming.

High School Credit Recovery

Students in grades 9 - 12 who have failed one or more major subject courses and who have not been absent more than 30 days during the regular school year may enroll in a High School Credit Recovery Summer Learning Academy. These programs give students the chance to recover course credit and earn points toward promotion and graduation. All major courses are offered. Students also have access to online courses, which allows students to retake courses they have failed. Students may take up to two in-person or online courses.

1.9. Grade Retention

Repeating a Grade

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) states retention of students is “an intervention with little to no evidence of improving long-term academic outcomes.” Several studies conducted over the last four decades indicate that children who are retained do not do better over time.

If the decision is made to retain a student, it is critical that we establish what will be done differently during the grade that is repeated. The guidance below outlines the decision-making process for promoting or retaining students.

Retention should only be considered when there is a lack of evidence of “meeting or exceeding the essential standards;” decisions must be grounded in evidence.

To be considered for retention, there must be evidence of other interventions:

- The student must be reviewed by the school-based Student Success Team using benchmark requirements and the student’s current academic performance;
- Evidence of a clear, teacher-developed intervention plan to include checkpoints with family to ensure timely and consistent communication;
- Promotion can be contingent upon successful participation and completion of summer programming; and
- The School Leader will have final sign-off (after conversations with all stakeholders).

1.10. Alternative Education

Alternative Routes to a High School Diploma

Boston Public Schools offers several programs to give adults and high school-age students who have left school a second chance to earn a high school diploma or HiSET (high school equivalency credential).

- Adult Education & Community Services: 617-635-9300
- BPS website: bostonpublicschools.org/adulted
- Re-engagement Center (for students who have dropped out and want to return): 617-635-2273

2. Specialized Services and Programs

2.1. Specialized Services

Students with disabilities have many rights and protections under federal and state law. As regulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all children with disabilities have the right to free and appropriate public education (FAPE) designed to meet their individual needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. Students with disabilities must be educated in classrooms with non-disabled students as much as possible. This is also known as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

The Office of Specialized Services provides a variety of settings for students with disabilities:

- **Full inclusion:** Students are educated alongside students without special needs for 80% of the school day or more in the general education classroom;
- **Partial inclusion:** Students may spend up to 60% of the school day outside of the general education classroom;
- **Substantially separate setting:** Students spend more than 60% of the school day outside of the general education classroom; and
- Some students with high levels of need are enrolled in special schools in public or private day or residential settings and receive all of their instruction and services in these separate special education schools.

BPS has three day schools for students with disabilities with the highest levels of need:

- The Horace Mann School for students who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- The Carter School for students with significant intellectual and multiple disabilities; and
- The Melvin H. King South End Academies for students with emotional impairments.

Related services:

If you suspect that your child is having difficulty making progress in school due to a disability, you have the right to request an evaluation of your child to determine if they have a disability and whether or not the disability is impacting their access to general education. Ask the principal/head of

school or the Coordinator of Special Education (COSE) at your school for more information.

For more Information visit: The Office of Specialized Services at bostonpublicschools.org or call 617-635-8599.

You can also contact the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#).

2.2. Multilingual Learners

BPS has made high-quality instruction for Multilingual Learners (ML) a top priority. BPS provides various choices and services to help MLs students learn academic English as they study literature, writing, math, science, history/social studies, the arts, physical education, and other subjects. Our vision is to provide a culturally and linguistically responsive education with the supports needed to ensure that all our MLs have equal access to opportunities that promote language acquisition, bilingualism, biliteracy, and lifelong learning.

Who is an ML?

MLs are students who are native speakers of languages other than English and who are still building their English literacy skills while they also learn academic content.

How are students placed in ML services?

The parents and caregivers of every child entering BPS for the first time must complete a home language survey at the time of registration. If the survey indicates that the child might qualify for ML services, the district must assess the child's academic English proficiency in four areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which occurs at the [Newcomers Assessment and Counseling Center \(NACC\)](#).

Parents/caregivers of children who qualify for ML services have the legal right to be informed of the options and benefits of ML services available in a way they can understand and then choose the option they (parent or caregiver) believe best fits their child's needs. Every student has the right to receive services regardless of which BPS school they are enrolled in. Parents of MLs also have the right to "opt-out" of ML services for their child if they do

not want their child to receive English as a Second Language (ESL) direct instruction from a licensed ESL teacher.

What program options are available for MLs at BPS?

Under state law, all MLs have access to ESL instruction, which is designed to teach English to MLs. All teachers of MLs who teach the core academic subjects (such as math, social studies, and science) must have special training and hold a Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) Endorsement in addition to their teaching license. Teachers who provide native language instruction must have training and possess the Bilingual Education Endorsement (BEE).

BPS offers multiple programs to support MLs, described on [our website](#).

At schools without formal ML programs, any student with an ELD 1-4 receives explicit ESL instruction from a qualified teacher and sheltered instruction to make core academic instruction and grade-level academic content more accessible. If you would like to decline any of these English Learner programs or services, schedule a time to meet with your child's school principal, who will explain your options and rights. After this initial meeting, if you would still like to decline services, your request will be formally submitted and approved by the Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (OMME).

The state law called the LOOK Act allows the district flexibility to implement new language programs for English Learner students and affirms the importance of students' native language. The LOOK Act also allows for the parents of 20 or more students to request that the district implement a specific language instruction program. The district shall respond to this request within 90 school days. Please contact OMME for more information about these options.

If you are the parent of an ML, you can expect that:

- Your child's level of English will be tested each year until they become proficient. You will receive the language assessment report every year. If your child is not meeting state benchmarks, you will be notified and asked to provide recommendations for how your child's school can help

your child to meet language goals. For more information, visit doe.mass.edu;

- You have the right to choose the program you think is best for your child regardless of their status as an ML. All programs within the Boston Public Schools are able to provide services for MLs;
- ML programs for students with disabilities should also meet the needs of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs);
- In addition to learning English, your child should be taught the same content as all other students in mathematics, history, and other subjects;
- The information you get should be easy to understand. Information about your child's academic progress, special education or other education services, health and safety, and other essential information should be available in the language you know best; and
- If you speak a language other than English, language assistance services are available to you free of charge. Contact your child's school for assistance or visit [our website](#).

For more information contact the Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education call 617-635-9435, email omme@bostonpublicschools.org, or visit bostonpublicschools.org/bps-departments/multilingual-and-multicultural-education.

2.3. Students Who Are Experiencing Homelessness

Students who are experiencing homelessness need stable learning experiences in school. The BPS Homeless Education Resource Network (HERN) offers a variety of resources and support to students experiencing homelessness. For more information on the Homeless Education Resource Network call 617-635-8037.

2.4. Home and Hospital Instruction

BPS provides home and hospital instruction for students who must remain at home or in a hospital setting, or a combination of both, for at least 14 school days in any school year. Before a student can receive these services, a licensed physician must complete a state form, which can be obtained from your child's school nurse. Physician statements must be renewed every 60 days by the providing physician. For more information call Student Support at 617-635-6633.

2.5. Homeschooling

Parents and caregivers who live in Boston and want to homeschool their children must submit an application to the BPS Office of Expanded Learning Opportunities for approval. The application can be found [online](#). They must demonstrate that their home education proposal follows the Guidelines for Home Education in Massachusetts and meets the requirements of the state's curriculum hours for grade levels. Parents or caregivers who home school must submit an end-of-year assessment each year before being able to continue for the following school year. Homeschooling authorization is granted upon receipt of the application. For more information contact BPS Expanded Learning Opportunities at 617-635-8880 or email homeschooling@bostonpublicschools.org.

2.6. Alternative Education

BPS offers a variety of educational options and services for middle school and high school students who are not succeeding in a regular school setting. The programs provide intensive support services and different approaches to learning. It is important to note that not every student who requests an alternative program will be placed in a program.

Some of the programs are:

- The BPS Re-engagement Center (REC) is the referring office for all potential alternative students. REC helps students who have dropped out of high school (or are thinking of dropping out) to complete high school and continue their education and career preparation beyond high school;
- Boston Adult Technical Academy (BATA) serves students ages 18–22 who are considered over-age for their grade. Some of these students are MLs;
- Accelerated Diploma Program at Brighton High School (ADP) The ADP program is a voluntary, competency-based program for students who have struggled in traditional settings;
- Accelerated Intervention Program at Excel High School (AIP);
- Roads to Success at Charlestown High School serves students from all BPS high schools who have not succeeded in regular programs and need a rigorous competency-based education supported by a small, personalized learning culture;
- Greater Egleston High School is an alternative school serving 125 students, grades 9-12. It enrolls students ages 15-21 who are over age and

under-credited. GEHS supports students with a holistic approach that encourages social emotional growth, positive decision making, collaboration and critical thinking. Academic classes are small, providing students the attention they need to be successful;

- Community Academy (grades 9-12) enrolls students who need a structured, positive small learning community focusing on behavior and positive involvement in school;
- Boston Day and Evening Academy (BDEA) engages young adults to build a vision for their future through supportive relationships and meaningful competency-based learning experiences;
- Boston Central Adult High School provides diplomas and the High School Equivalency Examination (HiSET). Students and their families may choose these programs if they have had a negative school experience or want to take a different path toward a high school diploma; and
- Boston Collaborative High School (BCHS), offers additional programs as part of a partnership with community-based organizations:
 - ABCD University High School and William J. Ostiguy offers non-traditional learning and year-round programming for over-age students, focusing on career development;
 - Otro Camino (Another Path) is for English learner students. Students receive necessary EL supports while also benefiting from a project-based learning model;
 - St. Mary's School is for expectant and parenting students using online, portfolio, and project-based learning St. Mary's students receive new parent and daycare support resources; and
 - Boston Collaborative middle school program for students in grades 6th , 7th and 8th who are at risk of school failure and who would benefit from an alternative academic setting.

More Information on Alternative Education contact the BPS Re-engagement Center at 617-635-2273. For information on GED, visit doe.mass.edu/hse

2.7. Career and Technical Education

BPS offers a wide array of Career and Technical Education (CTE) opportunities to allow students to compete for rewarding careers in over 25 industries. CTE provides hands-on learning that builds academic and technical knowledge, problem-solving skills, employability skills, and specific career skills that lead to industry credentialing. Our goal is that every CTE

student possesses strong academic, technical, and professional skills upon graduation in order to start their careers and access rigorous post-secondary opportunities, including two and four-year college degrees, certification, and technical training programs and apprenticeships.

BPS students can select from 51 CTE programs and pathways at 14 high schools through three types of Career and Technical Education programs:

- Chapter 74 programs meet the definition of vocational-technical education contained in Massachusetts General Law Chapter 74 and the Perkins Act and are approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- Non-Chapter 74 CTE Pathways meet the definition of vocational-technical education contained in the Perkins Act and are approved by BPS;
- Innovation Pathway CTE Pathways are approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and include college-level coursework; and
- See the CTE webpage for more Information about the specific career pathways each school offers including Madison Park Technical Vocation High School: bostonpublicschools.org/cte.

Out of district vocational requests

Non-resident student tuition applications for any Out-of-District Vocational Requests must be submitted by email or mail to the Executive Director of Career and Technical Education before April 1, for consideration for the upcoming fall. Students exploring this option should contact the Office of Career and Technical Education for help with this process.

All individuals, including those who are members of special populations, are provided with equal access to career/vocational technical education programs, services, and activities and are not discriminated against based on their status as members of special populations or race, color, sex, national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or English language proficiency.

2.8. Early College

Early College students take strategically sequenced, real college courses during their regular high school day at no cost to them or their families. With extra academic support and personalized guidance, students gain the skills and confidence to thrive in these rigorous classes. By high school graduation, students can earn 12 transferable college credits or more and, in some cases, enough to complete an associate degree, saving both time and money on their college journey. Along the way, they build the habits and knowledge needed for lasting success in college and career. As of Fall 2025, BPS offers Designated Early College Pathways at 11 high schools.

