

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026-2027



**ARTS SCHOOLS
NETWORK**

EXEMPLARY SCHOOL
2024-2029



Distinguished
School



**ROBIN RIDGEWAY, PRINCIPAL
LILIA ALCALA, ASST. PRINCIPAL**

15709 E. Olive Branch Dr. La Mirada, CA 90638
Phone #: (562) 210-2500 Fax #: (562) 947-3861
Website: www.benton.nlmusd.org

The Board of Education of the NLMUSD is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs, activities, and practices shall be free from discrimination based on race, color, ancestry, national origin, ethnic group identification, age, religion, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, or genetic information; the perception of one or more of such characteristics; or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

Student Handbook 2026-2027

School Theme

“Cultivating a Culture of Creativity”

School Mission

Benton Middle School inspires and empowers all students to achieve academic excellence in a creative visual and performing arts environment.

School Vision

We envision a school in which staff works together, interdependently, in collaborative teams to support and encourage all students as they

- take risks,*
- explore new interests,*
- discover their passion,*
- persevere through challenging concepts,*
communicate effectively, and
- develop autonomy.*

We prepare students to participate in a diverse and ever-changing society.

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

Table of Contents

I. Bell Schedule	4
II. Awards Criteria	5
III. Student Expectations	6
IV. Behavior Expectations Matix	6
V. Citizenship	7
VI. Cell Phones/Electronic Devices	7
VII. Dress Code	8
VIII. Athletics	9
IX. Discipline	10
X. Attendance	11
XI. School Procedures	14
XII. Birthdays, Food Service, Special Days	14
XIII. Progress Reports/Report Cards	17
XIV. Promotion	17
XV. Rules and Regulations	19
XVI. District Mobile Communication Device Policy	24

Wolverine P.R.I.D.E.

P ERSEVERANCE	Continue to work on something despite the difficulty
R ESPECT	Honor self and others and preserve property
I NTEGRITY	Be honest and sincere regardless of consequences
D ETERMINATION	Exhibit willingness to make and stick with a decision
E XCELLENCE	Demonstrate high levels of academic achievement and personal character

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

BELL SCHEDULES

Regular Daily Schedule 26-27

Periods	Monday A Day <i>Periods 1A-4A</i>	Tuesday B Day <i>Periods 5B-8B</i>	Wednesday A & B Alternating Days	Thursday A Day <i>Periods 1A-4A</i>	Friday B Day <i>Periods 5B-8B</i>
1A/5B	8:35-9:59	8:35-9:59	8:35-9:39	8:35-9:59	8:35-9:59
2A/6B	10:01-11:24	10:01-11:24	9:41-10:45	10:01-11:24	10:01-11:24
Nutrition/Break	11:24-11:42	11:24-11:42	10:45-11:03	11:24-11:42	11:24-11:42
3A/7B	11:44-1:07	11:44-1:07	11:05-12:09	11:44-1:07	11:44-1:07
Lunch	1:07-1:37	1:07-1:37	12:09-12:39	1:07-1:37	1:07-1:37
4A/8B	1:39-3:00	1:39-3:00	12:41-1:45	1:39-3:00	1:39-3:00

Minimum Day Schedule*

**Thurs. & Fri. 8/13 & 8/14, Mon-Fri 10/19-10/23, Thurs. 12/17, Mon-Fri 3/1-3/5, Thurs. 3/25, Tues.-Thurs. 6/1-6/3*

Periods	Monday A Day <i>Periods 1A-4A</i>	Tuesday B Day <i>Periods 5B-8B</i>	Wednesday A & B Alternating Days	Thursday A Day <i>Periods 1A-4A</i>	Friday B Day <i>Periods 5B-8B</i>
1A/5B	8:35-9:33	8:35-9:33	8:35-9:33	8:35-9:33	8:35-9:33
2A/6B	9:35-10:31	9:35-10:31	9:35-10:31	9:35-10:31	9:35-10:31
Nutrition/Break	10:31-10:49	10:31-10:49	10:31-10:49	10:31-10:49	10:31-10:49
3A/7B	10:51-11:47	10:51-11:47	10:51-11:47	10:51-11:47	10:51-11:47
Lunch	11:47-12:17	11:47-12:17	11:47-12:17	11:47-12:17	11:47-12:17
4A/8B	12:19-1:15	12:19-1:15	12:19-1:15	12:19-1:15	12:19-1:15

* Wednesday Assembly/Homeroom Schedule*

Homerooms only meet on:	Homeroom/Assembly	8:35-9:33
August 19	1A/5B	9:35-10:24
September 9	2A/6B	10:26-11:15
October 7	Nutrition/Break	11:15-11:33
November 4	3A/7B	11:35-12:24
December 9	Lunch	12:24-12:54
January 6	4A/8B	12:56-1:45
February 3		
March 10		
April 14		
May 19		



BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

AWARDS CRITERIA

Benton celebrates student success!

