Briarcliff Middle School

Student Handbook 2026 - 2027

Dear Briarcliff Students and Family,

We are so excited to have you be a part of our school this year! We welcome you back after what I hope was a very fun and restful summer vacation. As always, it is our goal to make your time at Briarcliff an awesome time to learn, grow, and make lifelong connections. Our staff has been working very hard to plan for the upcoming school year and I hope you look forward to the exciting activities they have planned for you.

This planner serves many roles and purposes for you. It is very important for us to clearly communicate our Code of Conduct and expectations, which are identified in this planner. Please take the time to review our Student Handbook so that you are aware of what is expected. Should you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

In addition to providing you a copy of our Student Handbook, this planner can serve as an assignment pad for students to assist in staying organized. This is a great tool to also help communicate between home and school, and if used regularly, parents can know what their child is expected to complete outside of school in regards to assignments, but also school activities and events.

On behalf of the wonderful staff and myself, welcome back! I can already feel the energy in our halls as we await the start of the year. Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,
Mr. Erik Carlson
Principal

Mountain Lakes Public School District

Briarcliff Middle School

2026 - 2027 School Calendar

2026 AUGUST	26	Wednesday	First Day for Students
SEPTEMBER	4 7 21	Friday Monday Monday	Early Dismissal (12:15p) Labor Day (Closed) Yom Kippur (Closed)
OCTOBER	12	Monday	Staff In-Service (Closed)
NOVEMBER	2 4 5-6 25 26-27	Monday Wednesday Thurs. - Fri. Wednesday Thurs. - Fri.	12:15p Dismissal/Parent-Teacher Conferences 12:15p Dismissal/Parent-Teacher Conferences NJEA Convention (Closed) 12:15p Dismissal Thanksgiving Recess (Closed)
DECEMBER	23 24-31	Wednesday Thur.- Thur.	12:15p Dismissal Winter Recess (Closed)
2027 JANUARY	1 4 18	Friday Monday Monday	New Year's Day (Closed) Schools Reopen Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Closed)
FEBRUARY	15-17	Mon. - Wed.	President's Day/Mid-Winter Recess (Closed)
MARCH	8 26-31	Monday Fri.-Wed.	9:55a Delayed Opening (Staff In-Service) Good Friday/Spring Break (Closed)
APRIL	1-2	Thurs. - Fri.	Spring Break (Closed)
MAY	31	Monday	Memorial Day (Closed)
JUNE	8 9 10 11	Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday	12:15p Dismissal 12:15p Dismissal 12:15p Dismissal / BC Completion Ceremony, 6p Last Day / 12:15p Dismissal

NOTES: ***This calendar contains three (3) emergency closing days. Additional emergency closing days will be made up during Spring Recess starting with Friday, April 2, then Thursday, April 1, etc. Unused emergency closing days will be applied as follows:***

1. ***Friday, May 28 (Friday before Memorial Day).***
2. ***Tuesday, June 1 (Tuesday following Memorial Day).***
3. ***Thursday, May 27 (Thursday before Memorial Day).***

BRIARCLIFF BELL SCHEDULES: REGULAR DAY & EARLY DISMISSAL

Period	Regular Day	Early Dismissal
First Bell	7:55 a.m.	7:55 a.m.
Homeroom	8:00 a.m. – 8:05 a.m.	8:00 a.m. – 8:05 a.m.
Period 1	8:05 a.m. – 8:49 a.m.	8:05 a.m. – 8:33 a.m.
Period 2	8:49 a.m. – 9:33 a.m.	8:33 a.m. – 9:01 a.m.
Period 3	9:33 a.m. – 10:17 a.m.	9:01 a.m. – 9:29 a.m.
Period 4	10:17 a.m. – 11:01 a.m.	9:29 a.m. – 9:57 a.m.
Period 5 **(6th Gr. Lunch)**	11:01 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	9:57 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.
Period 6 **(8th Gr. Lunch)**	11:45 a.m. – 12:29 a.m.	10:25 a.m. – 10:53 a.m.
Period 7 **(7th Gr. Lunch)**	12:29 p.m. – 1:13 p.m.	10:53 a.m. – 11:21 a.m.
Period 8	1:13 p.m. – 1:57 p.m.	11:21 a.m. – 11:49 a.m.
Period 9	1:57 p.m. – 2:36 p.m.	11:49 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

The cafeteria will be closed on early dismissal days.

BRIARCLIFF DELAYED OPENING BELL SCHEDULES

Period	Delayed Opening
First Bell	9:55 a.m.
Homeroom	10:00 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.
Period 1	10:05 a.m. – 10:35 a.m.
Period 2	10:35 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.
Period 3	11:05 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.
Period 5 **(6th Gr. Lunch)**	11:35 a.m.- 12:05 p.m.
Period 6 **(8th Gr. Lunch)**	12:05 p.m. – 12:35 p.m.
Period 7 **(7th Gr. Lunch)**	12:35 p.m. – 1:05 p.m.
Period 8	1:05 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.
Period 4	1:35 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.
Period 9	2:05 p.m. – 2:36 p.m.

I. STUDENT RIGHTS & SERVICES

Statement of Non-discrimination/Affirmative Action

It is the policy of the Mountain Lakes Board of Education and Briarcliff Middle School not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, ancestry, nationality, or social or economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital, domestic-partnership, or civil union status, or any other distinguishing characteristic, in its educational programs or activities and employment policies pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to the Principal. Additionally, students have the right to attend school irrespective of pregnancy, parenthood, or marriage.