2.9. Districtwide Dual Enrollment

College course-taking opportunities are open to all eligible BPS secondary school students. Through partnerships with select local colleges, students can choose from the district's menu of college courses - taking one BPS-sponsored class per semester while still in high school. The BPS Dual Enrollment Opportunities Chart is published every fall, spring, and summer semester so students and families can review available courses and eligibility criteria determined by the college. These "a la carte" college courses are available to students at every secondary school, and schools are responsible for sharing information and guiding students through the process to ensure they succeed in their dual enrollment experience. High schools may also have their own partnerships with colleges that offer additional dual enrollment opportunities.

3. Services for Students

District Wellness Policy

BPS actively promotes the physical, social, and emotional wellbeing of all students to support both their healthy development and readiness to learn. Healthy students are better learners.

BPS is:

- Improving student health literacy and physical literacy;
- Improving school-based healthcare;
- Promoting healthy behaviors; and
- Creating a healthier school environment and climate.

The federal government requires all school systems receiving funding for the National School Meals Program to have a District Wellness Policy. The BPS District Wellness Policy ([Circular HWD-01](#)) is a road map to help guide schools. The policy includes healthy food and drinks, safe and supportive schools, healthy physical environments, health services, cultural proficiency, and comprehensive health education, physical education, and physical activity. Under this policy, every school in the district must have a School Wellness Council and create an annual Wellness Action Plan. We encourage parents to learn about and be part of the wellness activities at their child's school. Ask the school leader about joining the wellness council or learning more about wellness at your school. For more information visit bostonpublicschools.org/hwd or call 617-635-6643.

The District Wellness Council

The District Wellness Council consists of members of our school community, appointed by the superintendent, who work together to guide the policies and practices to make healthy learning environments at all schools. Council members review wellness-related policies and advise the school district on policies that address student wellness. Meetings are open to the public, and community members are welcome to attend. For more information about the meeting schedule or to learn how you can participate, visit bostonpublicschools.org/hwd.

3.1. Office of Health and Wellness

Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical activity is beneficial for health and learning. Increased physical activity and fitness has a positive effect on concentration and academics. Massachusetts state law says that physical education will be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students. All schools should provide opportunities for physical activity for all students in all grades. BPS is working to improve both the quantity and quality of physical education and physical activity for all students in grades Pre-K - 12 to promote their healthy development and readiness to learn.

Physical Education Requirements and Recommendations for Pre-kindergarten-Grade 8:

- 150 minutes of physical activity per week;
- 20 minutes of daily recess;
- At least 45 minutes per week of physical education; and
- Aim for 80 minutes per week of physical education.

Physical Education Requirement for Grades 9 - 12:

- One semester (equivalent to a half school year) each year of physical education for all students in grades 9 - 12; and
- At least 0.25 course credits required each year 9 - 12 for graduation.

BPS policy also states the importance of athletics and after-school physical activities.

For information about the BPS physical education curriculum, visit bostonpublicschools.org/hwd or call 617-635-6643.

Health Education

BPS requires health education from Pre-K through grade 12. Health education directly contributes to students' ability to practice behaviors that protect and promote health and avoid or reduce health risks. Providing students time to understand, practice, and master health skills helps them achieve academic success, develop healthy lifestyle habits, make healthy and informed decisions, and improve health literacy throughout their lives.

Our comprehensive Health Education (HE) program is medically accurate, age and developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically sustaining, and implemented in safe and supportive learning environments where all students feel valued. The curriculum follows the 2023 Mass Health and Physical Education Framework and the 2024 National Health Education Standards. Materials for health education classes include CATCH HE Journeys, Grades K - 8, and Goodheart-Willcox Essential Health Skills Grades 6 - 12.

The HE curriculum is LGBTQIA+ inclusive and modified as needed for students with disabilities and students who are English Learners. The curriculum addresses a variety of topics, including:

- Personal health, physical activity, and disease prevention;
- Mental health, stress management, social and emotional learning;
- Healthy relationships with self and others;
- Communication skills;
- Substance misuse prevention, including alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, and other drugs;
- Healthy eating and nutrition;
- Goal setting, decision-making, and refusal skills;
- Accessing valid information, products, and services to enhance health;
- Analyzing influences of family, peers, media, and technology on health behaviors;
- Safety and injury prevention, including bullying/cyber-bullying and violence prevention; and
- Sexual health education.

Minimum health education requirement:

- 12-lesson unit minimum in each of grades 4 - 6;
- Two semesters of health education in grades 6 - 8 taught by a licensed health education teacher; and
- At least one semester of health education (0.25 course credits) in grades 9 - 12 taught by a licensed health education teacher.

To learn more about the BPS health education curriculum, visit bostonpublicschools.org/hwd or call 617-635-6643.

Sexual Health Education

Sexual health education is an important part of the BPS Comprehensive Health Education program. Classes are taught by qualified, trained teachers and address the physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects of human sexuality at a level appropriate to the age of the students. The curriculum includes education about sexual and gender identity and is inclusive of all, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQIA+) students. The program is designed to help students maintain sexual health by developing healthy relationships, delaying sexual activity, preventing disease and pregnancy, and reducing risky sexual behaviors.

The lessons may include these topics:

- How to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships;
- Adolescent growth and development, including the changes throughout puberty;
- How to prevent the spread of communicable diseases (including HIV/AIDS);
- Responsible decision-making, including reducing sexual health related risk behaviors; and
- Personal safety, consent, boundaries and resisting negative peer pressure.

Materials for health classes include the Rights, Respect, Responsibility Curriculum and Get Real. These curricula align to the National Sex Education Standards, and are age-appropriate, medically accurate, trauma-informed, and use best practices for health education. We encourage you to review these materials at your child's school.

BPS recognizes the role of families as the primary health educators of their children. Families can and should have a strong influence on their children's health decisions. BPS conducts parent workshops to help you talk to your child about sensitive health topics. Please contact Cheryl Todisco, Director of Health Education, at (617) 635- 8709 or ctodisco@bostonpublicschools.org for more information.

While parents or guardians do not have to give permission for their children to take sexual health education classes, families do have the right to exempt

their children from lessons that primarily involve human sexual education without penalty (Mass.Gen. Laws Ch.71§ 32A and BPS [Circular HWD-05](#)).

Option to Opt Out

If you do not want your child to participate in sexual health education classes, please contact the principal of your child's school in writing or by email to let them know of your decision. Students who are exempted will not be penalized academically.

Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

A small number of students in middle and high school grades are asked to complete surveys about health behaviors and other related topics every two years. These surveys help us to create and improve school health programs and policies to promote positive health behaviors. The surveys are a part of a national effort led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The surveys are anonymous and protect each student's privacy. No individual student responses will ever be reported. The survey is voluntary. Students may skip any questions they do not wish to answer and may stop taking the survey at any time without penalty.

If your student's school and class are selected to participate in the survey, a parent/caregiver notification letter will go home with your student. If you do not want them to participate in the survey, please return the exemption form to opt them out of the survey. No action will be taken against you or your child if your child does not participate. For more information email: yrbs@bostonpublicschools.org or visit bostonpublicschools.org/YRBS.

3.2. Behavioral Health Services

The Behavioral Health Services (BHS) department has school psychologists assigned to all BPS schools that provide districtwide services. The Behavioral Health Services department provides a continuum of behavioral health services including prevention, at-risk, and intensive services such as assessments, training, counseling, and consultation.

The BHS team works in partnership with the Department of Social Work to provide mental health services and crisis response for the district and helps schools and students after traumatic events have occurred. To speak to a school psychologist about your child, please call your child's school. Many schools have community mental health partnerships that offer services within the school or the community. If you are interested in your child receiving counseling services, please reach out to the school to ask about their mental health partnerships.

More information on BHS visit cbhmboston.com, bostonpublicschools.org/behavioral-health, or call 617-635-9676.

3.3. Succeed Boston

Succeed Boston @ the Counseling and Intervention Center plants "SEEDS" (Social, Emotional, Educational, and Decision-making Skills) to cultivate student growth and promote the ability to assess risk, consider consequences, and repair harm. Succeed employs a multifaceted approach (including assessments, trauma-informed practices, counseling, restorative practices, and SEL skill development) to provide students with the opportunity to reset, reflect on their behavior, enhance coping and decision-making strategies, and return to school to make amends.

This approach fosters trust with students and offers opportunities for them to reflect on and develop their social-emotional skills. Students receive individual and group counseling from licensed counselors, which is based on their specific needs. The curriculum is comprehensive, promoting positive decision-making related to self-advocacy and addressing critical topics such as bullying and violence prevention, anger management, cyber safety, boundary setting, understanding sexual misconduct, and conflict resolution education. This comprehensive curriculum enhances students' abilities to assess risks, evaluate potential consequences, and make informed decisions.

Success has four distinct areas of student-facing work:

- The short-term **Supported Suspension Program** for students in grades 6 - 12 provides the highest level of support through individual and group counseling for students involved in Code of Conduct violations that have impacted the physical/ mental health of another and have resulted in

suspension. A discharge summary and return-to-school plan are co-developed with the student and the school to facilitate a positive re-entry to school;

- The **Voluntary One-Day Prevention/Education Program** is for students in grades 3 - 12 who could benefit from learning about bullying, bias, anger management, violence prevention, conflict resolution, boundaries, internet and social media safety, healthy relationships, and drug and alcohol education and prevention. The program offers an alternative approach to preventing suspension by addressing the root causes of disparities through the use of holistic, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, and by providing students with SEL skills before a serious code infraction occurs. This program is offered in-person for students in grades 6 - 12 and is available online for students in grades 3 - 5;
- **iDecide Substance Use Prevention and Education**, a partnership with Massachusetts General Hospital, is a voluntary program for students whose use of drugs or alcohol is of concern. This program provides education about the effects of drugs, edibles, vaping, and alcohol. It provides students with alternative ways to deal with stress and connections to outside resources, if needed; and
- The **Push In Program** is a key component in supporting the district's priority of decreasing suspensions and facilitating the creation of safe, welcoming, and inclusive spaces where all students feel connected and have the ability to thrive. This program works by providing targeted interventions and support to students who are at risk of suspension, helping them address their behavioral issues and promoting a positive school environment.

Restorative Practices

The regional Restorative Practices/Safe and Welcoming Schools Specialists (RP/SAWS) program is designed to promote a positive school culture and climate. These specialists collaborate with school leaders to assess the current culture and climate and develop an individualized school plan that focuses on relationship-building among students and staff. They also provide professional development, coaching, and consultations related to various aspects of school culture and climate, including bullying prevention, restorative practices, and relationship building. For more information contact succeedboston.org or call 617-635-8123.

3.4. Health Services

Nursing services are available in all of our schools. If you need to speak to the school nurse, please call the school office.

All school nurses are licensed to practice nursing in Massachusetts and are certified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The responsibilities of school nurses include:

- Evaluating and managing the health needs of all students, identifying and managing students with special health needs, working with other school-based groups to provide safe and healthy environments;
- Monitoring and administering medications and medical procedures as prescribed by a student's care provider;
- Providing first aid and emergency care;
- Helping families to get health insurance and find a healthcare provider;
- Managing the control of communicable diseases; and
- Supporting students with accessing menstrual products in high schools, working with other staff on the Condom Availability Team to provide access to condoms and reproductive health counseling.

You can help the school nurse care for your child by:

- Making sure the nurse knows if your child has any chronic or acute illnesses (diabetes, sickle cell, asthma, seizure disorder, etc.) or needs nursing services while in school so that we can provide appropriate accommodations;
- Communicating with the nurse if medication or health needs change;
- Providing evidence of a physical exam with all up-to-date immunization (exam must be within 12 months);

- Updating your child's emergency contact information on file at the school so the school can always reach you; and
- Giving the nurse permission in writing to discuss your child's healthcare needs with the child's healthcare provider. Forms available at bostonpublicschools.org/healthservices.

Immunizations

According to state law, students must be vaccinated for certain diseases before they may enter school. BPS requires that students have immunizations that are up-to-date for school entry when they register for school. By Massachusetts law, students who do not provide documentation of their current immunization status (including dates of each immunization) will be asked to leave school until the student is fully immunized.

Documentation of immunizations is critically important. Parents and caregivers are responsible for keeping immunizations current and informing the school nurse when their child has received additional immunizations. School nurses review immunization records regularly.

Required Immunizations to Register for the 2025-2026 School Year

(Note: requirements are for this year only.)