Academic	Principal's Honor Roll: 4.0 and higher GPA Honor Roll: 3.5 – 3.99 GPA • Certificates are awarded each semester. • Awards for 1st semester are based on final 1st semester grades. Awards for 2nd semester are based on grades earned on the award deadline date, about one week before awards night. • Honor Cords are awarded to 8th grade students who have achieved straight “A’s” for the entire school year. <u>Blue Cords</u> for students in a combination of Honors and Non-Honors Classes; <u>Gold Cords</u> for ALL Honors Classes. • <u>Blue & Gold Twist Honor Cord</u> are awarded for achieving straight A’s all 3 years. President's Academic Achievement Award ❖ Must maintain a 3.5 – 4.0 GPA for the entire school year ❖ Must score at “Exceeded Standard” level in Math or Language Arts on state standardized test
Students of the Month	Benton Staff recognizes <i>Students of the Month:</i> • Students who exhibit good citizenship and are striving to achieve their personal best. • The Visual Arts team and the Performing Arts team each select a student who excels in the Arts.
Movers & Shakers	Awarded each semester for superb effort and growth/progress over previous semester or previous year.
Wolverine P.R.I.D.E.	Awarded to students who best display character qualities that demonstrate Wolverine P.R.I.D.E. during the month by teacher.

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

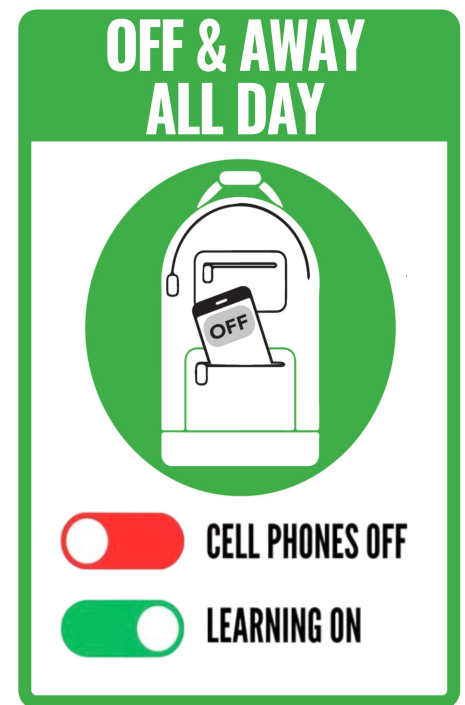
We believe that a safe, respectful, and responsible learning environment is essential for student success. To help all students understand what positive behavior looks like in different areas of campus, we use the following Behavior Expectations Matrix which outlines clear expectations for how students should conduct themselves. By following these expectations, students contribute to a positive school culture where everyone can learn and grow. Students are encouraged to make responsible choices that reflect **Benton P.R.I.D.E.** every day.

Benton Behavior Expectations				
Emergencies	Classroom	Office	Restroom	Common Areas
Stay calm. Follow directions from teacher/adult.	Always do your best. Use positive self-talk. Set goals.	Use appropriate volume and language.	Use appropriate volume and language.	Form single file lines. Patiently wait your turn.
Line up with your class, when evacuating.	Follow directions. Treat others with kindness.	Stay in designated office area. Enter and exit safely.	Wait your turn. Use supplies properly.	Throw away all trash. Be courteous to all staff and students.
Walk to the blacktop, when evacuating.	Do your own work. Own your actions. Ask for help.	Visit with purpose. Leave friends outside.	Visit with purpose. Respect the privacy of others.	Follow school rules even when no one is watching.
Stay quiet and with an adult at all times.	Submit work on time. Maintain positive citizenship.	Ask for help. Be honest.	One person per stall. Use restroom at snack or lunch.	Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Keep phones in your backpack.
Wear appropriate shoes to school.	If you see something, say something.	Remain behind the counter.	Leave food outside. Wash your hands. Sign in/out.	Chew gum off campus.
 P R I D E				

CITIZENSHIP: Citizenship grades (Outstanding, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory) are assigned to students for each class. To earn Outstanding Citizenship, Benton students will demonstrate Wolverine P.R.I.D.E. as well as being *Prepared for class and learning, Respectful, On Task, with a Positive attitude, and Supportive* of others. Students must maintain satisfactory citizenship to participate in all school activities including but not limited to activities such as sports, field trips, dances, camps, cheer, clubs, and special performance events. Satisfactory citizenship is defined as having no U's and no more than 1 N.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Benton is not responsible for personal electronic devices such as cell phones. Students may choose to bring a cell phone to school, but **per NLM District policy, all electronic devices must be turned OFF and kept in student's backpack while on campus.** Students may use their cell phone in the school office if necessary.