Students with Disabilities

For students with disabilities, the Code of Conduct will be implemented consistent with the student's individual education program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan.

Briarcliff Credo

BRIARCLIFF Is:
L ove of learning
A ppreciation of the arts
K nowledge of self
E mpathy for others
R espect for all

P ersonal excellence
R esponsibility to the planet
I nterpersonal skills
D edication to the community
E thical behavior

Love of Learning

I will commit myself to developing a life-long curiosity about the world in which I live, that is, the academic, the physical, the psychological, and the emotional. I will strive to enthusiastically investigate the unknown as topics, issues, and subjects that pique my interest.

Appreciation of the Arts

I will commit myself to a respect for the creative process in all its many forms: the fine arts, the performing arts, and literature. I will strive to understand the skills developed and the dedication to the refinement of the creative process.

Knowledge of Self

I will commit myself to developing an awareness of my personality and individuality and a respect for my beliefs, ambitions, likes, and dislikes. I will be aware of my strengths and strive to improve my weaknesses. I will believe in myself and not follow negative behaviors.

Personal Excellence

I will commit myself to positive behavior in thought, word, and deed. I will set goals that eliminate excuse making and avoidance of responsibility. I will strive to do my personal best in all my activities: the academic, the athletic, the social, and the cultural.

Responsibility to the Planet

I will commit myself to preserving the environmental integrity of the earth by paying attention to issues such as recycling, the protection of endangered species, and the preservation of the earth's delicate ecosystems. I will not pollute our water, land, or air.

Empathy for Others

I will commit myself to developing an understanding of and sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of others, and I will be compassionate to their needs. Before I judge another's views or values, I will figuratively "walk a mile in their shoes."

Respect for All

I will commit myself to behavior that brings dignity to all individuals. I will not tease, put down, insult or discriminate against anyone. I will respect other people's views and opinions. I will understand that there are differences in people's race, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, and culture. I will embrace their individuality, and I will act with compassion in respecting their differences.

Interpersonal Skills

I will commit myself to the development of my communication skills, both written and oral. I will strive to observe and react appropriately to the behaviors, moods, and natures of other people. I will support freedom of expression and practice civility in all my relationships.

Dedication to Community

I will commit myself to being a positive, productive member of all the communities to which I belong, for example, my family, my school, and my town. I will work toward the common good of all who share partnership in these communities with me. I will protect, preserve, and enhance the natural beauty that surrounds me.

Ethical Behavior

I will commit myself to being honest and forthright in my dealings with others both in and out of school. I will respect the rights and property of others. I will not cheat in class, in games or sports. I will not plagiarize or borrow another student's homework. I will not practice lying, deceit, or disloyalty in personal relationships.

Briarcliff Credo Developed by:
Joseph Caravela, Janet Kleinberg, Denise Lapinski, & Marge Wilkins, May 1999

Dress and Appearance

The Board of Education recognizes that each student's mode of dress and grooming is a manifestation of the student's personal choices and style. However, students **may not** wear clothing or engage in grooming practices that endangers their health or safety, or the health or safety of other students; creates disorder or disrupts the educational environment; causes excessive wear or damage to school property; is distracting to self or others, or prevents the student from achieving his/her own educational objectives.

Briarcliff prohibits students from wearing any type of clothing, apparel, or accessory that indicates the student has membership in, or affiliation with, any gang associated with criminal activities while on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored event. Apparel with biased, offensive or profane messages, alcohol, drug, tobacco, or sexual references will not be allowed. Also, wearing or possessing items depicting or implying racial hatred, stereotyping, or prejudice will not be tolerated.

The following types of clothing may not be worn at Briarcliff Middle School:

- Hats, headgear or backpacks inside the building. Exceptions will be made for medical or religious reasons. Backpacks may be used when lockers are not available or for specific reasons with approval from the Administration;
- Clothing that displays profanity, violence, discriminatory messages or sexually suggestive phrases or innuendo or clothing that promotes drugs or alcohol use;
- All shorts/pants/skirts are to be worn at the student's natural waist;
- Shorts are to be an appropriate length which is deemed appropriate by the Administration.
- All shirts that do not have a strap over the shoulder;
- Sleep wear may be worn when permission is granted by the Administration;
- Flip flop shoes (thin rollable sole, rubber thonged, beach shoe);
- Gym clothing in academic classes;
- Clothing that contains writing on the seat;
- Clothing that displays an open back or stomach;
- Clothing that exposes any inappropriate undergarments.

The dress code is meant to be a guide for appropriate dress at school and may not include specifics regarding changes in trends. Please be aware that the dress code may be modified from time to time during the school year to more clearly define

appropriate dress for school. Any student who comes to school dressed inappropriately will be asked to change his/her clothing. If a student does not have something appropriate to wear, his/her parents will be contacted to bring appropriate clothing to school. Special consideration should be made for field trips and other school-related activities. Specifically, some departments, such as physical education, science, art, and technology require specific guidelines for safety purposes. Students are expected to follow teacher directives regarding appropriate clothing/shoe attire for safety. Proper attire is always expected at school-sanctioned events. Remember, you represent yourself, your school, your family and your community.

Leaving School Grounds

Upon arrival to school grounds, students **are not permitted to leave** the school building/school grounds without permission. Students may only leave the building if they are picked up by a parent/guardian or an adult designated by a parent/guardian – unless other circumstances have been arranged and approved by the administration.