	K0/K1 (ages 3-4)	K2 (ages 4-5)	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
Hepatitis B	3 doses*	3 doses*	3 doses*	3 doses*
DTaP/DTP / DT/Td	≥ 4 doses DTaP/DTP	4-5 doses DTaP/DTP	≥4 doses DTaP/DTP or ≥3 doses Td	4 doses DTaP/DTP or ≥3 doses Td
Tdap	–	–	1 dose	1 dose
Polio	3 doses	3-4 doses^	3-4 doses^	3-4 doses^
Hib	1-4 doses	–	–	–
MMR	1 dose*	2 doses*	2 doses*	2 doses*
Varicella (Chickenpox)	1 dose*	2 doses*	2 doses*	2 doses*

	K0/K1 (ages 3-4)	K2 (ages 4-5)	Grades 1-6	Grades 7-12
^^ MenACWY (Meningococcal conjugate)	–	–	1 dose (grades 7 & 9 only)	2 doses

^^ The last dose must be on or after the 4th birthday and ≥ 6 months after the previous dose, or an additional dose is required.

^^ Meningococcal Conjugate vaccine is required for entry into grade 7 and an additional booster dose on or after age 16.

*or documentation of disease/immunity.

- For more information, visit mass.gov;
- Contact BPS Health Services at 617-635- 6788 if you have questions;
- It is strongly recommended that your child have a Tuberculosis Risk Assessment at the annual physical;
- **Special Situations:** Except in an emergency or epidemic, students may start school if a parent or guardian presents a written statement (1) from a physician that their child has not been immunized for medical reasons, or (2) that the child has not been immunized due to his or her religious beliefs.

Physical Examinations

While parents have final responsibility for their child's health, the school is responsible for the safety and well-being of students while they are in school. Under state law, students new to the school system must present results of a complete physical examination within one year prior to entrance to school or within 30 days after they enter school. If your child is new to the school, it is mandated to bring a copy of the immunizations and physical exam to the nurse on the first day of school, even though you may have given them at registration. This information is necessary to provide the best healthcare to students during the school day. All continuing students must have a physical exam in grades 4, 6, and 9.

Physical Examinations for Student-Athletes

Student-athletes must pass a physical examination within 13 months before the start of each sport season. Please note that many healthcare providers need at least two weeks to copy records.

Taking Medications in School

In most cases, only the school nurse may administer medication to students in school. However, there are three circumstances when someone other than a nurse may give a student medication:

- When the student is on a field trip, the nurse may delegate and train another adult to administer the medication(s);
- Students who are at risk for life-threatening allergic reactions may be administered emergency medication, such as an EpiPen, by school personnel. The nurse is responsible for training and supervising all individuals involved in giving medication; and/or
- Some students may administer their own medication, such as an asthma inhaler. To allow this, the parent must contact the school nurse to arrange a Self-Medication Plan.

In order to administer prescription medications, the nurse must have an order from the student's primary care provider and signed parent/guardian's permission. Non-prescription ("over the counter") medications such as Tylenol or Motrin can be given with orders provided by the BPS school physician and also require parental permission. Ask the nurse in your child's school for the permission form. Parents must supply their child's prescription medication, which must be in the original pharmacy container. Always let the school nurse know if the doctor has changed the medication type or dose. Medication authorization forms, which have been signed by the child's healthcare provider and legal guardian, must be brought to the school nurse. Also, provide the nurse with treatment plans for chronic medical conditions (food allergies, asthma, seizures, sickle cell, etc.).

Health Insurance

Health insurance is available for every child in Massachusetts. If you need more information about insurance and healthcare, call the Mayor's Health Line, 617-534-5050. If you have insurance, please fill out a Student

Information Update form, which can be found at bostonpublicschools.org/backtoschool.

Health Screenings and Other Programs

School nurses screen for a number of health issues, from hearing and vision to substance use. The frequency of screenings for height, weight, dental, hearing, vision, and scoliosis vary by grade. If parents do not want this screening, they must indicate in the Health Screening section of the Student Information Update Form, which can be found at bostonpublicschools.org/backtoschool and in paper form at your child's school.

This information serves as notification of the condom accessibility policy:

- Parents and caregivers who do not want their students to receive condoms at school should email or submit in writing their intentions to the school principal and include the school nurse(s) in this communication. If you change your mind and decide that your student can access free condoms, send an email to the head of school and the nurse during the school year to notify them of this change;
- Under Massachusetts Adolescent Confidentiality laws, adolescents may receive confidential services for diagnosis, treatment, and referral for sexually transmitted infections, protection methods, and pregnancy. The opt-out to not receive condoms does not apply to these confidential services;
- State-recommended Substance Abuse Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) occurs in 7th and 10th grade. Information regarding SBIRT, including an opt-out letter, will be mailed out to parents/guardians of middle and high school grade students. SBIRT can help healthcare and other professionals determine whether someone is using alcohol and/or drugs in unhealthy ways; and
- The Menstrual Access Program provides free menstrual products to students in Boston Public Schools with grades 3 - 12. The program is led by the school nurse(s) in each school and includes a team of school staff members who all make menstrual products purchased by BPS available to all menstruating students.

Medical Emergencies

If a student is sick or injured at school, the school will make every effort to reach the parent or the emergency contact person named on the student's emergency card on file in the office. The principal and school nurse will decide what action to take. Most illnesses and injuries that occur during the school day are minor and can be treated by the nurse. If the student's condition is very serious, the nurse, school leader, or other school staff member will call for an ambulance. A school employee will stay with the student in the ambulance and will remain at the hospital, preferably until the parent arrives. However, if a parent does not arrive within a reasonable amount of time, the emergency room of the hospital takes responsibility for the student.

School-based Health Centers

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), in collaboration with Boston Medical Center, operates health centers in some BPS schools. Community health centers partner with additional schools to provide health services in other BPS schools. Students who attend schools with health centers are encouraged to register with the health center for these and other health services:

- Individual mental health counseling and crisis management;
- Sexual and reproductive healthcare;
- Screening services;
- Injury treatment;
- Physical examinations and sports physicals;
- Health insurance enrollment; and
- Health information.

The health centers have a medical provider (a nurse practitioner or physician assistant), mental health counselor, and health educator. They are available during the school day, so students who need health services spend the minimum time away from their classes.

211 HelpSteps (helpsteps.com)

211 HelpSteps is an online resource to find local social and health services. Services can be found by entering a zip code or selecting a category, such as “Adolescent & Youth Services.” BPHC consistently updates Boston area clinic and resource information. This site can be used by families, students, school staff, and the wider Boston community.

Health Resource Centers

BPHC has Health Resource Centers (HRC) in some Boston high schools. HRC staff are at these schools two days per week. HRCs offer information to students on decision-making, healthy relationships, and preventing sexually transmitted infections (STI), HIV, and unplanned pregnancies. HRC staff provide classroom education, as well as individual health education counseling, referrals, condoms, and family planning information upon student request. For more information about HRCs call 617-534-2279 or email mhemeon@bphc.org.

More Information about School Health Services

Detailed information about school health services, including all health service forms, school nurse contact information, health alerts, and policies, is available on the School Health Services website at bostonpublicschools.org/healthservices.

In addition to the policies described above, BPS has policies on:

- Asthma;
- Diabetes;
- Food allergies;
- Medication administration in school;
- Sickle cell anemia; and
- Seizure disorders.

3.5. Healthy and Safe School Environment

All Boston public schools work to create a healthier school environment. Every BPS building is required under federal and state regulations or BPS policy to implement the following:

Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) Management Plan

The AHERA Management Plan describes the location and condition of asbestos-containing building materials and documents the removal and repairs. The BPS Environmental Division is responsible for updating each school's AHERA Management Plan with information collected from their periodic surveillance inspections, 3-year reinspections for asbestos-containing materials, and response actions taken within the school. The AHERA Management Plan is available in the main office of each school building. The plan can be found in white or green 3-ring binder marked "AHERA Management Plan." The district continues to monitor, update, and improve each school's AHERA Management Plan.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Plan

State laws and regulations require all school buildings and licensed daycares to register an indoor and outdoor IPM plan with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR). The IPM Plan is available in the main office of each school building and can be found in a white 3-ring binder marked "IPM Logbook". Every BPS school has an assigned Pest Control Contractor (PCC), whose contract is managed by the BPS Environmental Division. The PCC is responsible for annually updating the school's indoor and outdoor IPM plan.

Annual School Environmental Audits

Every BPS school annually receives two environmental audits - one conducted by the BPS Facilities Management Environmental Division, and one conducted by the BPHC. The purpose of the audits is to identify building issues that affect environment, health and safety. The audits evaluate issues related to: cleaning, ventilation, indoor air quality monitoring, pest infestation, water leaks/stains, visible mold, odors, chemical or hazardous materials, clutter and housekeeping, and any occupant's building concern.

Annual audits are sent to school leaders and made publicly available on the BPS website.

Environmentally-preferable cleaners

All Boston schools are cleaned with environmentally-preferable cleaners. Cleaning products, especially pre-soaked wipes, brought from home are not allowed, as they can be asthma triggers and negatively affect the BPS Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) sensors.

Any inquiries regarding the AHERA Management plan, IPM plan, and annual environmental audits should be directed to the district's AHERA Designated Person, Maria F. Carvalho, 1216 Dorchester Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02125, mcarvalho2@bostonpublicschools.org or 617-635-8300.

School Wellness

Families can promote school wellness by knowing about their child's school building conditions. Tell the school nurse if your child has asthma or allergies that could be affected by environmental triggers such as mold, dust, pests, or strong fumes, and make sure the nurse has your child's Asthma Action Plan from your healthcare provider. Contact the school's main office with any concerns about the health and safety of school facilities. For more information contact the BPS Facilities Management, Environmental Division at 617-635-8300.

3.6. Guidance Counseling Services

School counselors address the developmental needs of all students through a comprehensive school counseling program addressing the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students. School counselors work with students in individual, small group, and classroom settings to help create an academic plan for their education, prepare for successful careers after graduation, and help students develop necessary skills, such as organization, time management, and study skills. They also help students overcome obstacles that may form barriers to learning by helping students respond to social-emotional challenges. For more information about the Guidance Counseling Center call 617-635-8030.

3.7. Food and Nutrition Services

Boston Public Schools Department of Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) offers free nutritious, breakfast, lunch, and after-school meals to all students in preschool through high school and in alternative education programs. During the summer months, FNS provides breakfast and lunch to sites across the city.

For students with special dietary restrictions, such as food allergies, FNS can provide alternate meals. Please see your school nurse or contact FNS directly.

All Students Eat at No Cost

- All BPS students are eligible for free breakfast, lunch, after school meals, and summer meals;
- When they are served their breakfast and lunch at school, students will enter their 6-digit BPS student identification number into a meal counting system; and
- Families requesting a verification letter concerning the free meal program can contact Food and Nutrition Services at the phone number below.

School menus and more information can be found at bostonpublicschools.org/fns or by calling 617-635-9144.

Wellness and Nutrition Policy: Healthy Choices

BPS supports lifelong healthy eating habits. BPS has adopted nutrition policy guidelines that apply to all foods sold or served in schools that are not part of the national school meal program to increase access to nutritious foods in our school communities and address nutrition-related health issues. For more information and the full policy go to bostonpublicschools.org/fns.

4. Transportation

Students in Grades K - 6

BPS students in grades K - 6 are eligible for BPS yellow bus transportation if they attend a school within their homebase and meet the mileage requirements listed below.

→ **Home base Requirement:** All BPS students must attend a school within their homebase to qualify for yellow bus transportation. You can find a list of schools within your child's homebase by going to boston.explore.avela.org.

→ **Mileage Requirement:** Students in grades K - 5 must live 1-mile or more (walking distance) from their school to qualify for yellow bus transportation. Students in grade 6 must live 1.5 miles or more (walking distance) from their school to qualify for yellow bus transportation.

Students in grades K - 6 who ride yellow buses are picked up and dropped off at designated corner "hub" stops throughout the city, within a half-mile of their home address. These designated stops are the only locations at which yellow school buses are assigned to service corner-stop students. If your child is eligible for a school bus, we will send notification by email and through the Zūm app before school starts with their bus stop location, pick-up and drop-off time, and bus numbers.