Phones/electronic communication devices that are NOT in student backpacks will be confiscated and held in the front office for the student pick-up after school. Repeated violations may result in a required parent pick-up, and student may be placed on a *Check In-Check Out* system with an administrator.



LOCKER ROOMS/RESTROOMS: Under no circumstances may students have a **phone out in the locker rooms or restrooms.** Parents will be contacted for a parent phone pick up and a conference will be held with an administrator.

DRESS CODE: What students wear should not detract from learning. Clothing should be **neat, clean, safe, and appropriate for school.**

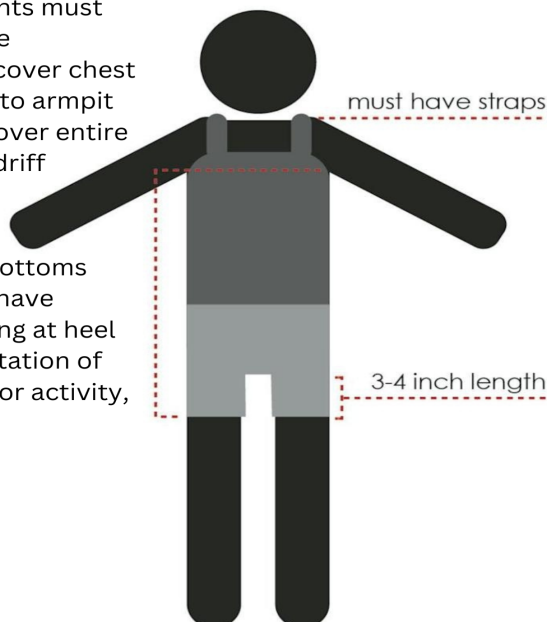
- ❖ Appropriate undergarments should be worn and should **not** be visible.
- ❖ Students may wear sandals with a back strap, but no flip-flops.
- ❖ Clothing and jewelry should not promote racism, sexism, ethnic or religious bigotry, profanity, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, violence, graffiti, or other illegal activities.
- ❖ Hats may be worn but should be removed inside the classroom.
- ❖ Sleepwear (pajama bottoms), dance shorts, costumes or face masks may not be worn.
- ❖ Length of shorts/skirts should be mid-thigh length.
- ❖ **For P.E.**, students must dress out in P.E. shirt, shorts/leggings, and athletic shoes. Students may wear dance shorts during Dance class.
- ❖ **Performance Attire** Teachers will advise students of the required attire.

Benton *Dress Code*



- Wear appropriate undergarments; undergarments must not be visible
- Shirts must cover chest from armpit to armpit
- Shirt must cover entire stomach/midriff

- No pajama bottoms
- Shoes must have strap/covering at heel
- No representation of illegal items or activity, profanity



BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

ATHLETIC POLICY

ATHLETICS: Students who participate on school sports teams must maintain 2.0 GPA and Satisfactory Citizenship (No U's and no more than one N).



INTRAMURAL ATHLETICS

Fall	Winter	Spring
❖ Football ❖ Volleyball ❖ Cross Country ❖ Cheerleading	❖ Basketball ❖ Soccer ❖ Cheerleading	❖ Softball ❖ Annual Track Meet ❖ Cheerleading



BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Benton implements a combination of Progressive Discipline with a Restorative Justice approach. The goal of Progressive Discipline is to improve student behavior and help students learn from their choices; Restorative Justice is focused on acknowledging and repairing the harm. Both practices help prevent inappropriate behavior from happening again. Progressive discipline can include the following:

- Conversation or conference with the student
- Reflection Form
- Parent Contact (phone call, email, letter home)
- Review of expectations of appropriate behavior
- Referral to counselor or other resources
- Conference with student and parents
- Behavior Contracts
- Community Service
- Restitution
- Loss of privileges
- Assigned areas for snack and/or lunch
- Detention
- Suspension

The Restorative Justice response to discipline seeks to create opportunities for learning so that the offender can understand the impact of their behavior on others. The student is expected to repair the harm and face up to the consequences of their actions.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE GOALS:

- Foster understanding of the impact of the behavior
- Repair the harm that was done
- Attend to the needs of victims and others in the school
- Avoid imposing intentional pain, embarrassment, shame, and discomfort on students
- Collaborative approach actively involving others as much as possible



BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Student success is directly affected by attendance. Good attendance increases the opportunity for students to achieve academically, participate in sports and activities, and improve self-esteem.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE:

California State Law requires all persons under 18 years of age attend school on a full-time basis. Parents' interest and cooperation will assure better student attendance and school success. A record of all correspondence will be maintained.

OFFICIAL SCHOOL DAY:

The official school day starts with classes beginning at 8:35 A.M. and ends at 3:00 p.m. School ends at 1:45 p.m. on Early Release Wednesdays. Office hours are from 7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Students are not allowed on campus prior to 8:05 A.M. unless they are attending a prearranged school activity. All students must also be picked up promptly after school by 3:15 P.M. unless they are involved in a prearranged school activity. Parent support is greatly needed in these crucial areas to ensure a safe environment for our students.