Acceptable Use of District Network Systems, Internet, & Technology

Electronic devices at Briarcliff contain access to the Internet. The Internet is an electronic highway connecting thousands of electronic devices all over the world and millions of individual people. The District has access to the following: (1) electronic mail (E-mail); (2) information and news from a variety of sources and research institutions; and (3) access to many university libraries, the Library of Congress, and more.

While it is impossible to control all materials that are accessible on the network, Briarcliff takes precautions to deny access to inappropriate materials and has identified acceptable use guidelines for those who are permitted to use the network. The District Intranet, a local area network that encompasses the electronic devices of Briarcliff, includes, but is not limited to, classroom electronic devices, lab electronic devices, servers, and media center electronic devices. Students are only allowed access to programs and applications published for educational purposes - unless permission is expressly given by an administrator – and in a manner that is not inconsistent with the educational mission of Briarcliff. A smooth operation of the network relies upon strict adherence to the acceptable usage guidelines. In general, these guidelines require efficient, ethical, and legal use of network resources by students.

School electronic devices, like any other school property, are never to be altered – including the addition or deletion of software – without the explicit authorization of a

systems administrator employed by the District. Tampering with systems, including attempts to gain unauthorized access may provide grounds for suspension or expulsion from school.

Any student that accesses the Internet through the District network must adhere to the guidelines provided for in the Board's Acceptable Use Of The Internet as set forth in the Board Policy 6142.10. If a student violates the following policies or otherwise misuses the District's network, he or she may lose Internet and Intranet access privileges. The student will also be subject to appropriate school discipline. If the activity is contrary to existing statutes and regulations that are prohibited by law, the student may be subject to criminal prosecution. Please see the school's homepage for a copy of the District's full Acceptable Use Policy.

1. Acceptable Use of Internet/Intranet – The purpose of the Internet is to support research and education in and among academic institutions in the U.S. by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the Briarcliff's account must be in support of education and research and consistent with the educational objectives of Briarcliff.

2. Unacceptable Use of Internet/Intranet:

    1. Do not send abusive messages to anyone; use of the network to send hate mail, or further harassment, discriminatory remarks, or other anti-social behaviors is prohibited.
    2. Use for commercial activities by for-profit institutions is not acceptable.
    3. Use for product advertisement or political lobbying is also prohibited.
    4. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulations is prohibited.
        i. This includes, but is not limited to:
            1. copyrighted material.
            2. threatening or obscene material.
            3. material protected by trade secrets.

3. Security – security on any electronic device system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. All users have a vested interest in protecting the security of the system and the responsibility of notifying a teacher or system administrator immediately of a potential security problem. No one is allowed to use another individual's account without the expressed written

permission of the principal or designee. Student passwords may not be shared with others without the expressed written permission of the principal or designee. Attempts to log on as a system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges and disciplinary action. Any user identified as a security risk may be denied access to the Internet/Intranet. All users must close their accounts and log out before leaving the computer.

4. Vandalism – is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy the data of another user, the Internet, Intranet or any of the agencies or networks that are connected to our systems. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of electronic device viruses. Vandalism also encompasses physical destruction of electronic devices and peripherals in the media center, classrooms, and labs. Vandalism will result in the cancellation of privileges and disciplinary and/or legal action, plus potential restitution if necessary.

5. Enforcement – The use of the Internet/Intranet is an integral part of the curriculum. Inappropriate use will result in cancellation of the student's ability to take advantage of this research tool. School disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may also be taken. Serious violations of the Internet Use Policy agreement will be dealt with to the full extent of the law. School administrators will determine what constitutes serious inappropriate use. Due process appeal procedures and policies will be implemented, as applicable, through N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2 and 7.5.

Lockers

Briarcliff recognizes the need to provide student locker facilities. Student lockers, although intended for student use, are the property of the Briarcliff. Accordingly, Briarcliff recognizes its responsibility to protect the health, welfare, and safety of all District students and personnel and to provide for an environment that is conducive to learning. Furthermore, Briarcliff is cognizant that the Fourth Amendment right to privacy applies to students, and students are therefore entitled to be free from unreasonable search and seizure by school officials. Briarcliff directs that periodic general inspection of lockers shall be conducted for the purposes of health, welfare, and safety of all District personnel and students. However, the determination by a school official to conduct an individual locker search shall be based on reasonable grounds. The standard that shall guide the conduct of a school official in effecting a student locker search shall be that the school official must have reasonable grounds to believe that a

student possesses evidence of illegal activity or activity that would interfere with school discipline and order or the health and safety of students and staff before a reasonable search can be conducted. In the event that a search reveals that a student's locker contains any material or article in violation of Board Policy or the laws of the State of New Jersey, the individuals may be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal charges.

Each student is assigned two lockers at the beginning of each school year, a hall locker and a gym locker. Each student is also assigned a student lock that will follow them each year they are at Briarcliff. Each of their lockers are expected to remain locked at all times. The Physical Education teacher will give out combinations for gym lockers on a yearly basis. Students are expected to maintain an orderly locker and to remove material that is not used.

Briarcliff lockers are made available to students for the temporary storage of school materials, clothing and other personal property that does not pose a threat to the safety, security, or orderly discipline of the school. Briarcliff assumes no responsibility for the safety of personal belongings in student lockers. Please note that all personal items of value should always be locked in the GYM LOCKER during in-school or after-school activities. Students are prohibited from sharing the combination to their locker with anyone. Food should never be kept in lockers beyond a single school day. Students are responsible for the condition of their lockers and may be charged for any damage, including damage resulting from unreasonable wear and tear. Students shall not affix permanent materials or otherwise deface lockers.