Students in Grades 7 - 12

Students in grades 7 - 12 use MBTA buses and subways for transportation service and receive a free monthly 7-day MBTA pass to use this service. Each school is provided passes and distributes them to all their eligible students on the first day of school. The MBTA allows students to ride for free on the first day of school before they pick up their passes. MBTA passes are valid all hours, seven days a week. It is recommended that students receive travel training to and from school prior to the first day of attendance.

Students in grade 6 may also opt-in to receive MBTA service instead of a yellow bus, provided they are eligible for yellow bus service. Students in grades K0 - 5 may not receive MBTA passes.

4.1. Specialized Transportation Services

We provide specialized transportation services for students with disabilities in accordance with their IEP or Section 504 Plan. Specialized transportation services are only provided if the student's IEP or Section 504 Plan states they are required. Some students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans may also be picked up and dropped off at a corner stop, receive an MBTA pass, or walk to school.

Types of specialized transportation services:

- **Door-to-Door Transportation:** Students are picked up and dropped off in front of their home address. If a student's home address is not accessible to our buses, we may provide service at the nearest accessible point; and
- **Bus Monitors:** Special education bus monitors are provided to students in accordance with their IEP or Section 504 Plan.

Please Note: Buses are not required to go into private parking lots.

4.2. Private Transportation Services

Some families arrange to have their children driven to and from school by a private transportation service or individual. For safety reasons, the school will not release a student to anyone other than the custodial parent or guardian without the parent's written permission. If you are arranging private transportation for your child, be sure to sign a release form. You can get it from the school or on the BPS website:

bostonpublicschools.org/suptcirculars, "Policies & Procedures," then click the Safety Services folder. It is [Circular SAF-08](#). This form releases the BPS from any liability if there is a problem with the private service.

4.3. Pickup Policies

BPS buses are allowed a ten minute window to arrive before or after the scheduled pick-up time. In the mornings, students are expected to be at the bus stop ten minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time. Students and parents and caregivers must be visible at the bus stop, not waiting inside the home or car. Drivers may bypass a stop if they are within the ten minute window and do not see any student or parent waiting. Drivers are not allowed to blow the horn at bus stops.

4.4. Drop-off Policies

BPS buses are allowed a ten minute window to arrive before or after the scheduled drop-off time. Students with corner bus stops can get off the bus at their assigned bus stop without a parent/caregiver present if they feel comfortable doing so. Drivers cannot keep students, including kindergartners, on board against their will if the bus is at the assigned stop. However, students may stay on the bus if they do not feel comfortable getting off (such as if their parent or guardian is not at the bus stop). BPS officials will then try to locate the parent/caregiver. Parents/caregivers should make sure their children are familiar with the surroundings at their bus stop and know the safest route to walk home if no one is there to meet them.

Students with door-to-door bus stops cannot be let off the bus without a parent/caregiver present under any circumstances. If a parent/caregiver is not at the stop, BPS officials will try to get in contact with the parent/caregiver and arrange for them to meet the bus.

4.5. Parent and Caregiver Responsibilities

- If appropriate and comfortable, discuss any medical issues regarding their child with the driver;
- Parents/guardians should ensure their student's personal belongings are labeled with their first and last name and parent/ guardian contact information. This supports student safety and helps ensure lost belongings get back to their owner; and
- If a phone number or contact information changes at any time, notify the school and update your information at a BPS Welcome Center, 617-635-9010. This is to ensure we can easily contact parents/caregivers in the event of an emergency while on board the bus.

4.6. Zūm

As mentioned earlier in this guide, BPS utilizes the Zūm platform for parents/caregivers to track their student's school bus. We encourage BPS families and caregivers to download the Zūm App for parents/caregivers to track rides at app.ridezum.com.

The first time parents/caregivers login they will be asked to verify their credentials by answering a few simple questions about their student (e.g. what school they attend, what street they live on). Parents/caregivers cannot edit contact information and/or login details directly on the Zūm App - they must update their information through a BPS Welcome Center.

If you experience any trouble using the site or have questions about your login information, please contact us by email or at our Transportation Hotline at 617-635-9520, and we will help resolve the issue.

4.7. Behavior on the Bus

The BPS considers the school bus to be “an extension of the classroom.” That means we have the same standards of behavior on the school bus, on the MBTA, at school bus stops, and at MBTA bus stops as we do in school. These standards also apply any time our students ride yellow buses or the MBTA—including outside regular school hours and on weekends. For example, students should remain in their seats; and they should not hang out of windows, push or fight with other students, throw things, or distract the driver. Students should respect all other riders on the yellow bus and the MBTA.

Students who violate School-Based Rules or the Code of Conduct while on the school bus or the MBTA may be disciplined, referred to the Bus Safety Program at BPS Succeed Boston, and/or denied transportation, including deactivation of their MBTA pass. The student will be suspended only from the bus route on which the incident occurred. Denial of transportation for fewer than four days does not require a hearing. The school must notify the family before denying transportation. The student should still attend school.

4.8. Contacting BPS Transportation

BPS Transportation works hard to provide excellent service for students and families. Families can contact the Transportation Department in a few ways:

- **Support Portal:** bostonpublicschoolshelp.freshdesk.com/support/home. Our Support Portal provides information on our policies and FAQs and allows families to enter and check support tickets (for questions, complaints, or transportation assignment change requests). This is the

best channel to communicate any non-urgent questions or concerns;. Your ticket will automatically be directed to the right team member, and we will generally respond within seven to ten days at the most, if not sooner;

- **Transportation Hotline:** 617-635-9520. The Transportation Hotline is open for students and families from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 pm on days that school is in session. In addition, the hotline is open for limited hours on school vacations, typically from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Customer service representatives are available to speak to parents/caregivers in multiple languages. If we do not have a customer service representative available in your preferred language when you call in, we will arrange for someone to call you back; and
- **Email:** You can email us at schoolbus@bostonpublicschools.org. A team member will generally respond within two to three days.

4.9. Transportation Change Requests

Parents/caregivers may request a variety of changes to their child's transportation assignment through our Support Portal. Navigate to the Support Portal, click "New Support Ticket," and specify the type of change under "Ticket Type," and enter the requested information.

Please note that processing time may take up to two to three weeks, and requests are not guaranteed approval. We process requests in the order they are received. If approved, requests do not carry over to the following school year and need to be resubmitted. All requests received before the first Friday in August will receive a response before the start of school and, if approved, will take effect on the first day of school. Requests received after the first Friday in August and in September may take several additional weeks to process.

Change requests can include the following:

- **Alternative Request:** Parents/caregivers may use this to request your child is picked up and/or dropped off at an alternate address, including before/after school programs, a babysitter's home, etc. This can be requested even if a student is not eligible for transportation between home and school. Requests are not guaranteed, but BPS Transportation

will review if we can accommodate the request. In order to accommodate a request:

- The requested stop must be on one of the school's regular bus routes;
 - There must be a seat available on the bus; and
 - The alternative stop must be the same for every school day.
- **Sibling Ridership Request:** Parents/caregivers may use this request if they have two children going to the same school and living at the same address and you would like for them to ride the bus together. At least one of the students must be eligible for transportation for us to review this request, and there must be available seats on the bus;
 - **MBTA Waiver Request:** Parents/caregivers may use this if their child is a 7th or 8th-grade student assigned an MBTA pass and they would like to request yellow bus service instead. There must be an existing bus stop and an available seat on the bus to accommodate this request;
 - **MBTA 6th Grade Opt-In:** Parents/caregivers may use this if their child is assigned to a yellow bus, and they would like to request an MBTA Pass for them instead. Please note that K - 5 grade students cannot receive an MBTA pass;
 - **Transportation Opt-Out:** Parents/caregivers may use this to inform us if you do not require yellow bus transportation for your child; and
 - **Transportation Reinstatement:** Parents/caregivers may use this if they have previously opted out of yellow bus transportation for their student and now want to restart it. This will only be approved if your child is eligible for bus transportation. Reinstatement of bus service will take ten to fifteen days in most cases. You will receive a notification of your student's new bus assignment when it is ready.

4.10. Ridership Procedure

After 10-plus consecutive school days of not riding the bus without prior notification in the Zūm to cancel a student's scheduled bus rides, BPS Transportation will communicate to families through ParentSquare that their student is being opted out of the bus. Students can keep their bus assignment if they return to riding the bus. Otherwise, their bus assignment will be paused.

If your student is eligible for a yellow bus, but you do not plan to have them ride the bus, please let us know by emailing schoolbus@bostonpublicschools.org or by submitting a “Request to Opt Out of Transportation” form on our Support Portal. If your student was opted out of yellow bus transportation previously, but you want your child to ride the bus next year, you need to submit a reinstatement form. For more details, please review the Ridership Procedure page on [our website](#).

For more information about Transportation Services including Frequently Asked Questions and Answers visit bostonpublicschools.org/transportation.

5. BPS Policies

5.1. Student Safety and Emergencies

Nothing is more important to us than keeping our students safe. Here are some of our policies to protect your children.

Lost and Missing Children

Very rarely, a child may leave home in the morning but not arrive at school or may leave school but not return home. If your child is lost or missing, call the school first. If no one answers, call “911.” Also, call School Safety Services, 617-635-8000. School Safety officers will work with the Boston Police (and the BPS Transportation Department if your child receives transportation service) and will keep you informed until your child is found.

CORI/SORI Checks For School Volunteers

All school volunteers and chaperones on field trips must undergo a CORI/SORI check before participating. CORI is Criminal Offender Record Information. SORI is Sex Offender Record Information.

Release of Students to Adults Other than the Parent

Schools will not allow anyone other than a child’s custodial parents/caregivers to take the child away from school. If you want a relative, friend, or care provider to pick up your child at school, you must give written permission or call the school. If you call, the principal must verify that it was the parent/caregiver making the call. The individual must show identification before the school will release the student.

If you want to have a private transportation service take your child to or from school, you must fill out and sign a form, “Parent Permission to Release Students to Authorized Persons.” You can get it from the school office or on the BPS website. The BPS is not responsible for accidents or injuries to students who use non-BPS transportation.

When a Child Is Not Picked Up at School

The school principal or a responsible staff person knows which students take the bus, which students are allowed to walk home by themselves, and which students are picked up regularly by a parent or another adult.

The principal is responsible for making sure all children arrive home safely. When a child is not picked up at school, the principal will try to reach the parent or emergency contact person. After 5:00 pm, BPS staff may contact the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families (DCF) to take custody of the child.

When a student is repeatedly not picked up at school, the principal will file a 51A (see “Child Abuse and Neglect” below).

Child Abuse and Neglect

If school staff suspects that a student is being abused or neglected, they are required by law (M.G.L. Chapter 119, Section 51A) and BPS policy to report it to the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families (DCF). The BPS policy also gives procedures for how schools will respond to reports of child abuse or neglect, including cooperating with DCF investigations.

Safety Transfers

It is sometimes necessary to change a student’s school assignment to ensure a safe and secure learning environment for that student.

- Students who are victims of a serious physical, emotional, and/or electronically transmitted assault or who are victims of a violent criminal offense while on school property, on school buses, or at school-sponsored activities are eligible for a safety transfer to another school.
- Students attending a school designated as “unsafe or persistently dangerous” by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may transfer to a safe school. At the time this guide was updated, no Boston public school had this designation.

To request a safety transfer, the parent/caregiver must complete and sign the “Safety Transfer Request Form” and submit it to the head of school, principal, or program director for review and recommendation. Contact the head of school or principal for more information.

School Access Control

The safety, health, and wellness of our students, staff, and families is our highest priority at BPS. In compliance with Superintendent Circular SAF-12, School Access Control, each school in the district must complete and submit an updated School Safety Contingency Plan annually. The plan should ensure that a clear and comprehensive school access control protocol is in place for the building.

Student Searches

Under federal law, school staff may search a student if they suspect the student possesses evidence that shows either a violation of law or a violation of school rules. In order to reasonably suspect something, school officials must have enough facts to establish that the suspicion is likely to be true.