REPORTING AN ABSENCE/ATTENDANCE ACCOUNTING SYSTEM:

When a student is absent from school, the parent or guardian may choose ONE of these options:

1. Complete the online **Absence Reporting** link from the *Benton.nlmusd.org* website. This is the preferred method of reporting an absence.
2. Call the front office.
3. Provide a signed note for the student to bring on the day they return to school. Please provide the following information: Student's Name, Reason for Absence, Parent/Guardian Name, Dates of Absences.

EXCUSED ABSENCES:

Excused absences are identified as *illness, immediate family death, or a doctor/dentist/court appointment*. Any other absence is considered an unexcused absence and is marked as a parent violation (this includes vacations). If a student is going to be out of school for more than 5 days, information on Short Term Independent Study (STIS) is available on the Absence Reporting tab on benton.nlmusd.org. *Please call the school office if you have any other questions regarding an absence.*

UNVERIFIED / UNEXCUSED ABSENCE / TRUANCY:

If an absence goes unverified for 10 days from the date of absence, it will be changed to a **truancy**, which constitutes a parent violation. This is in accordance with Board Policy and will be strictly enforced. Once an absence becomes a truancy, it will not be changed.

**** Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's absences and tardies through the PowerSchool parent portal.**

TARDY PROCEDURE: Punctuality increases student success and decreases classroom disruptions.

1. Students will have a passing period between classes to go to and from class.
2. Students who are not seated in their classroom at the end of the passing period will be considered tardy.
3. Any staff member can issue a tardy if the student is out of class without permission.
4. When a student is tardy in the morning, they must report to the office, sign the tardy log before reporting to class.
5. If a student is tardy due to a doctor/dentist/court appointment, please bring a note from that office for the tardy to be marked excused.
6. A tardy is considered unexcused if the student arrives more than 30 minutes late to class and will be marked as a Truancy.

TARDY CONSEQUENCES (PER SEMESTER):

- **1st Tardy** – Warning. Handled by individual teachers.
- **2nd Tardy** – Parent notified by teacher.
- **3rd Tardy** (and any additional tardies) –Possible Parent Conference and/or referral to Student Attendance Review Team (SART). Students may be required to attend a Tardiness workshop.

If a student continues to have excessive absences, tardies, or truancies, the student and parent will be required to have a conference with the School Counselor or Administrator to discuss solutions in order for the student's attendance to improve. If there is no improvement, the student will be referred to the School Attendance Review Team (SART) where an attendance contract will be established. If there is still no improvement, the student and parent will then be issued a subpoena to the District School Attendance Review Board (SARB), which is held at the Norwalk Court House. Continuing attendance problems will result in a referral to the District Attorney.

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

SCHOOL HOURS:

8:35 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (Mon./Tue./Thur./Fri.) and 8:35 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. (Wed.)

Students are not allowed on campus prior to 8:05 unless attending a school-related activity. Students are to leave the campus promptly at the end of the school day by 3:15pm, unless they are attending tutoring or a school-related activity.

To maintain the best possible learning environment, have the fewest classroom disruptions, and to make our school run more efficiently, please observe the following:

BICYCLES, SKATEBOARDS, & SCOOTERS

Bicycles are to be kept in the school bicycle compound during the day. Students are to bring locks and secure their bicycles individually. A skateboard rack is available inside campus for students to secure their skateboards. Students and parents assume full responsibility for lost or stolen bicycles and helmets. In accordance with California State Law, all students riding bikes to and from school are required to wear a helmet. Violation of the helmet law can result in a citation from the local Sheriff. Students are not permitted to use *skateboards*, *scooters*, and *rollerblades* on campus at any time and violation will result in confiscation of the item. Confiscated items must be picked up by a parent.

BIRTHDAYS, FOOD DELIVERY AND SPECIAL DAYS

Do not send balloons or flowers to school, as they will remain in the office until the end of the day. **Birthday parties or special lunch celebrations are not allowed.**

Lunch is provided for all students at no cost. Students are encouraged to eat a school lunch or bring lunch from home.

Food items, meant for sharing in groups, are not allowed on campus (Board Policy 5030).

Parents should refrain from using food delivery services (DoorDash, GrubHub, etc). The office staff is **not** responsible for the communication of deliveries from food delivery services.

If a parent is dropping off lunch for their child, the parent must come into the front

office, complete a “For My Student” form and leave the lunch on the table in the front office for student pick up. The office staff is **not** responsible for the communication or delivery of lunch drop-offs.