Textbooks and Library Books

Each student is responsible for the books issued to him. Students should report lost books immediately. If a book is lost or damaged, the student will be responsible for payment of the book. The final report card will not be mailed if a student owes any textbook or library book fines.

Lost & Found

Articles that are found should be returned to the following areas:

- Books to the library.
- Valuables and textbooks to the main office.

- Articles of clothing to the cafeteria.

Inquiries regarding lost/found items should be made to the designated lost and found location. Unclaimed items will be donated on dates determined by the Administration.

Physical Education Participation

All students are expected to wear appropriate attire at all times, including while participating in physical education class. Accordingly, while in physical education class, students are expected to wear socks, sneakers, and a gym suit. Students may be excused from class for one day only on a written excuse from the parent. A doctor's note is necessary for any extended excuse.

Health Services

A school nurse is on duty at Briarcliff during regular school hours. Students should report to the nurse if illness occurs in school. The nurse will arrange for the students who are too ill to remain in school to go home. If the nurse is not in, students are to report to the main office. Emergency care will be provided for students who are injured or become ill during the school day. Names and telephone numbers of designated care persons, in the event of an emergency, must be updated and on file with the school nurse. The school nurse following the guidelines below will administer all medications, including all over the counter medication taken by any student:

1. Students requiring medication at school must have a written statement of permission to administer medication from his/her physician which identifies the type of medication, dosage, and time schedule, including reason for medication.

2. A parent's written permission to the school nurse must accompany the physician's permission also with the identity of medication, dosage and the time schedule.

3. All medication must be in the original container, both for prescription and non-prescription medication, with the label clearly visible and updated, as needed. Unused medication will be returned by the school nurse to the parent at the end of each school year.

Intervention & Referral Services

The I&RS Committee follows a team-based approach to determining the best means of supporting students who may be experiencing learning, behavior and/or health difficulties. Referrals to the committee may be made by a staff member or by a parent. The Committee's goal is to identify obstacles to a student's success, determine intervening recommendations for the classroom teachers and the family, and review the student's progress following initial implementation of the action plan. Student referral to I&RS customarily precedes referral to the Child Study Team.

Birthday Bulletin Board

At Briarcliff, we feel that individual self worth is important to all students and therefore recognize all students on their birthdays. Birthday names appear every month in our hallways. Students may choose to decorate a friend's locker. This is to be done before or after school. All students must gain permission & sign in at the front office. There may not be any candy or balloons placed on the outside of the locker. We are not able to give out locker keys or combinations for decorating purposes.

Student Bicycles

Bicycle racks are located on the playing field. Bikes are not to be ridden during the school hours and it is strongly recommended that they all be equipped with locks.

Notification of Health Curriculum Content

The New Jersey State Health Curriculum Guidelines require that parents receive notification of the content of the District's health curriculum. Further, parents may request a waiver from selected topics contained in the curriculum.

If a parent questions the appropriateness of these health topics, the parent will be given the opportunity to examine the details of the Health Curriculum. Further, the parent may request a waiver for his or her child to be exempted from the topic(s) in question. The request, stating the specific reasons for the exemptions, shall be submitted in writing to the building principal. Should there be sufficient reason to honor the request, the Principal will assign the student to a library/study location during the health instructional time and will be provided an alternate assignment to meet the health requirements.

Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying and Hazing

The Board of Education and Briarcliff prohibit acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for pupils to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying like other disruptive/violent behaviors is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate in a safe and disciplined environment.

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying," means any gesture, any written, verbal, or physical act, or any electronic communication as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that:

1. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability; or by any other distinguishing characteristic; and that

2. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus or off school grounds as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other pupils; and that

3. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a pupil or damaging the pupil's property, or placing a pupil in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property; or

4. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any pupil or group of pupils; or

5. Creates a hostile educational environment for the pupil by interfering with a pupil's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the pupil.

All cases that are reported as harassment, intimidation, or bullying may not constitute the statutory definition set forth above. As recently explained by the Courts:

> The statutory definition of "bullying" does not include all violent or aggressive conduct against a student. The definition, both before and

> after adoption of the 2010 Anti-Bullying Act, refers to conduct that is "reasonably perceived as being motivated" by a "distinguishing characteristic" of the victim, such as, "race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory [disability]" N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14. The statute has not limited "distinguishing characteristic" to those specifically enumerated, but it has consistently required such a perceived motivation. Thus, harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about relationships or personal belongings, or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation, does not come within the statutory definition of bullying.

In such cases, however, the conduct will be handled in accordance with the applicable Board Policy or Regulation.

Each report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, in accordance with the statutory procedures set forth in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15 *et seq*., will be addressed in an appropriate manner, beginning with an administrative investigation. Every instance of these behaviors will be treated according to the specific, individual circumstances of the occurrence; however, a student's history of problem behaviors and prior interventions will also be considered in the determination of consequences.

The Board and Briarcliff also prohibit acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying directed towards District students or staff executed through electronic media (including, without limitation, electronic groups such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat etc.) or electronic means (including, without limitation, e-mail, text messaging and use of image-altering software). As noted in the statute, electronic communication means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to, a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or wireless communication device.

Hazing is considered to be an individual or group act of harassment of another individual or group by banter, ridicule, criticism, or by exacting unnecessary work, or participation in a disagreeable/unpleasant activity for the purpose of initiation. The practice of hazing is unhealthy and counterproductive to the positive climate promoted by student participation in athletics and other programs.