In determining whether and how to conduct a student search, school officials must use common sense and good judgment. They should consider such factors as the danger posed by the object being sought, the likelihood of the evidence being disposed of or destroyed, and the student's age, sex, and prior disciplinary record.

Student searches must follow these and other guidelines:

- Only administrators authorized under the Code of Conduct to suspend students from school should conduct student searches;
- If the school administrator believes that a student may possess a firearm, weapon, dangerous object, or drugs, or otherwise fears that a search would jeopardize his or her safety, the administrator should notify the BPS Student Safety Services (617-635-8000) and the Boston Police Department. A police officer must be present during the search;
- Authorized staff should search only students of the same sex; and
- The search normally should be limited to those areas and objects that could reasonably be expected to contain the item(s) being sought, such as a locker, jacket pockets, or backpack.

Some schools use metal detectors as part of their overall safety plan. The school community, School Site Council, and principal/head of school decide together if the school will use metal detectors. The policy must be in writing and must be reviewed by the BPS Office of the Legal Advisor.

More Information:

- **Student searches:** [Superintendent's Circular SAF-01](#)
- **Metal detectors:** [Superintendent's Circular SAF-07](#)
- **School Access Control:** [Superintendent's Circular SAF-12](#)

Whole-School or Community Emergencies

Each school has a plan for action in case of a disaster or community emergency. The school's safety contingency plan is tailored for the individual characteristics of that school. It is important for parents/caregivers and guardians to be aware that there is a plan for each of their children's schools, particularly the plan for reuniting parents/caregivers with their children if the school has to be evacuated.

"Safe Mode"

Occasionally, with the cooperation of the Boston Police Department, we ask schools to increase their level of security because of a possible disturbance that is external to the building (e.g., in the surrounding neighborhood) or internal, such as a medical issue happening in the hallway. This proactive measure is called "Safe Mode" and keeps the perimeter of our building secure.

When this happens, it simply means that visitors are not allowed into the building, students and staff are not allowed to leave, and existing security measures are reinforced. Teaching and learning may continue in classrooms (depending on the disturbance) when these extra security measures are activated, listening for further instruction. We want to assure our BPS families that the safety of our students and staff is our highest priority at all times. To ensure that everyone in the school is familiar with the procedure, each school is required to practice two drills annually. If you have any questions about these procedures, please contact the principal or head of school of your child's school.

If there is an emergency call 911 and/or one of these BPS numbers:

- Safety Services and Emergency Management: 617-635-8000; and
- Transportation: 617-635-9520

Office of Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) team was established in September 2023 to assist the district with safety, security, and emergency preparedness. In collaboration with district operations, OEM supports the district with safety and risk analysis, weather briefings and safety tips/training for the school community. These are lifelong lessons that families can take with them long after their time at BPS. The OEM team supports the district to prepare for, mitigate, respond to, and recover from critical incidents.

Keep Your Child's Emergency Information Up to Date

Be sure the school has current information

- Parent/caregiver's home, work, and cell phone numbers;
- Email address;
- The best number for you to receive automated phone calls (see page 7);
- Current address;
- An emergency contact person with current phone number and address (if the parent cannot be reached);
- Health insurance information;
- Call the school right away if there are any changes.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

BPS will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including bullying in all forms and types towards others in any school or at school-related activities. BPS will promptly investigate all reports and complaints of bullying and take prompt, effective action to end that behavior and prevent its recurrence.

Students and parents/caregivers who are concerned or want to report bullying may confidentially talk to a trusted staff member or call the Safe Space and Bullying Prevention Hotline 617-592-2378. Additional resources and support can be found at www.succeedboston.org and [Superintendent's Circular SSS-18](#).

5.2. Non-Discrimination and Civil Rights

Equal educational opportunity and non-discrimination laws protect the rights of students to participate in all activities pertaining to their education. The district's Non-Discrimination Policy statement provides:

"The Boston Public Schools... does not discriminate in its programs, facilities, or employment or educational opportunities on the basis of race, color, age, criminal record (inquiries only), disability, pregnancy, homelessness, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, genetics or military status, and does not tolerate any form of retaliation, or bias-based intimidation, threat or harassment that demeans individuals' dignity or interferes with their ability to learn or work."

Below you will find a brief description of various anti-discrimination policies ("Circulars") of Boston Public Schools. For a complete copy of any of these policies, visit bostonpublicschools.org/suptcirculars.

If you believe you or your child have experienced bias based on ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation, or membership in any of the protected groups listed above or any form of sexual misconduct, or if you have questions regarding the district's non-discrimination policies, please contact the BPS Office of Civil Rights at 617-635-9650 or ocr@bostonpublicschools.org.

Students and staff who violate any of the district's non-discrimination policies may be subject to discipline, up to and including expulsion (for students) or dismissal (for staff).

Non-Discrimination Statement ([Superintendent's Circular EQT-1](#)):

Boston Public Schools is committed to maintaining an educational environment and workplace where individuals of all backgrounds and experiences are welcomed, encouraged, included, and can flourish. BPS is resolved that prejudice and disparate treatment will never impede our learners or our educators. BPS will not tolerate discriminatory behavior, including intimidation, threats, or harassment of employees, students, or anyone else who visits or is part of our learning community. Retaliatory conduct toward persons who have reported possible bias, discrimination, or

inappropriate behavior, who have assisted in an investigation, or who have otherwise exercised their rights under this policy is prohibited.

Discrimination/Harassment of Students or Employees

(Superintendent's Circular [EQT-2](#) and [EQT-5](#))

This policy prohibits discrimination or harassment of students or staff, including treating students or staff differently, using insulting language or actions that create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment, or refusing to let a student participate in an activity because of their membership in a protected class. This circular addresses how to file complaints regarding alleged discrimination or harassment based on race, color, age, disability, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, retaliation, sexual orientation, genetics, natural or protective hairstyle, military status, or homelessness, immigration status and English language proficiency.

Sexual Misconduct Policy (Superintendent's Circular [EQT-3](#) and [EQT-6](#))

These policies state that sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, will not be tolerated, whether committed by staff, students, or third parties, and retaliation against a person who reports sexual misconduct or cooperates in an investigation also will not be tolerated. Sexual misconduct in any form will not be tolerated on school grounds, at school-sponsored events or activities, or while traveling to and from school or school-sponsored activities. These policies also set forth procedures for students to report a sexual assault.

Title IX Grievance Procedures

This policy contains the grievance process that BPS uses to respond to information suggesting that sexual harassment covered by the regulations implementing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which can be found at 34 C.F.R. § 106.1 et seq., is, has been, or may be occurring in a district education program or activity and against a BPS student in the United States. Complainants (alleged victims) and respondents (alleged perpetrators) will be treated equitably throughout the grievance process. The district's Title IX Coordinator can be reached at TitleIX@bostonpublicschools.org.

Non-Discrimination Against Students on the Basis of Gender Identity ([Superintendent's Circular EQT-4](#))

Massachusetts law and BPS require that all classrooms, programs, activities, and employment practices be free from discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This circular sets out guidelines for schools and district staff to create a culture where transgender and gender-nonconforming students feel safe, supported, and fully included and to meet each school's obligation to provide educational opportunities for all students.

Non-Discrimination Against Students with Disabilities

BPS is committed to a policy of non-discrimination against qualified students with disabilities. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, students with a disability may not be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance based solely on their disability.

Hazing Law ([Superintendent's Circular LGL-01](#))

Massachusetts law makes it a crime to engage in hazing activities. Hazing refers to any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. The BPS policy on hazing includes a discussion of a person's legal obligation to report to law enforcement authorities if he or she knows that someone is a hazing victim or is at the scene of such a crime.

For more information contact the Office of Civil Rights at 617-635-9650 or email ocr@bostonpublicschools.org.

5.3. Residency Requirement for Students

Only students who live in the City of Boston may register for, and attend, Boston Public Schools per BPS policy and consistent with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 76, Section 5. The residence of a student under age 18 is the legal residence of the parent(s) or guardian(s) who have physical custody of the child. A student age 18 or older may establish a residence separate from his or her parents/caregivers or guardians for school attendance purposes.

“Residence” is the place where a person lives permanently. Temporary residence in the City of Boston, solely for the purpose of attending a Boston public school, is not considered “residency.”

This residency policy does not apply to students experiencing homelessness. For questions, please call the Office of Legal Advisor, 617-635-9321

Proof of City of Boston Residency

In order to register for admission to any Boston public school, the student’s parent or legal guardian must provide two proofs of residency in the City of Boston from the list below. Documents must be pre-printed with the name and current address of the student’s parent/caregiver (or the student if 18 years of age or older). Legal guardianship requires additional documentation from a court or approved agency.

All names on required documents must be the same. If different, please provide legal documentation showing a name change.

The two items may not be from the same bullet.

- A utility bill (not water or cell phone) dated within the past 60 days;
- A current lease, Section 8 agreement, or BPS Landlord Affidavit (available at bostonpublicschools.org/register) dated within a year;
- A deed, mortgage payment statement dated within the past 60 days, or property tax bill dated within the past year;
- A W2 form dated within the year, or a payroll stub dated within the past 60 days;
- A bank or credit card statement dated within the past 60 days;

- A letter from an approved government agency¹ dated within the past 60 days.

Approved government agencies: Departments of Revenue (DOR), Children and Family Services (DCF), Transitional Assistance (DTA), Youth Services (DYS), Social Security, any communications on Commonwealth of Massachusetts letterhead.

Residency for Exam School Applicants

For special rules about residency for students applying to the city's three exam schools—Boston Latin Academy, Boston Latin School, and John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science— visit bostonpublicschools.org/academics/exam-schools.

Declaration of Boston Residency

Custodial parents/caregivers and legal guardians of BPS students, and students age 18 and older, must sign a statement, under the pains and penalties of perjury, stating they are legal residents of the City of Boston. They also must agree to notify BPS if they move during the school year. If a student moves out of Boston during the school year:

- High school students may stay in their current BPS school if they move after the start of grade 12;
- Students in kindergarten–grade 11 who move out of Boston on or before March 31 will be discharged immediately;
- Students in kindergarten–grade 11 who move out of Boston after March 30 may complete the school year in their current school. They will be discharged from the BPS at the end of the school year; and
- BPS does not provide transportation to students who live outside Boston.

Enforcement of the Residency Requirement

When the school department suspects that a family of a current BPS student resides outside of Boston, an investigation will take place. BPS may suspect a student is not a resident if, for example, mail is returned due to an invalid address, the proofs of address submitted by the parent are

¹ Approved Government Agencies: Department of Revenue (DOR), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Youth Services (DYS) or Social Security. Some communications on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Letterhead may also apply.

inconsistent or suspicious, or a tip is received from school administration or an anonymous caller.

In addition to investigations of families suspected of non-residency, the residency investigator will conduct a limited number of residency checks of students selected at random from the exam schools and from non-exam schools. The residency investigator will also work with other outside agencies to obtain information relative to the residency of the student(s). Occasional MBTA checks may be done for students suspected of living outside the city and commuting to school.

- Residency Tip Line: 617-635-9609;
- Call to leave anonymous tips about students attending BPS who do not reside in the City of Boston.

What happens to students who violate the Residency Policy?

Students found to be in violation of the Residency Policy will be dismissed pending notification from BPS. In addition to dismissal from school, BPS will impose a fine based on the cost of educational and related services received and may impose additional penalties on the family, such as legal action and the withholding of certain scholarships and prizes.

The parent/caregiver of a student dismissed for non-residency may appeal the decision. The student may be allowed to remain in school during the appeal process.

5.4. School Transfers and Other Special Situations

Voluntary Transfer Requests

A parent or student aged 18 and older may request an assignment to a different school. Voluntary transfers—those that are not for change of address, safety, programmatic, or disciplinary reasons—can be requested during the following dates:

- Grades K0 - K2: until the end of January 2026
- Grades 1 - 12: until the end of November 2025

*Waitlists expire after these dates as well.

**To request a voluntary transfer, visit any BPS Welcome Center.

Safety Transfers

It is sometimes necessary to assign a student to a different school to ensure a safe learning environment for that student. Safety transfers are initiated through a student's school.

Long-term Suspension and Expulsion

BPS may assign elementary school students to another school for disciplinary reasons. Middle and high school grade students will be assigned only to alternative programs.