BLACKTOP, FIELD AND TRACK

Safety is a top priority at Benton. When students are on the black top, athletic field or track it is important to follow all safety rules to avoid injuries. Students must promptly exit the blacktop, field and track areas when directed by school supervision or staff. Students who borrow sports equipment must return it to the designated area. Students who engage in disruptive, unsafe or defiant behavior will follow progressive discipline consequences, which could include not being allowed to use the area.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Counseling is available to all students. The school counselors are available to help students with academic guidance, personal and social counseling, minor behavior and discipline concerns, attendance guidance, communication with parents and teachers, and to assist students in making a successful transition from elementary to middle school and middle to high school. Parents are invited to contact the school counselor when they have questions or concerns related to their child’s education and/or social development. Our Wellness Specialist can help students access services for counseling, grief support, mental health, and well-being.

FIELD TRIPS

Teachers may plan various trips throughout the year. Students must return permission slips to field trip advisor(s) for admission to any approved excursion off campus. Students with unsatisfactory citizenship, poor attendance, poor grades, or inappropriate behavior may be excluded from any trips planned. Students who behave inappropriately for adult supervisors will receive consequences upon returning to school. Consequences may include: loss of participation in future field trips and any upcoming school activities; special end of the year activities; detention; suspension; community service; citation; or any combination of these deemed appropriate by administration. *This includes any multiple day academic travel excursions/camps.*

LEAVING DURING THE DAY

Make all arrangements regarding doctor/dentist appointments, rides home, lunches, etc. before school starts. Students must come to the office to be checked out if they leave during the school day.

LOST AND FOUND

Students assume full responsibility for loss or damage to any personal property left in a

classroom or on campus. The school will endeavor to protect all personal property but is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. *Never leave backpacks or other personal items unattended.* Students should write their names on all books and put identification marks on all personal belongings. Found articles (books, clothing, etc.) should be taken to the office. Lost items not recovered by the last day of school will be donated to a local charity.

LUNCH AND SNACK AREAS

Students must remain in designated lunch and snack areas during breaks. Students must stay visible to supervision and staff at all times. Students who do not remain in designated areas will follow progressive discipline consequences.

MEDICATION

Students are not allowed to bring any medication (prescription or non-prescription) to school without a specific form filled out by the student's doctor. Forms may be obtained in the school office. All medications with appropriate form will be kept in the office during the school day.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER USE

Students may check out books and other items using their school I.D. Students are responsible for any item issued to them and will be charged the price of that item if it is lost, stolen, or damaged. Activities (including Promotion), report cards, and/or yearbooks will be withheld/suspended until the fee is paid or the item returned.

IPADS

Students must bring school-issued iPads to school each day, fully charged. Students are responsible for the care of the iPad. Students and their families are responsible for the cost of repairs or replacement due to accidental damage, intentional misuse, or neglect.

PERFORMANCES

Safety is a top priority at Benton. On performance nights, students must arrive at a designated time and check-in to their "Green Room" to prepare for costume changes, group meetings, and instructions for the night's performance. At the end of each show, students report back to their "Green Room," clean and clear the space to prepare for instruction and are released to a parent/guardian immediately after the show.

PHONES & OTHER COMMUNICATION DEVICES

Students may possess electronic devices including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets, and MP3 players. Cell phones are to be turned off, put away in backpacks and not to be used at any time on campus between the hours of 8:05am and 3pm, or until 1:45pm on Wednesdays. The school is NOT responsible for any lost or stolen phones or other electronic devices.

PROGRESS REPORTS/REPORT CARDS

All Benton parents/guardians have access to the PowerSchool Parent Portal, which provides the most updated attendance and grading information for each student. The PowerSchool Website address is <https://powerschool.nlmusd.k12.ca.us/public>. In addition to this resource, Report Cards are distributed each semester, and Progress Reports are issued every quarter, which is halfway through the semester.

PROMOTION CEREMONY/ END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES

Participation in the 8th grade Promotion Ceremony is a privilege earned. All 8th graders who met NLMUSD promotion criteria and submitted a signed promotion contract are eligible to participate in the ceremony. Eligibility is determined by GPA, Course Failures, Suspensions, Attendance, and Tardies. Parents and students are encouraged to communicate with the School Counselor any time eligibility is not met.

8th graders must meet promotion eligibility criteria and have satisfactory citizenship (No Us and no more than 1 N) to participate in **all** end of year activities (such as, but not limited to: Disneyland, 8th grade Dance, Movie Night, and Field Day).

SPORTS/CLUBS/ACTIVITIES/FIELD TRIPS

Students must have:

- 2.0 GPA ("C" average) or better and
- Satisfactory citizenship (No Us and no more than 1 N)

by the grade check deadline to participate. If a student becomes ineligible to participate, they may regain eligibility at the next grade check deadline. Students may be excluded from attending school activities, games, field trips, or special events if they are ineligible. Student athletes must abide by the BMS Athletic Policy in order to participate in sporting events.