Under no circumstances will hazing in any form be tolerated within the scope of programs (extra-curricular and co-curricular) sponsored by Briarcliff. The Principal/or designee will determine the level and severity of the disciplinary action to be taken

including detention, suspension, and/or removal from the team or school activity of students participating in hazing practices. Some incidents may need to be reported to, and investigated by, law enforcement authorities in accordance with New Jersey state law. Student leaders (captains, club officers, etc.) are expected to discourage and are required to report hazing to their coach, teacher, and/or the administration.

To view the complete Board Policy on this matter please refer to the school website or request a copy in the Board office.

First Offense:

- Behavioral intervention, which could include a suspension (In-School or Out-of-School as determined by the Principal).
- Parent conference.
- Possible referral to local law enforcement authorities.
- Possible referral to Affirmative Action Officer.

Second Offense:

- Behavioral intervention, which could include a suspension (In-School or Out-of-School as determined by the Principal).
- In-school parent conference.
- Possible Referral to local law enforcement authorities.
- Referral to appropriate school personnel and/or Affirmative Action Officer.
- Referral to appropriate mental health professionals.

Anyone with a concern about harassment, intimidation, and bullying or bias incidents should inform a classroom teacher, guidance counselor, coach, assistant principal, or principal. Students who witness harassment are highly encouraged to report such incidents to a trusted teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator. Anonymous reports of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may be made to school officials.

Willfully false accusations of any incidents are prohibited and will be disciplined under the Code of Conduct under Level 2 offenses.

According to law, the school District prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. An administrator will determine consequences and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation after consideration.

II. STUDENT CONDUCT – RESPONSIBILITIES

The expectations, rules, and guidelines that follow are necessary in order to establish and maintain a civil, safe, and supportive school environment that promotes learning and fosters the healthy physical, social and emotional development of all students.

Briarcliff Code of Conduct Addendum

All members of the Briarcliff community are expected to uphold the standards outlined in the Credo. It is our goal that students acquire the traits necessary to become active, responsible citizens, and independent learners. Part of this growth process includes the development and reinforcement of a value system based on character traits inherent in our Credo. In addition, parents, teachers, and administrators need to model these behaviors so students have tangible examples to follow. By communicating and reinforcing these positive character traits, we hope to instill in our students a sense of pride in themselves and in their academic work.

We expect all students to exhibit positive character traits throughout their academic career at Briarcliff. All students are integral in creating a culture based on academic excellence that is achieved within a climate of honesty, respect, trust, and responsibility. By observing and upholding these ideals and principles, students embody a spirit of mutual trust and intellectual honesty that is central to the very nature of the school, and represent the highest possible expression of shared values among the members of the school community.

Students who engage in behaviors that contradict the Credo will receive consistent and progressive consequences. Briarcliff Middle School uses counseling, detention, community service, and suspension within its disciplinary procedures. A student may be excluded from participating in activities, trips, school events, and/or the graduation ceremony if an offense, or multiple offenses, warrant it.

<u>Class Trip Prohibition</u>

1. If, at any time during the year, a student is assigned an out-of-school suspension, the student will automatically lose the privilege of attending and participating in that year's end of the year class trip.

2. If a student receives three or more conduct referrals to the Principal, any of which result in an administrative detention, the student will automatically lose the privilege of attending and participating in that year's end of the year class trip.

3. The Principal reserves the right to exclude any student from participation in any field trip if the student's behavior has failed to comply with the District's Code of Conduct, provided that the student's misconduct has resulted in school consequences.

Student Appeal Process

It is recognized that student behavior can be improved and Briarcliff is a place that allows for students to learn and grow from their mistakes. As such, any student who is excluded from participating in a field trip will have the right to appeal this exclusion. A student who wishes to appeal will need to first submit a letter to the Principal stating why they feel they should be allowed to attend the trip. The student will then have a meeting with a committee of Briarcliff Staff selected by the Principal who will hear the appeal and render a decision within five school days, unless the trip is scheduled to occur within five school days of the meeting, in which case the staff will render a decision as expeditiously as possible to allow for attendance on the field trip where appropriate. Should the decision of the staff committee be unsatisfactory to the student, the student may appeal the decision to the Principal, whose decision shall be final.

Statement of Academic Integrity

The highest standards of honesty must apply to all students' actions at Briarcliff. Any act of dishonesty reflects poorly upon a student and affects the entire school community.

In general, students are prohibited from engaging in any of the following acts:

- Cheating or allowing your work to be copied on exams, quizzes, research papers, projects, or homework.
- Unauthorized use of books/notes.
- Using cheat sheets.
- Copying from other students' papers.
- Inappropriately exchanging information with other students orally, in writing, or by signals.
- Obtaining copies of the examination illegally.

- Using text messaging, electronic transfer of information, and/or other similar activities for personal use.
- Plagiarism.

Among the Honor Code's most serious offenses are copying and plagiarism. Both are forms of cheating and are expressly prohibited. A student can be disciplined for copying where he/she takes the work of another, with or without their knowledge, uses it on homework, research papers, quizzes, or other assessment, and claims it as his/her own or takes credit for the work.

Plagiarism is not permitted in term papers, essays, reports, images, take-home examinations, homework, and other academic work. **Plagiarism is defined as stealing or using ideas, words, formulas, textual materials, on-line services, computer programs, etc. of another person without acknowledgement or in any way presenting the work of another person as one's own. Plagiarized material may appear in a student's paper as word-for-word copying, a summation, or a paraphrase of another's ideas. A student has plagiarized whether the material from another source has been taken in whole or in part. In effect, by not naming the source, the student is claiming the work as his/her own. A student's integrity is at stake whether he/she is the person who gives or receives the information; both are acts of dishonesty.**

Falsification, including forging signatures, altering answers after they have been graded, the insertion of answers after the fact, the erasure of grader's markings, and other acts that allow for falsely taking credit, are expressly prohibited.