Change of Address

If a student moves and their current school is one of their home-based choices based on the new address, they can remain in their current school, but their eligibility for yellow bus transportation may be affected. Students who move and whose current school is not in their home base may have to change schools. However, the student may continue to attend their school, through its highest grade, if the parent agrees in writing to provide transportation to the school. If the family requests a transfer due to a new address, we will try to assign siblings to the same school if seats are available.

Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students whose families become homeless have the right to stay in the school they last attended or to go to school in the new area or town where they live temporarily. BPS also has a program dedicated to providing resources and support for students experiencing homelessness. For more information, call the BPS Homeless Education Resource Network (HERN) at 617-635-8037.

Over-Age Students

Students ages 20-21 will be referred to the BPS Re-Engagement Center to discuss enrollment options. This includes current students as well as new students and those who are re-enrolling in the BPS. However, heads of school may allow some students to remain in the current high school.

Students also have the right to appeal the heads of school's decision to refer them to the Re-Engagement Center by contacting the Welcome Services Department at 617-635-9046.

5.5. Communications Policy

BPS, the Boston School Committee, the superintendent, and all central and school-based staff have a responsibility to communicate accurately and in a timely manner with families, students, colleagues, partners, and the community. Ongoing communication is essential to developing and sustaining effective home/school/community partnerships for improving student achievement.

The Boston School Committee affirms these principles:

- Families and citizens have a right to know what is happening in their public schools;
- All BPS employees have an obligation to ensure that the public is kept systematically and adequately informed;
- BPS staff and families benefit from improved sharing of information—positive and negative;
- Written and verbal communication from schools and employees should reflect the BPS commitment to supporting all children and families, focusing on student achievement through high-quality teaching and learning;
- Effective communication must be two-way: schools and the central office must find ways to listen to and garner input from families, students, and the community and respond in clear, concise language;
- All communications must reflect and be sensitive to the diversity of BPS families and staff and be free of bias concerning race, ethnicity, language, education, income, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability;
- BPS provides translation and interpretation services. Language assistance services are available for free. Contact your child's school for assistance. Communications shared with families should be provided in the parent's/ guardian's preferred language; and
- All media requests and inquiries concerning BPS staff, schools, and programs should be sent to the Communications Office.

More Information about the Communications Policy refer to bostonpublicschools.org/SuptCirculars, Policies & Procedure: Superintendent's Circulars, then click the Communications category.

5.6. Using Technology in School

BPS provides many technology resources for use by students and staff. These resources are to be used only for educational purposes. The BPS Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines responsible use and prohibited activities when using all technology, including networks, electronic devices, and online resources. The policy was developed with input from BPS administrators, teachers, students, parents/caregivers, community partners, school police, and the BPS legal advisor. It applies to all users of the BPS network, including staff, students, and guests.

Every student is expected to follow all of the rules and conditions listed below, as well as those given verbally by BPS teachers and administrators, and to demonstrate good citizenship and ethical behavior at all times.

Acceptable Use Policy for Technology, Including the Internet: **Student Responsible Use**

- I am responsible for my computer account and email account. I understand that passwords are private and that I should not share my password with anyone. I understand that I am responsible for all activities done through my account. I will not allow others to use my account name and password or try to use that of others. I understand that I will be in violation of the law if I attempt to electronically capture another person's password. I understand that it is important to log off the computer at the end of every session so another user cannot use my password;
- I am responsible for my language. I will use appropriate language in my email messages, online postings, and other digital communications. I will not use profanity, vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language as determined by school administrators;
- I am responsible for how I treat other people. I will use email and other means of communication responsibly (e.g., blogs, wikis, chat, instant messaging, discussion boards, etc.). I will not send or post hate or harassing mail, make discriminatory or derogatory remarks about others, or engage in bullying, harassment, or other antisocial behaviors while in school or out of school;
- I am responsible for my use of the BPS network. I will use BPS technology resources responsibly. I will not search, retrieve, save, circulate, or display hate-based, offensive or sexually explicit material. I will not search, retrieve, save or circulate images or information about weapons using

any BPS technology resources unless authorized by the school administrator/teacher as part of a school assignment;

- I am responsible for my conduct on all online sites. I understand that what I do on social networking websites should not negatively impact the school learning environment and/or my fellow students, teachers, and administrators;
- I am responsible for being honest while I am online. I understand that masquerading, spoofing, or pretending to be someone else is forbidden. This includes, but is not limited to, sending out emails, creating accounts, or posting messages or other online content (e.g., text, images, audio, or video) in someone else's name;
- I am responsible for protecting the security of the BPS network. I will not attempt to bypass security settings or Internet filters or interfere with the operation of the network by installing illegal software, including file sharing, shareware, or freeware, on school computers;
- I am responsible for protecting school property. I understand that vandalism is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to accessing, modifying, or destroying equipment, programs, files, or settings on any computer or technology resource;
- I understand that I need authorization from a school administrator/teacher to use personal electronic devices that I bring to school, including but not limited to memory storage devices (i.e., USB drives);
- I am responsible for respecting other people's property online. I will obey copyright laws. I will not plagiarize or use others' work without proper citation and permission. I will not illegally download materials protected by copyright, including but not limited to music and movies;
- I am responsible for following school rules whenever I publish anything online. I will follow all guidelines set forth by the BPS and/or my teachers when publishing schoolwork online (e.g., to a website, blog, wiki, discussion board, podcasting, or video server); and
- I understand that it is unsafe to post any personal information about myself, including but not limited to: my name, address, phone number, or school. I will not post photos of students with their first and last names on any online site, including but not limited to websites, social networks, blogs, wikis, and discussion forums, without the permission of the parent/caregiver or student (age 18 and older).

For more information visit bostonpublicschools.org/technology.

5.7. Expectant and Parenting Student Policy

[Superintendent Circular EQT-08](#) details the BPS policy and practices to support students who are expecting and parenting so they can stay in their school and accomplish their academic goals. We use the inclusive term “expecting” because the policy applies to students, regardless of gender identity, who are either pregnant or have gotten someone pregnant. As part of this policy, all schools with grades 6 - 12 must appoint a liaison for the Expectant and Parenting Student Policy who is responsible for communicating about the policy within the school community.

5.8. Student Engagement and Governance

Every Boston public middle and high school must have a written student engagement plan documenting opportunities for students to assume leadership roles within classrooms and the broader school community, as stated in the BPS Seven Essentials of Whole School Improvement. The student engagement policy should be part of each school’s Family Engagement Plan. As part of this policy, each high school must also have a functioning and engaged student government. Middle school grades are encouraged to have a student government. Student leaders in this body will represent their peers by serving as advisors, researchers, and participants in the decision-making process at the school and district levels. Student government serves to engage students in learning about democracy and leadership.

See student the [Government Circular FAM-3](#) for more details about the procedures and make-up of a student government.

Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)

BSAC is a citywide body of student leaders representing their respective high schools. BSAC is the primary vehicle for youth engagement in the BPS and serves as the voice of students to the Boston School Committee. BSAC representatives offer perspectives on school reform efforts and inform their respective schools about relevant citywide school issues. BSAC also ensures that students are included in decision and policy making that impacts their lives and educational experiences. See [Superintendent’s Circular FAM-06](#). For more information email bsac@bostonpublicschools.org.

5.9. Graduation Ceremonies

Graduation from high school is a very important and special occasion. All BPS high schools honor their graduates with formal ceremonies during which they present diplomas, scholarships, and other recognitions. Only those students who have met the Massachusetts Competency Determination (CD) and Boston Public School's Mass Core requirements may participate in high school graduation exercises and receive a diploma. The CD requirement includes coursework in ELA, Mathematics, Science and History (Class of 2027). The Mass Core requirement is 22 credits across all subject areas with an exemption for students in standalone Alternative Education programs. Only those students who have met the all BPS high school promotion requirements and met the state's CD requirements for ELA, math, and science & technology/engineering may participate in high school graduation exercises and receive a diploma. Students who have not met graduation requirements may not "walk across the stage" to receive a blank piece of paper in place of a diploma.

Exceptions: There are only three exceptions to this policy:

- Students who have completed two years in a technical vocational program at Madison Park and who have earned a Certificate of Competence may participate in graduation ceremonies;
- Special Education students with significant disabilities who are 22 years old and exiting high school based on their age are permitted to participate; and
- Per G.L. c. 71B, §16, a school age child with a disability who is completing the twelfth grade but who has not yet earned the competency determination for high school graduation, shall be allowed to choose to participate fully in high school graduation ceremonies and activities conducted or sponsored by the school or school committee even though the student will not receive a diploma during the ceremony if:
 - Student has met BPS attendance requirements;
 - Student has met the [Massachusetts graduation requirements and related guidance](#); and
 - Student has completed the grade 12 year in good standing as defined in the IEP and has met all of the school's or school committee's nonacademic standards for students to be eligible to participate in graduation ceremonies and related school activities.

Many schools hold end-of-year assemblies to recognize students who are promoted from kindergarten, grade 5, and grade 8. However, these celebrations are not graduations. Schools are discouraged from calling them graduations, presenting “diplomas,” and having students wear caps and gowns.

All students except graduating high school seniors are expected to attend school through the last (180th) day—even if the end-of-year ceremony takes place before the last day of school—and will be marked “absent” if they do not attend.

5.10. Athletics

There are many opportunities for BPS middle school and high school students to participate in athletics. The department offers interscholastic, middle level, Special Olympics and unified athletic teams during the fall, winter and spring seasons. As a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), BPS Athletics and its athletic programs must comply with all MIAA rules. To participate, every student-athlete must successfully pass a physical examination within 13 months before the start of each sports season, have a signed parental consent form, and maintain a qualifying grade point average and attendance rate.

Massachusetts law requires all student-athletes and their parents/caregivers, as well as coaches, athletic directors, school nurses, and physicians, to learn about the consequences of head injuries and concussions through training programs and written materials. Parent volunteers and parents/caregivers of students who participate in any extracurricular athletic activity will receive more information from their school. The text of the law can be found at: malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section222.

More information on BPS athletics is available at schools and by contacting the Athletics Department directly. For more information email athletics@bostonpublicschools.org or call 617-635-8143

5.11. Personal Property

It is upsetting for students and school staff when valuable personal items, such as jewelry, toys, or electronics, are lost or stolen at school. We strongly encourage families to be sure that children do not bring valuable items to school. If such items cause disruption, the School-Based Rules may allow staff to take the property away from the student while at school. The School-Based Rules also may state that certain items should not be brought to school in the first place.

We make every effort to return all personal property to the student or parent, provided it is not against the law, or on the BPS list of prohibited contraband. However, we cannot be responsible for replacing lost or stolen property or compensating the family for the value of that property.

5.12. School Cancellations

On occasion, the BPS may need to close school because of bad weather or an emergency situation. We communicate cancellation information in these ways:

- Automated telephone calls to students' homes;
- Major radio and television stations, beginning at 5:30 a.m.;
- ParentSquare app;
- Mayor's Hotline: 311;
- BPS Central Office 617-635-9000;
- BPS website bostonpublicschools.org;
- BPS Bluesky (@bostonschools.boston.gov);
- BPS Facebook (@bostonschools);
- BPS Instagram (@bostonschools);
- BPS LinkedIn (@boston-public-schools);
- BPS Twitter (@bostonschools);
- City of Boston website cityofboston.gov/snow: Sign up to be notified of snow emergencies, parking bans, and school cancellations by phone or email.

Whatever our decision regarding school opening, the parent should make the final decision on whether it is safe for their child to go to school. If a parent decides to keep a child home because of weather conditions or

safety concerns, the absence will be excused when the parent sends a note. If schools are closed: The day will be made up at the end of the school year.

If bad weather develops during the school day, dismissal will be at the regular time.

When school is canceled, all after-school programs in BPS, BPS athletic events, and evening classes and events are also canceled.

By state law, the school year for students must be 180 days. Under the Boston Teachers Union contract, the last day of school must be no later than June 30. If necessary, we will adjust the BPS calendar to comply with these requirements and you will receive information from your child's school.