TEXTBOOKS

Students may be issued one or more textbooks/reading books during the course of the school year. Students are responsible for each book issued to them and will be charged the price of the book if it is lost, stolen, or damaged. Students need to make sure that they are responsible for books they check out and know their whereabouts at any given time. Report cards, promotion certificates, activities, and yearbooks will be withheld in the event of a lost book until it is found or paid for in full.

TRANSPORTATION

Students receiving transportation on district-provided buses to and from school must carry a school ID with a school issued bus sticker to validate entry. Temporary bus passes will be issued from the office to students during nutrition or lunch only (**maximum 3 per year**). Lost IDs and/or bus stickers must be replaced for entry on district provided transportation. School-wide behavioral expectations and progressive discipline measures also apply to transportation.

TUTORING

Many teachers offer tutoring after school, or during lunch/break. Please refer to the school's after-school activities schedule for specific support and classroom locations. School-wide behavior expectations and the District's mobile communication device policy, as well as progressive discipline also apply to after school tutoring.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

All visitors, parents, guardians must report to the office and check in before going anywhere else on campus. Any deliveries (lunch, money, homework, P.E. clothes, etc.) are to be delivered to the office and not the classrooms.

YEARBOOKS

Yearbooks sell out quickly each year. To ensure that you get a yearbook, listen to announcements and *buy it early!*

BENTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

RULES AND REGULATIONS

All Rules and Regulations pertain to the campus, both to and from school, and at all school activities. Progressive discipline will be enforced for the following violations:

AEROSOL CANS

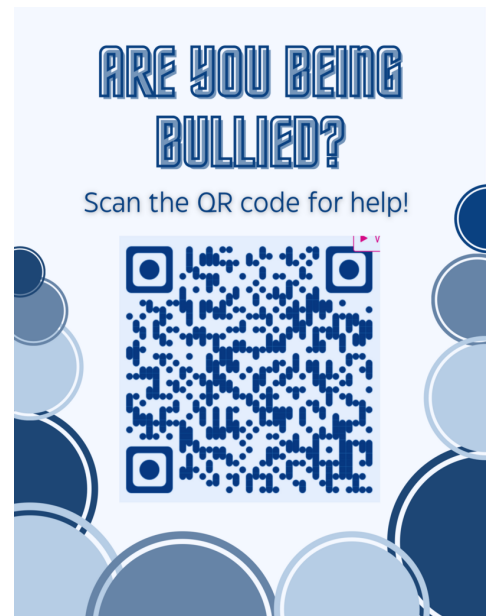
Aerosol spray cans are NOT permitted on the BMS campus. Please leave them at home!

ARSON

Any person who attempts or sets fires to any building, lockers, trash cans, towel rolls, etc. is guilty of a felony.

BULLYING/ABUSIVE CONDUCT

Any student who repeatedly threatens or intimidates another student, whether physically, verbally, or electronically, is guilty of bullying. This will not be tolerated. Students, parents, and community members are encouraged to notify school staff when they are being bullied or suspect that another is being victimized. To report bullying, notify any school staff member or complete the online bullying report using the QR code, which is posted in the front office, classrooms, and other common areas.



CHEATING/ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, plagiarism, and/or copying another student's work is a very serious infraction of school rules. It is an unfair representation of scholastic achievement and demonstrates academic dishonesty. Cheating, plagiarism, and/or copying will result in an automatic "0/no credit" for the test or assignment and will follow progressive discipline. Please refer to the course syllabus provided by each teacher for details on appropriate classroom use of Artificial Intelligence such as ChatGPT, Google Assistant, Siri and others.

CLASSROOM, CAMPUS, AND/OR EXTRACURRICULAR DISOBEDIENCE

Any pupil who is disrespectful, insubordinate, disorderly, defiant, or creates disturbances is considered disobedient.

DRESS CODE

While on campus or at any school sponsored events, students shall not be dressed or groomed in a manner which adversely affects the instructional program or violates reasonably acceptable standards of cleanliness, safety, or decency as determined by the principal or designee. Shoes must be worn at all times. No attire may be worn that signifies membership in a gang, profanity, or any illegal activity. Students may be sent home to change or will be provided with a change of clothes for inappropriate attire. Students who repeatedly violate this policy will be given consequences for defiance.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES (BOARD POLICY 5131.8)

Mobile communication devices must be turned off and kept out of sight during the school day, which is defined as the first bell to final bell. This includes cell phones, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, AirPods, tablets, gaming devices, smart glasses, and similar technology.