All instances of academic dishonesty are dealt with seriously at Briarcliff. Any work (*e.g.*, homework, test, examination, or paper) that was completed by dishonest means will receive a grade of zero (0) and may result in other disciplinary action at the discretion of the teacher and the principal. Teachers will notify parents of the offense, and a record of the student's action will remain in the student's file throughout the student's career at Briarcliff. Further disciplinary measures will follow second, third and fourth offenses of the Honor Code.

Cell Phones, Cameras, and other Electronic Mobile Devices

The Board of Education recognizes the educational value in utilizing electronic mobile devices as instructional tools. With the rapid expansion of the use of electronic mobile

devices in our society, the Board of Education feels it is imperative that its students be educated and receive guidance on how to properly use these tools for educational purposes. Utilized correctly, electronic mobile devices can enhance the learning environment while allowing the District and its students to remain current with the various uses of technology for educational purposes. Conversely, the Board of Education recognizes that the inappropriate use of such devices may constitute a disruption to the educational process and, in some cases, a violation of personal privacy.

Accordingly, any such items that are not directly associated with the educational program (electronic games, laser pens, iPods, cell phones, smart watches & etc.) are prohibited and should be kept in the student's locker during the school hours, unless with specific teacher permission for the classroom. Students may use these devices before or after school hours. If students choose to use their items during school hours, they will be confiscated and brought to the main office.

Student use of a mobile electronic device to photograph, videotape, or audio record anyone on school property, including staff, students, or visitors, is strictly prohibited during school hours, on a school bus, or at school-sanctioned events, unless expressly approved by the teacher or a member of the administrative team. Further, unauthorized electronic recording of students or staff may be deemed an act of bullying, harassment, or intimidation, and handled according to Board policy and relevant state law.

Finally, students are prohibited from using any personal entertainment devices during class time or in the media center. These devices include, but are not limited to iPods,, and handheld computer or console games.

In such cases where a student uses an electronic mobile device in an inappropriate manner or in a way that otherwise violates Briarcliff policy, the principal or his/her designee or classroom instructor may confiscate the device. In such instances, any confiscated electronic devices are subject to search if reasonable suspicion warrants, and the building administration will take appropriate disciplinary action, which may require contacting outside authorities, as outlined in the Briarcliff Code of Conduct. In the case of repeat offenses, a parent of the student must meet with a school administrator to retrieve the device. Failure to hand over a cell phone is considered insubordination and may result in suspension. Please note that a teacher may require a student to deposit her/his cell phone in a holding container upon any request to leave the classroom.

Contents of Electronic Mobile Devices

Briarcliff reserves the right to examine any student's electronic mobile device that is brought onto school grounds and search its contents if there is reasonable suspicion that Briarcliff or Board policies, rules, or regulations have been violated, as well as if there is a reasonable suspicion that the electronic mobile device contains information that may be pertinent to a school investigation. Students who use their electronic mobile device to violate Briarcliff or Board policies, rules, or regulations will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action as outlined in the Briarcliff Code of Conduct and any suspected violation of New Jersey law will be referred to law enforcement authorities.

First Offense:

- Devices will be confiscated and brought to the main office.
- The student may pick it up at the end of the day.

Second Offense:

- Devices will be confiscated and brought to the main office.
- A parent or guardian will be called to pick up the device at the end of the day.

Third Offense:

- Devices will be confiscated and brought to the main office.
- A parent or guardian will be called to pick up the device at the end of the day and a detention will be assigned.

Expectations for Student Behavior During Distance Learning

All District expectations for student behavior exist whether instruction is provided onsite, remote, or in a hybrid combination of onsite and remote instruction. Therefore, the Student Code of Conduct applies to students at Briarcliff School even when they may be receiving distance learning. All students are expected to be respectful and kind toward their classmates, other students, and the staff. Appropriate language must be used during synchronous instruction as well during online instruction. Chatbox usage must also be appropriate. Student video must remain on and in focus during synchronous instruction. Eating and drinking as well as chewing gum are not permitted during distance instruction. Students should report any incidences of harassing, intimidating, or bullying behavior immediately to the teacher.

Assemblies

Cultural and educational assemblies may be available to students throughout the school year. Unless participating in an assembly as an honoree or performer, students must sit in the section of the auditorium designated for their assigned homeroom. Attention and proper respect for participants is always expected and always required.

Fire, Safety and Security Drills

Fire drills and emergency safety drills are necessary for the safety and security of all students, staff, and others. Everyone should know the specific direction for reaching a point of safety from those areas of the building in which he/she may be. For fire drills, the information is posted on a sign adjacent to the exit door of each room. Any specific directions regarding a fire/emergency safety drill will be announced at that time via the public address system. When a fire alarm sounds, all students must stop what they are doing and file out of the building through the nearest fire exit. Students and staff must situate themselves at least 150 ft. from the building. A quiet and orderly manner of evacuation must be maintained in case emergency conditions require a change of commands. Students are to follow the direction of the teacher in charge.

Any student who pulls a false fire alarm, otherwise creates a false alarm in the school, or removes a fire extinguisher will be subjected to serious disciplinary action, including suspension from school and a possible referral to the Superintendent of Schools with a recommendation for expulsion. Additionally, a police complaint may be filed in response.