5.13. Tobacco-free Environment Policy

The possession, use, and display of all tobacco and nicotine products and equipment, including electronic vaping devices, are prohibited on school property and within 50 feet of school property at all times, and also at all school-sponsored, off-campus activities. "School property" includes school buildings, offices, warehouses, athletic fields, school buses and vehicles, parking lots, sidewalks/walkways, and any other property under BPS jurisdiction. This policy applies to all individuals, including school staff and visitors. Violators may be subject to a fine. Students who violate the policy will be subject to discipline as outlined in the Code of Conduct and/or school handbook. See [Superintendent's Circular HWD-06](#) for the complete policy.

Care of Books and Other Materials

Our schools supply students with the textbooks and other materials they need for school, free of charge. Textbooks and library books are owned by the BPS. Most textbooks now in use in our schools are in good condition. New books are purchased each year as needed. Students are expected to return them in good condition. All textbooks that are taken home by students should be covered. If a student damages or loses a book or other school property, the student or parent may have to pay for a replacement. Families should be aware that many textbooks are very expensive.

School Uniforms

BPS does not have a districtwide school uniform. However, it does have a School Uniform Policy. Under the policy, each School Site Council must choose one of three options:

- No school uniform;
- Voluntary uniform or dress code; or
- Mandatory (required) uniform or dress code.

Even if your child's school has a mandatory uniform policy, you have the right not to participate. To do this, send a letter to the principal stating why your child is not participating. School staff must allow students who are not wearing uniforms to attend school.

Drinking Water Availability

By law, schools must make drinking water available at no cost to all students during the school day. All BPS schools offer filtered bottle refill stations or bottled water dispensers, including in the cafeteria and nurse's office. All water sources used for drinking and food preparation are tested annually. For more information about water safety and availability, contact 617-635-9162 or visit bostonpublicschools.org.

6. The Code of Conduct

The Boston Public Schools (“District” or “BPS”) deeply believes that a safe, positive, just, mutually supportive, and restorative school community fosters learning, childhood, and youth development, and reduces the need to resort to school exclusion. Addressing student conduct includes working to understand the context and systems in which the behavior manifested. The Code of Conduct is one of Boston’s continued efforts to develop, support, and improve our school community for all students.

BPS’s goal is to foster a culture and community that is anti-racist, that encourages the free exchange of ideas, that maximizes personal growth, and that develops students’ self agency while upholding their constitutional rights.

Students deserve a safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environment in which to learn. To ensure this, all Boston public schools follow the BPS Code of Conduct. A summary of the Code of Conduct follows in the next few pages of this Guide. You should receive a copy of the School-Based Rules for your child’s school along with the guide. They are both very important.

6.1. The BPS Code of Conduct

Every school must follow the BPS Code of Conduct. The code lists rules that all students are expected to follow. While School-Based Rules can vary by school, they may not conflict with the Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct emphasizes prevention and positive approaches to behavior. Every school has a multi-tiered system of support for students’ social, emotional, and behavioral needs that aim to keep students in school. School-Based Rules and the Code of Conduct apply to the behavior of students while they are in school, certain internet usage and/or social media outside of school that caused, or is likely to cause, a substantial disruption or material interference with school activities and/or school-related parties, at school-sponsored activities, and on their way to and from school (on the school bus, at the bus stop, on the MBTA, and walking).

If there are any questions or concerns about the Code of Conduct, specifically emergency removal, due process, or suspension/expulsion appeals, contact the Assistant Superintendent’s Office at 617-635-6755

6.2. School-Based Rules

Each school has its own rules for non-suspendable offenses—known as “School-Based Rules”—that its students are expected to follow. These rules may not conflict with any BPS Superintendent Circular or the BPS Code of Conduct.

School-Based Rules are written by a committee of administrators, teachers, and parents/caregivers at each school and are reviewed each spring by the School Site Council. In middle and high schools, students are also on the committee. School-Based Rules should be posted in conspicuous places within the school and the rules should be uploaded to the school’s online communication site.

6.3. Do Not Miss Out on School Privileges!

Students have the opportunity to participate in many special school functions and activities, such as field trips, celebrations, performances, class days, proms, and graduation ceremonies, among others. Participation in such activities is a privilege to be earned— not a “right.” At the start of each school year, the principal/school leader will inform all parents/guardians/caregivers of the individual school’s privileges, e.g., assemblies, use of school store, off-campus lunches, approved-tardy passes, student dress code, etc., and how they relate to the general expectations of students through their school based rules.

By violating school rules or the Code of Conduct, a student may lose these privileges. The school leader has the authority to limit or deny a student’s participation in such special functions and activities.

6.4. Denial of Transportation

Students whose actions endanger or will continue to endanger others or themselves on school-provided transportation, including the MBTA or school buses, may be denied transportation to and/or from school on a temporary basis. Removing a student from a bus will be used as a last resort to keep students safe. Students may be denied transportation only to allow BPS, the student, and the student’s parent, guardian, or caregiver to develop a Bus Safety Plan that may include but is not limited to, a seating plan.

If a parent, guardian, or caregiver is unable to provide transportation, then this removal will be counted as an out-of-school suspension, and suspension procedures must be followed.

Students with a disability may have additional protections related to transportation. (See [Superintendent's Circular SPE-15](#)).

6.5. Suspension

Short-term Suspension means a student is not allowed to attend school for a limited number of school days. Please note that students in grades K0 - 2 cannot be suspended. For students in grades 3 - 5 suspension violations are limited to:

- if the student is accused of having assaulted a classmate or staff member; or
- if the student is accused of being in possession of a dangerous weapon; or
- if the student is accused of being in possession of a controlled substance; or
- if the student is accused of sexual misconduct; or
- if the student is accused of a civil rights violation; or
- if the student is accused of repeated bullying.

Long-term Suspension

Long-term Suspension is an exclusion for more than 10 consecutive or cumulative school days. Any student who is suspended from school for more than ten consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and to make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through the school-wide education service plan. During a period of long-term suspension or expulsion, when a student's long-term suspension has ended, they may return to the same school if approved by the school leader or the parent/guardian/caretaker (or student age 18 or older).

The Suspension Process and Due Process: Note that the full suspension process and due process, including rights of the student and family, can be found in [\[Code of Conduct\]](#) and [\[Superintendent's Circular SUP-05\]](#).

Before a school leader can suspend a student, they must hold a hearing at the school and invite the student and the student's parent/guardian/caregiver. The school must provide the parent/guardian/caregiver written notice of the hearing in English and the language spoken in the home. At the hearing, the school leader reviews the evidence and considers any mitigating circumstances. They also explore alternative remedies. For short-term suspensions, the school leader makes the final decision. For long-term suspensions and expulsions, they make a recommendation to the region's operational leader. If the student and their parent/guardian/caregiver disagree with the suspension or expulsion, they can appeal the decision to the superintendent's hearing officer within 10 school days.

In some instances, a student may be subjected to an emergency removal before the hearing. This emergency removal can be imposed only when a student is alleged to have committed a suspendable offense where the student's presence poses a continuing danger to persons or property or seriously disrupts teaching and learning, and in the school leader's judgment, there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption. The student may only be removed for the remainder of the school day of the emergency removal. Before an emergency removal, the school leader must notify the parent/guardian/caregiver. The student must be afforded adequate arrangements to safely be transported home. The school shall provide the required verbal and written notice and convene the disciplinary hearing within two (2) school days.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety school days, indefinitely or permanently. Students may be expelled for possession of a dangerous weapon, possession of a controlled substance, assault on educational staff, or a felony charge or conviction if the school leader determines that the student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school.

The Expulsion Process

- In some cases, when a student commits an expellable offense, the school leader may issue an emergency removal for safety reasons;
- At the expulsion hearing, the school leader listens to witnesses evidence. The student or parent/guardian/caregiver may bring an advocate or

lawyer to the hearing. If already identified or requested, the school will provide an interpreter for parents/guardians/caregivers whose primary language is not English. The school must record the hearing and make the recording available to the parent/guardian/caregiver or student upon request;

- Following the hearing, the school leader sends the written recommendation to the appropriate operational leader for review of due process. If the determination is to expel a student, the student and parent/guardian/caregiver must be notified in writing.

Appealing a Suspension or Expulsion.

If the student and the parent/ guardian/caregiver disagree with the expulsion, they may appeal the decision to the superintendent (617-635-9057) within ten school days. The superintendent will preside over all expulsion appeals. For suspension appeals, the superintendent may designate a hearing officer.

During and After the Expulsion Period.

Any student expelled from school for more than ten consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements through the school-wide education service plan. When a student's period of expulsion has ended, the parent/ guardian/caregiver (or student age 18 or older) must go to a BPS Welcome Center and re-enroll the student in the BPS. The student will not be reassigned to the school from which he or she was expelled unless the school leader has recommended this at the time of the expulsion.

Offenses for Which Students May Be Suspended or Expelled.

A student may be expelled for up to one calendar year only for these serious offenses:

- possession of a dangerous weapon;
- possession of a controlled substance;
- assault on a member of the educational staff;
- a felony complaint or felony delinquency complaint or conviction.

A student may be suspended for these serious offenses:

- Assault on school staff;
- Sexual misconduct;
- Assault on any person;
- Assault and battery on any person causing physical injury, except in self-defense;
- Endangering the physical safety or mental/emotional health of another by the use of force or threat including technology, (includes bullying, cyberbullying, hazing);
- Setting or attempting to set a fire;
- Encouraging a physical fight by staging and/or instigating the fight, or by posting;
- Possession of Firearms, Dangerous Weapons, and Objects of No Reasonable Use;
- Bullying and cyber-bullying;
- Bias-based conduct and sexual misconduct;
- Possession and use of alcohol, tobacco, and other prohibited substances
Distribution or possession of any prescribed or non-prescribed controlled substance;
- Use of tobacco products, including but not limited to e-cigarettes, drug paraphernalia, and vaping products on school property, at school sponsored activities, or while on school-provided transportation is prohibited;
- Distribution or use of vaping products;
- Theft and vandalism;
- Damaging or stealing school or private property, including tampering with school records;
- Unacceptable use of networks, including internet platforms and electronic mail (Email);
- Presence in a part of the school building or grounds that are off-limits to students;
- Leaving the school building, and school-sponsored activities, including field trips or school campus without permission;
- Allowing any person unauthorized entry or re-entry into a school building, which includes propping doors open, with the intent to avoid school safety protocols;
- Preventing or attempting to prevent, by a physical act, the safe functioning of any part of any school;

- Intentionally causing a substantial disruption or materially interfering with the operation of the school or the teaching of other students. This includes repeated, unauthorized use of cellular phones;
- Making a bomb threat; and/or
- Pulling/reporting a false fire alarm;

NOTE: This list is meant as a guide only. Please refer to the Code of Conduct, Section 7, for a complete list of offenses and penalties.

6.6. Students with Disabilities

The Code of Conduct applies to all students. There is a specific procedure, however, for disciplining students with disabilities. You can find this procedure on the BPS website in [Superintendent's Circular SPE-15](#). Your child's school can give you a copy of this document upon request. This procedure is also included in the [Parent's Rights](#) brochure that you receive with your child's IEP.

How Parents/caregivers Can Help

As a parent, you can help your child follow the rules and help keep the school safe by:

- sharing the responsibility for the behavior of your child in school, at school-sponsored activities, and on the way to and from school;
- preparing your child to take responsibility for attending school and for his or her own behavior;
- fostering in your child positive attitudes toward himself or herself, others, the school, and the community;
- communicating with school staff about your child attending individual or group conferences;
- recognizing that school staff members have the right to enforce the policies of the Boston School Committee;
- conducting yourself in a civil and non-disruptive manner when visiting the school; and
- being sure your child brings to school only those things that are appropriate in a school setting.

6.7. Corporal Punishment

Under state law and Boston School Committee policy, school staff may not punish a student by hitting, pushing, or using physical force. School staff may use reasonable physical force to restrain a student only if (1) non-physical intervention would be ineffective or has been ineffective, and/or (2) they believe the student's actions may result in physical injury to the student or other people, (3) only if such reasonable force is necessary to protect a student or another school community member from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. The program staff member who administers the restraint shall verbally inform the principal/school leader of the restraint as soon as possible and by written report no later than the next school working day.