- Devices should remain stored in backpacks or designated areas unless specifically authorized by school staff or site administration.
- Students with accommodations outlined in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or documented medical necessity will continue to have access to approved devices as required.
- A progressive discipline process will be used if students do not follow the policy, beginning with device confiscation and increasing consequences for repeated violations. Parents or guardians will be involved as needed throughout the process.
- Serious misuse of devices, including recording others without permission, cyberbullying, harassment, or using devices in restrooms or locker rooms, will result in immediate administrative action.
- In an emergency, students may use mobile communication devices when directed by staff or when necessary to ensure their personal safety. Schools will continue to use established emergency notification systems to communicate with families. Students who need to contact a parent or guardian during the school day may do so through the school office.

NLMUSD **will not** be responsible for and **will not** investigate lost or stolen electronic devices (BP 5412). Misuse of electronic devices, including text messaging, recording, or taking photos without permission is prohibited.

EXCESSIVE DISPLAY OF AFFECTION

Excessive displays of affection are inappropriate for students at Benton Middle School. No hand holding, excessive hugging, or kissing, etc. is permitted on school

campus or at any school sponsored events. Students must keep hands, arms, legs, and objects to themselves. Students must respect the personal space of others.

FIGHTING

Fighting on campus is strictly prohibited on campus and at all school sponsored events. It is an unacceptable way of solving problems and may result in suspensions, citations, and possibly arrest. Students are encouraged to seek the assistance of an adult on campus (teacher, counselor, administrator) before situations escalate. If a student feels angry, threatened, or upset, they should report it immediately to an adult.

FIRECRACKERS AND EXPLOSIVES

Possession of explosive materials, firecrackers, poppers, stink bombs, cherry bombs, etc., is against State Law. These items are not permitted on school campus or at any school sponsored events.

FOOD

Students are not permitted to bring energy drinks of any type to school. If parents would like to bring food for their own student(s), they must bring it to the office for student pick up. Full pizzas and other types of food to feed more than one child are **not allowed**. Food must be consumed before or after class, not during class. Gum is not allowed.

GAMBLING

Pitching coins, throwing dice, playing cards with betting, or engaging in any other kind of gambling are examples of unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated.

HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

No student may verbally abuse or harass another student, threaten another student with bodily injury, or engage in any gang type activity. This includes harassment or threatening behavior through the use of an electronic device or online.

LEAVING CAMPUS WITHOUT PERMISSION

Once on campus, students must stay at school and are not allowed to leave, even before the official school day starts. If a student needs to leave during the school day, a parent/guardian must check them out at the office. Students are not permitted to be out of class during class time without signing out with a teacher.

LITTERING/THROWING OF FOOD

All students are expected to clean up after themselves and pick up their own trash. Students throwing items/food, leaving trash/food on campus will be given consequences for disobedience, which may include Community Service.

LOITERING

Students are not permitted to loiter in front of the school or in restricted areas on campus. Students loitering could be cited for disobedience. Large groups may be separated for safety reasons.

OBSCENE ACTS AND PROFANITY

Obscene gestures, physical contact, and the use of vulgar and profane language will not be tolerated in any form. Using electronic devices for the purpose of “sexting” is also considered obscene and will not be tolerated. (Sexting is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between cell phones.)

OPEN AND OVERT DEFIANCE

Any student who persistently defies school rules and school authority will be considered defiant. Belligerence and hostility directed to school authority or personnel is a defiant action and may result in suspensions, citations, and possibly arrest.

REFUSAL TO DISPERSE

Any student failing to disperse, return to class, or leave the area after being told to do so by school personnel will be cited for open defiance of authority.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Engaging in sexual harassment acts (verbal, gestures, and/or physical contact) that are severe or pervasive as to have a negative impact on a student’s academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment will not be tolerated.

SKATEBOARDS / ROLLERBLADES / SCOOTERS/ E-BIKES

They are not to be brought to school. Any skateboards, scooters, E-bikes or rollerblades seen on campus will be confiscated and held until a parent comes to school to take possession of the item.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE: POSSESSION, USE, OR SALE (BOARD POLICY 5495)

While on school grounds or at any school-related activity, students shall refrain from use or possession of narcotics, intoxicating liquor, alcohol, “look-alike” controlled substances, personal vaporizer, or any type of drugs or drug paraphernalia. Benton Middle School has a *Zero Tolerance* for using, possessing, or selling drugs or alcohol. Those students violating this policy will be removed from school, cited, and/or referred to Local Guidance.

THEFTS / EXTORTION

Any person who steals or extorts the property of another is guilty of theft.

THREAT

Any threat to school employees, direct or implied, is a serious violation of the law and may result in suspensions, citations, and possibly arrest.

TOBACCO

Students are not allowed to be in possession of personal vaporizers (e-cigarettes, vape pens, vape chargers), tobacco, lighters, or use tobacco in any form on school premises or at school-sponsored events.