The District conducts regular fire, evacuation, and lock-down drills. During a lock-down drill, students and staff are to seek refuge in the nearest securable room, which may also be the room that the student currently occupies. As swiftly as possible each room will be locked, lights will be turned off, and the blinds will be drawn closed. All students and staff shall seat themselves on the floor out of the line of sight of the door and shall maintain silence. Remain in lock down until appropriately advised by police or the Principal.

In the instances of relocation or evacuation students are to immediately proceed in a quiet and orderly manner to their designated gathering areas external to the building or campus. In cases of evacuation, students must leave all bags and/or backpacks in the building.

Attendance

Maximum learning occurs for most students through regular attendance in classes. Excessive absence can result in poor performance. Therefore, a student may not be absent from class for more than **TWENTY (14)** days during the academic year. Consideration may be given for certain exceptions and extenuating circumstances, including, but not limited to, bereavement, religious observance and legal requirements. Parents are required to notify the School of a student's absence. If your child will be absent, you MUST call the Student Absentee Line at **(973) 334-6369** or email **bcattendance@mlschools.org** **by 7:55 a.m.** on the day of the absence.

Student absences for reasons related to school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities are exempt from the attendance policy. A note from a physician that indicates illness as the reason for an absence does not necessarily deem the absence exempt from this policy. An administrator may extend this limit if extenuating circumstances are involved (*e.g.*, long-term illness, hospital stay, etc.).

A student must be present in school a minimum of four (4) hours of instructional time to be given credit for a day of attendance.

Students who are absent from school, sign out early, or who do not meet the minimum four (4) hour instructional time requirement, are not eligible to participate in any practice, game, meet, special program, evening activity event, or program scheduled for that day without the prior written approval of the school administration. Extenuating circumstances may include, but are not limited to, family emergency, funerals, religious obligations or observations, etc.

Authority to Excuse from Class Attendance

For other than instances of illness, medical appointment, recognition activities, or away athletic contests, teachers alone have the authority to excuse students from their classes. This includes field trip participation, music lessons, or other schoolwork responsibilities.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as a student who absents himself by either not coming to or pre-maturely leaving school without the prior consent of a parent or guardian. Therefore, a student whose absence has not been verified by his or her parent or guardian is truant on that day and will earn a "0" for his or her class work in addition to being subject to disciplinary action. A student who is absent without consent of a parent or guardian more than four times will be referred to the I&RS team. After the 10th absence without parental consent, the District will coordinate with community based social or health provider agencies, other community resources, as well as the juvenile/family crisis intervention unit ("FCIU") as further attempts to have the student attend school. As a last resort, the District may inform the municipal court in writing the steps it has taken regarding the student's attendance. When there is evidence of a juvenile/family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part.

Tardiness

A student who is tardy to school shall report to the main office for an admission slip. A student should have a note signed by a parent explaining the tardiness. If the student does not have a note, the tardiness will be recorded as unexcused. Excessive tardiness will result in parent notification by the attendance officer or appropriate action by the building administrator.

Tardiness not covered by the causes listed as valid reasons for late arrival or early dismissal shall be cumulative, and will be handled accordingly:

- 3 unexcused tardies: letter home.
- 4 or more unexcused tardies: detentions (recess or after school)
- 10 or more unexcused tardies and each time thereafter: letter home; additional detentions (or community service); potential loss of class trips and participation in clubs/activities; I&RS referral.

The following circumstances justify a student's late arrival. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, and the principal should use his/her best judgment in determining whether or not there is good cause for a student's late arrival.

- The student's disability from illness or injury, including any necessary emergency visits to a physician or dentist.
- A documented family emergency.
- The observance of a religious holiday.
- Religious instruction.
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than during the school day.
- The student's required attendance in court.
- Take Your Kid to Work Day

Theft

Stealing and knowingly possessing stolen property is a crime. Students who are caught stealing or knowingly possessing stolen property will be turned in to Mountain Lakes Police for prosecution. Theft may also be construed as harassment and bullying and will be investigated accordingly.

Students are warned that leaving personal items unlocked or outside their lockers in the physical education locker rooms may result in theft and is strongly discouraged. Briarcliff will not assume responsibility for such carelessness. Students must exercise great care to see that all lockers are properly secured to protect school and personal property from theft. The administration and/or police department carefully investigate every theft report. To prevent theft, students are urged to take the following precautions:

- Never leave personal property unattended.
- Leave valuable belongings and large sums of money at home, not in lockers.
- Do not share your locker combination with anyone and do not leave your locker open.

If a theft occurs, the student suffering the loss should report to the main office immediately to complete a theft/loss materials report. This form should be filed

immediately upon discovery of the loss. All thefts of a serious nature should be immediately reported to the local police department. Briarcliff takes no responsibility for the damage to or the loss of personal property or school-assigned property.

Vandalism

Graffiti and other forms of vandalism result in loss of time among our custodial staff and may generate a monetary loss for the District. Defacing school property is strictly prohibited. Students who are found to have vandalized Briarcliff property will be assigned suspension, community service, and restitution will be incurred by the student and his/her family (up to and including cleaning, repair, or payment for damages). Briarcliff may also choose to involve the police department if necessary.

Smoking

The Board of Education and Briarcliff recognizes the use of cigarettes and other tobacco products as addictive chemical substances with deleterious health effects both on users and on those who passively breathe the smoke. The Board also recognizes that cigarettes often serve as a gateway substance to other illicit substance use for young adults. For the purpose of this policy, vaping is also considered a form of smoking.