The school leader shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent/guardian/caregiver of the restraint within 24 hours of the event, and shall notify the parent/guardian/caregiver by written report sent either within three school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three school working days of the restraint. Any school employee who uses unreasonable force will be subject to discipline.

6.8. Where to Find the Code of Conduct

- Visit bostonpublicschools.org/code-of-conduct;
- Visit bostonstudentrights.org and download the mobile app. Developed by students, it presents the Code of Conduct in a condensed, simplified format, plus information on student rights and responsibilities and legal aid resources;
- Contact any BPS Welcome Center or the Superintendent's Office (617-635-9050 or superintendent@bostonpublicschools.org) to request a printed copy.

7. Student Records

The student record includes all information concerning a student maintained in any form by the BPS that is organized on the basis of the student's name or in a way that the student can be individually identified.

The student's transcript includes the student's name, date of birth, address, years and grades completed, and courses and grades earned. The transcript is kept for 60 years after the student leaves BPS (for example, by graduating or transferring).

All other records regarding the student are temporary records and are destroyed seven years after the student leaves the system. Students who leave BPS or their parents/caregivers, as appropriate, will receive a notice telling them approximately when BPS will destroy the temporary records. Graduating students and parents/guardians/caregiver have a right to receive the temporary record upon leaving BPS or before it is destroyed. They may request the record by contacting their current school administration or the building administrator of the school they last attended. A parent/ guardian/caregiver or student must sign a Release of Record Form for the record.

A parent of any student, or a student who has entered high school or is at least 14 years old, has the right to inspect the student record upon request. The parent or student should receive the record no later than ten days after the request and may ask to have the record interpreted by another person or amended by the principal. Call your child's school if you would like to see your child's student record. However, once the student turns 18, parents/caregivers must have written consent from the student to inspect or receive records.

Copies of BPS policies on student records and parents/caregivers' and students' rights to student records are available at each school. A parent or student may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office in the U. S. Department of Education for alleged violations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its regulations or with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

More information on student records: [Superintendent's Circular LGL-7](#) or [Massachusetts Department of Education](#)

7.1. Student Health Records

Under federal and state student record laws and regulations, student health records are subject to special confidentiality protections. Although the student health record is part of the temporary record, it does not have the same accessibility as the transcript or temporary record. Generally, only the school nurse can fully access the student's health record information in the temporary record. For information about when the law allows certain health information to be released to school staff other than the nurse without the parent's consent, see [Superintendent's Circular LGL-16](#).

7.2. Obtaining Records of Former BPS Students

Former and current BPS students can obtain a copy or an official transcript and proof of graduation by submitting a request online at bpsma.scriborder.com.

If you prefer to submit a written request, visit:

- bostonpublicschools.org/request-transcript;
- Download and complete the School Transcript Request Form;
- Mail the completed form to:

Office of Instructional & Information Technology

Attention: Christina Connors

Boston Public Schools

2300 Washington St., Roxbury, MA 02119

7.3. Records of Student Leaving the Boston Public Schools

If a student is transferring out of BPS, the receiving school or the parent/guardian/caregiver can request the student's records through our online portal: bpsma.scriborder.com. Processing can take up to 10 business days. Records may include transcripts, attendance records and special education documents (if applicable).

7.4. Release of Student Information

Usually, no individual or organization is legally allowed to have information in the student record without the written permission of the parent or eligible student. However, there are a few exceptions that allow schools to release student information without the parent's consent and sometimes with notice, as provided in this guide. Examples of exceptions include:

- Under state law, when a student transfers to a new school, the student record (including the Special Education record) may be transferred to the new school without the parent's consent, so long as the parent receives annual notification of this law;
- Release of information may be necessary to protect the health or safety of a person and may be requested by the Mass. Department of Children & Families (DCF), Department of Youth Services (DYS), a probation officer, or other law enforcement or education agencies;
- Under state or federal law, public school districts must give our directory information to various groups:
 - Under federal law, public school districts must release the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of secondary school students to U.S. military and higher education recruiters; and
 - Under Massachusetts Education Reform Law, public school districts must give charter schools the names and addresses of their students for recruiting purposes. BPS may release the following information without parent consent: student's name, age, the neighborhood of residence, and dates of attendance.
- If you do not want your student's contact information released, you have two options:
 - Fill out the appropriate section of the online form that you will receive via ParentSquare; or
 - Submit your request in writing to the school principal or head of school by written note or email by October of each school year.

Massachusetts law [M.G.L. C.71, section 34H and 603 CMR 23.07 (5) (a)] describes the procedures by which public schools provide student record information to non-custodial parents/caregivers. For information go to doe.mass.edu.

8. Boston Public Schools (BPS) Offices

Office/Department/Location	Phone #
MAIN NUMBER	617-635-9000
Adult Education and Evening High School	617-635-9300
Office of Family and Community Advancement	617-635-9661
Alternative Education	617-635-8035
Behavioral Health Services	617-635-9676
Communications Office	617-635-9265
Countdown to Kindergarten	617-635-9288
Data and Accountability (testing)	617-635-9450
Early Childhood Education	617-635-9063
Employment Permits, Students	617-635-8873
Office of Multilingual and Multicultural Education (O)	617-635-9435
District EL Advisory Committee (DELAC)	617-635-9435
Office of Civil Rights	617-635-9650
Exam Schools	617-635-9512
Family Literacy Center	617-635-9300
Food and Nutrition Services	617-635-9144
Grants and External Funding	617-635-9577
School Counseling Services	617-635-8030
Health and Wellness	617-635-6643
Hearings and Appeals (disciplinary issues)	617-635-7773
Helpline	617-635-8873
High School Support	617-635-9289
Home and Hospital Tutoring	617-635-6633
Homeless Students	617-635-8037
Office of Human Resources	617-635-9600

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Table (continued)

Office/Department/Location	Phone #
Instructional and Information Technology (OIIT)	617-635-9199
Newcomers Assessment and Counseling Center (language testing)	617-635-1565
Parent University	617-635-7750
Re-engagement Center	617-635-2273
Safety Services	617-635-8000
School Committee	617-635-9014
School Health Services	617-635-6788
Office of Specialized Services	617-635-8599
Special Education Parent Advisory Council	617-297-7335
Student Records (transcripts)	617-635-9180
Succeed Boston	617-635-8123
Summer School	617-635-9414
Superintendent's Office	617-635-9050
Transportation	617-635-9520
Welcome Services (Registration and Assignment)	617-635-9046

9. BPS Welcome Centers

bostonpublicschools.org/welcomecenters

BPS Welcome Centers offer many services for families, including:

- advice about your school choices and BPS policies;
- registering students for school;
- applying for transfers to other schools;
- filling out a change-of-address form if you move;
- providing information (in many languages) about schools, summer programs, and health and human services resources available to Boston families

Dorchester 617-635-8015 Campbell Resource Center 1216 Dorchester Ave.	Roslindale 617-635-8040 Jennie Barron Building 515 Hyde Park Ave.
Roxbury 617-635-9010 Bolling Municipal Building 2300 Washington St., 2nd Fl.	East Boston 617-635-9597 Mario Umana Academy 312 Border St.

Hours of Service

School Year: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri) and Noon–5 p.m. (Wed)

July: Only the Roxbury Welcome Center is open.

9:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday (closed Friday)

Closed: Federal, state, and city holidays

PLEASE NOTE: Parents/caregivers/guardians must produce identification for ALL transactions at the Welcome Centers

Back-to-School & School Registration Hotline

617-635-9046

August-September and January

Monday-Friday: 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Safe Space & Bullying Prevention and Intervention Hotline

617-592-2378 (call or text)

For students and parents/guardians/caregivers to report bullying or safety concerns at school, out of school, online, and via electronic devices.

Staffed 24/7 by trained counselors.

Residency Tip Line 617-635-9609

Leave anonymous tips about students attending the

Boston Public Schools who do not live in the City of Boston.

Additional Services

- Boston: City Services: 9 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or boston.gov
- Mayor's 24-Hour Line: 311 or 617-635-4000
- Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF): 617-635-4920
- Mayor's Health Line: 1-800-847-0710
- Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (multilingual): 617-635-2980
- Mayor's Youthline: 617-635-2240
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) doe.mass.edu or 781-338-3000
- Charter School Information: 781-338-3227

10. Parent Groups Information

10.1. School Parent Council (SPC, [Superintendent Circular FAM-01](#))

- Every school must have a School Parent Council (SPC). All parents/caregivers who have children at that school are members. Only parents/caregivers can be members;
- The SPC is where parents/caregivers can express their concerns, advocate for the school, and plan school activities and events;
- The SPC elects its executive committee at a meeting held each year in the fall, not later than October 15. At that meeting, it also elects parents/caregivers to serve on the School Site Council;
- SPC officers meet regularly with the principal to discuss school-wide issues;
- Collaborate with school staff to create a welcoming school climate for all students and families;
- Raise funds to support school-based initiatives, activities, and events.

10.2. School Site Council (SSC [Superintendent Circular FAM-02](#))

- Every school must have a School Site Council or Governing Board;
- The role of the School Site Council is to engage parents/caregivers and teachers to serve with the principal/head of school as the central decision-making body of the school;
- The School Site Council consists of parent representatives, teachers, the principal, and associate members. High school councils also have two student members. The number of parents/caregivers must equal the number of professional educators (including the principal/head of school);
- Parent representatives on the School Site Council are elected at the annual School Parent Council (SPC) election meeting. This meeting must be held by October 15;
- The School Site Council:
 - reviews and approves the Quality School Plan;
 - reviews and comments on the entire school budget and rates on the discretionary budget;

- develops and supports plans to increase parent engagement;
- approves waivers to BPS rules and union contracts;
- reviews and approves all recommendations that will have a significant impact on the school community; and
- oversees all school-based committees.
- The parent representatives on the School Site Council must report back to the SPC;
- School Site Council meetings are public meetings, open to all.

10.3. Parent University

Parent University is a family engagement initiative committed to empowering parents and caregivers as their children’s first teachers, strongest advocates, and most essential partners in education.

Our mission is to equip families with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to support student success—at home, in school, and in the community. By partnering with schools and district leaders, we help ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education.

What We Offer: Parent University provides free, high-quality courses and workshops in four key areas:

- **Parents as Teachers:** Learn how children grow and develop, and explore the teaching and learning methods used in BPS;
- **Parents as Advocates:** Understand academic standards and expectations, and discover how to effectively support your child’s learning journey and advocate for their needs;
- **Parents as Leaders:** Build leadership skills to engage meaningfully in school and district-level governance and decision-making structures; and
- **Parents as Lifelong Learners:** Work toward your own personal or professional goals with support from Parent University and our network of community partners.

In addition to our core areas, we offer a variety of practical and skill-building classes, including:

- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math);
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- Computer Literacy; and
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).

Whether you're supporting your child's academic growth or pursuing your own development, Parent University is here to support every step of the journey.

For More Information, please visit bostonpublicschools.org/parentuniversity or call/email at 617-635-7750/parentuniversity@bostonpublicschools.org.

10.4. DELAC

District Multilingual Learners Advisory Committee (DELAC) is a multiethnic, parent-led committee. We are comprised of English learners, parents/caregivers, and community members whose task is to provide recommendations to school and district officials regarding programs and services provided to English Learner students. These meetings take place bi-monthly starting in September 23, 2025. To learn more about DELAC please visit our [Boston Public School website](https://bostonpublicschools.org) or contact us via email: ellparentteam@bostonpublicschools.org.

10.5. SPEDPAC

The Boston Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpEdPAC) is a parent-led council made up of families of students with disabilities. SpEdPAC serves multiple roles, including meeting with Boston Public Schools officials to advise on specialized services and programs, while also providing families with information, resources, and support. SpEdPAC hosts monthly meetings throughout the school year—typically in the evenings on the fourth Thursday of each month—to discuss key topics, offer professional development for families, and address family inquiries. To learn more about SpEdPAC, visit the [Boston SpEdPAC website](https://bostonpublicschools.org/spedpac) or contact spedpac@bostonpublicschools.org.

Family **GUIDE**

2025 - 2026

bostonpublicschools.org