VANDALISM / GRAFFITI

Destruction of school, staff, or student property will initiate penalties according to the degree of damage. Please note that PERMANENT MARKERS (e.g. Sharpies) are NOT allowed on campus and possession can result in a citation.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Students are not permitted to have visitors on campus. Brothers, sisters, friends, or relatives may not accompany students during the school day. All visitors are required to check in the front office for permission to enter campus. Parents/Guardians wishing to conference with teachers or visit classrooms must submit a request via email, phone call, or note to teachers to arrange a meeting and/or visitation. Visitors with arranged meetings before school and/or after school must also check in the front office prior to visiting classrooms.

WEAPONS

Students are not to have any weapons or objects that might cause bodily harm in their possession when traveling to or from school, at school, or at any school related activities. This includes look-alike toys or other types of pretend weapons. Students may not bring water guns or other types of toys to school.

This following outlines established procedures for implementing the District's Board Policy regarding student use of mobile communication devices, including enforcement protocols and a progressive discipline system to ensure consistency across all school sites.

Districtwide Expectations (All Grades Preschool–12th Grade)

Devices must be off and out of sight during instructional and non-instructional times unless explicitly authorized by staff. However, no instructional or reward-based use is permitted unless pre-approved by site administration.

Devices must remain stored in backpacks or designated areas unless explicitly authorized.

During extracurricular activities, expectations may be adjusted to support supervision, safety, and communication needs.

California Penal Code § 632 makes it illegal to intentionally record or eavesdrop on a confidential communication without the consent of all parties involved. Violations can result in criminal penalties, including fines and possible imprisonment, as well as civil liability for damages.

Enforcement and Responsibilities

To ensure consistent implementation, teachers and staff will reinforce expectations. Administrators/designees will handle disciplinary actions ensuring consistent application across classrooms and sites. Devices used or visible during restricted times will be confiscated. Devices must be logged, secured in a designated location, including secure classroom caddies or office storage, and returned according to established procedures.

Confiscation Procedures

When a device is visible or used in violation of policy:

1. Staff will confiscate the device after an initial warning.
2. The device must be:
 - Logged into a site-based tracking system.
 - Secured in a designated location.
3. Devices are returned according to the progressive discipline structure below.

Progressive Discipline System (Preschool–12th Grade):

The following will be in effect starting the first full week of the school year.

Warning (Preschool–5th Grade Only):

- Warning issued by staff
- Incident documented

First Offense (All grades):

- Device confiscated
- Device returned to student at end of day
- Incident documented

Second Offense (All grades):

- Device confiscated
- Parent/Guardian notified

- Device returned to student at end of school day
- Additional school consequences may be issued (e.g., detention, Saturday School, etc.)
- Incident documented

Third Offense (All grades):

- Device confiscated
- Parent/Guardian retrieval required
- Additional school consequences may be issued (e.g., detention, Saturday School, restriction from bringing device to school, etc.)
- Incident documented

Fourth and Subsequent Offenses:

- Device confiscated for 3-5 school days (but no later than Friday of the week in which the offense occurred)
- Parent/guardian retrieval required
- Additional disciplinary action can be taken, which may include:
 - In-school suspension
 - Loss of extracurricular privileges
 - Behavior plan

Note: Students 18 years or older may retrieve their own device unless otherwise determined by site administration.

Severe Violations (Immediate Administrative Action):

The following behaviors bypass progressive discipline and result in immediate escalation:

- Recording or photographing others without consent in violation of California Penal Code § 632
- Use of devices in restrooms, locker rooms, or changing areas
- Cyberbullying, harassment, or threats using a device
- Academic dishonesty facilitated by device use

Consequences for Severe Violations may include:

- Immediate confiscation
- Parent/guardian required retrieval
- Suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion

Implementation Supports and Best Practices

Schools may implement classroom phone caddies or storage systems and secure storage procedures for confiscated devices. Clear signage and reminders must be implemented. Staff will be trained for consistent enforcement.

Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

- Devices not used during practices, games, team meetings
- Permitted for:
 - Coordinating rides after events
 - Emergency communication
- Locker room use = strictly prohibited

Students with Special Needs

The use of appropriate devices required by an Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan, or medical necessity as determined by a licensed physician are permitted.

Emergency and Communication Protocols

In emergencies or perceived threats, students may use mobile communication devices when directed by staff or when necessary to ensure personal safety in accordance with Education Code 48901.5 and 48901.7. The District will maintain and communicate clear emergency notification systems to families. Students needing to contact parents during the school day may do so through the school office.

Student Wellness and Access

- Students feeling ill or in need of support will be directed to appropriate school personnel (e.g., health office, counseling office, administration, etc.).
- Staff will ensure timely support without reliance on personal devices.

Liability

The District is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices brought to school.

Review Cycle

The Board may review this policy periodically and as needed to ensure alignment with State law and District priorities.

Legal References: Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District, Rules and Regulations

Education Code 48901.5, 48901.7

Assembly Bill 3216

California Penal Code § 632

Adopted: June 8, 2026