In accordance with state law and Board of Education policy, smoking of any kind is forbidden in school, on a school bus, at school sponsored events, and on school grounds. The use of chewing tobacco, snuff, or “chew,” etc. is also prohibited on those same venues. There are NO approved smoking/chewing grounds on campus or off campus at a school sponsored event. Students who violate this rule will be suspended from school. In addition, violations of New Jersey law and local municipal law will subject the student to possible legal penalties.

All rules and regulations regarding the use of tobacco are in effect on all school grounds, before, during, and after school, on a school bus and at school sponsored events.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

Briarcliff shall, in accordance with law, systematically monitor its procedures to ensure continuing compliance with anti-discrimination laws and regulations in school and

classroom practices. The administration of discipline will be equal and consistent without regard to race, color, religion, ethnicity, disability, national origin, ancestry, nationality, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital, domestic partnership or civil union status, or any other distinguishing characteristic.

Teachers reserve the right to maintain discipline within the scope of their classroom and throughout the school day. Teachers will follow the procedures outlined by the Administration. Teachers may assign detentions during lunch and/or before or after school. Students will receive consequences as outlined below depending on the severity of the offense.

Parent notification of the District's Disciplinary Guidelines is consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-6.2; N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.2 through 7.8.

Level 1

Students who have exhibited repeated behaviors contrary to the standards set forth in the Briarcliff Credo will be handled by their classroom teacher. Level 1 offenses are frequent or serious misbehaviors that disrupt the learning climate of the school. Examples of behaviors that would qualify as Level 1 offenses are:

- Disruptive classroom behavior.
- Inappropriate displays of affection.
- Misbehaving for a substitute.
- Insubordination/defiance.
- Misbehavior/talking during a fire or emergency drill.
- Abusive or disrespectful behavior toward any staff member.
- Offensive or obscene slogans on clothing.
- Purposeful mess making.
- Inappropriate language.
- Forged notes/excuses.
- Throwing objects.
- Harassment, Intimidation, and/or Bullying.

Potential classroom teacher responses to Level 1 behaviors may be:

- Lunch Detention.
- Before or After School Detention (a.m./p.m.)
- Extended Detention.

- Loss of privilege (recess, enrichment class, athletic participation)

Level 2

Students who continue to exhibit behaviors that are contrary to the standards set forth in the Briarcliff Credo, or who engage in much more serious transgressions, will receive a Level 2 response from the administration. Examples of these behaviors are:

- Fighting or violence toward a peer or staff member.
- Damage to the facility that interferes with the functioning of school or threatens the well being of others.
- Sexual harassment.
- Drug, alcohol, or weapon possession.
- Extortion.
- False alarms.
- Harassment, Intimidation, and/or Bullying.
- Repeated Level 1 violations that have been addressed by the classroom teacher.

Potential administrative responses to Level 2 behaviors may include:

- Extended Detention.
- In-School Suspension.
- Out-of-School Suspension.
- Community Service
- Repeated offenses or level 2 offenses may result in student removal from Field Day, field trips, or any other co-curricular event.

Lunch/Recess Detention

Students may be removed from Enrichment Classes or recess for minor violations of the Briarcliff Credo. Students who are removed from Enrichment or recess will be directed to the main office where they will remain for the entire period.

Administrative Detention

Detentions will be scheduled either before or after school. The administration assigns detention as a result of a student violation of school rules or District policy. Having to serve detention is sometimes an inconvenience for the student and his/her parents. However, it must be kept in mind that when rules are broken, appropriate consequences must follow:

- Students must arrive at detention promptly.
- There is no talking, gum chewing, or eating during detention.
- Students must bring something appropriate to read during the assigned detention time, for example a novel, newspaper, or textbook.
- Students who miss detention will be given an additional detention, if two detentions are missed, students may receive an in school suspension.

Suspension

A student will be suspended when the student's behavior is totally unacceptable to the school setting:

- A student will be given an out-of-school suspension for engaging in serious offenses and violations of Board or Briarcliff policies, such as fighting, bullying, smoking (use of electronic smoking devices, tobacco use/possession), stealing, leaving school property without permission, obscene or threatening language directed at teachers or staff, etc.
- In-school suspension places a student in one room for the entire day. The student receives his/her work for the day but is removed from the school setting. Students must behave for the entire school day while in the suspension room.

Students serving a suspension may not participate in any school activity/practice during the day(s) in which they are suspended.

III. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Electives

- Advanced Art Elective
- Band
- Chorus
- Strings Orchestra
- Computer Programming
- Stock Market and Investing

Enrichment Classes

On select days during period 9, students have the opportunity to participate in the Enrichment Classes, which offer a wide variety of enrichment activities. Students have the option of choosing the activities in which they wish to participate.

Reinforcement

On select days during period 9, students have the opportunity to meet and work with teachers or to complete assignments. Students must report to their reinforcement immediately after period 8.

Student Photographs

In the fall, a professional photographer takes student pictures. Information is sent home with the students a few days before the picture date. A make-up date is scheduled and listed on the school calendar.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- Academic Team (Quiz Bowl)
- Aviation Club
- Baseball
- Basketball (Intramural & Interscholastic)
- Cross Country (Interscholastic)
- Debate
- Destination Imagination
- Environmental Club
- Math Counts
- Mock Trial
- Musical
- National History Bee
- Robotics
- School Newspaper
- Soccer
- Softball
- Spelling Bee

- Geography Bee
- Homework Club
- Jazz Band
- Student Government
- Upstanders Club