

BLIND BROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL

840 King Street • Rye Brook, NY • 10573
914-937-3600



FAMILY GUIDEBOOK 2026-2027

Please Note: *The BBMS Family Guidebook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that it is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance. Also, please be aware that the Family Guidebook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Family Guidebook provisions will be made available to students and the community through newsletters or other communications. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Family Guidebook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.*

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DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

The Blind Brook-Rye Schools are the cornerstone of our community. Our mission is to prepare our students to be active, lifelong learners who have the skills and confidence necessary to achieve their highest potential. We encourage our students to be curious, compassionate, and strong in their ability to face challenges. We are committed to preparing our students to be reflective, adaptable citizens with an open world view. We aspire to instill integrity as a core value and to influence our students to be ethical and responsible members of society.

Blind Brook Belief Statements

1. We value the development of caring, respectful, and ethical individuals and are committed to cultivating in our students an integrity that will inform their conduct in all aspects of their lives.
2. We believe that open and respectful communication between students, district employees, parents, and the community will contribute to a more dynamic and effective school environment.
3. We strive to develop creative, adaptable, and skillful individuals who think critically, solve problems and take leadership roles in society.
4. We believe that a physically and emotionally safe and healthy environment is essential for the growth and development of our students and employees.
5. We embrace the varied learning styles and capabilities of our students and are committed to providing diverse opportunities for them to demonstrate their gifts and maximize their potential.
6. We are committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining high quality individuals to work with our students and families.
7. We believe interdisciplinary learning best promotes intellectual development, personal growth and effective communication.
8. We believe that appreciating differences fosters a common respect for each others' humanity.
9. We are committed to providing students opportunities to pursue their passions through a wide range of academic and extra and co-curricular activities.
10. We believe that access to information and proficiency in technology are essential components to teaching and learning.

Adopted by the Board of Education, 12/07

MIDDLE SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Early adolescence is a critical period when children begin the transition from the protective environment of the elementary school to the more demanding high school setting which requires individual responsibility, emotional maturity, and independent decision-making. Because the Blind Brook Middle School values the development of the whole child, the school must emphasize the balance between academic and social/emotional growth and provide opportunities for exploration and development in both. The environment will help all students develop a self-image of competence and strength, enable them to succeed in high school and beyond, and lead them to realize the importance of lifelong learning and growth.

We believe:

1. In a challenging, academically and culturally rich standards-based educational program.
2. In an environment that fosters ethical, respectful, and responsible behavior in all of the members of the school community.
3. In a nurturing environment in which all students are encouraged to take risks in a safe and supportive educational structure.
4. In a community that promotes appreciation of diversity and enables all students to reach their highest potential.
5. In an environment that promotes the intellectual and personal transition from childhood to young adulthood and provides rich and varied curricular and extracurricular activities to move students from dependence to independence.
6. In a supportive climate which fosters professional and personal growth and collegial responsibility.

ADMINISTRATION

PRINCIPAL - Ms. Karen Chalif is responsible for all aspects of the middle school operation including instructional leadership, personnel, student and parent affairs, and coordination of the middle school program. Ms. Chalif reports to the superintendent of schools and can be reached at x3101.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - Ms. Cheryl Rosenka assists the principal with administrative responsibilities and oversees all aspects of school safety and culture, assessment, student supervision, discipline, and extra- and co-curricular activities. Ms. Rosenka can be reached at x3100.

DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION,& INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS -

Mr. Greg Warren is responsible for all aspects of the district's Physical Education, Health Education, and Interscholastic Athletics programs including developing and evaluating the department's academic program and budget, program management, hiring and evaluation of coaches, team scheduling, and student selection and discipline. Mr. Warren can be reached at x4500.

DIRECTOR & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES - Ms. Alexandra Lafontaine-Casabona oversees all Special Education programs including the supervision of all Special Education and Nursing staff. Mrs. Jennifer Castelli assists the Director of Pupil Services by overseeing Special Education programming at Blind Brook Middle/High School. Ms. Lafontaine-Casabona can be reached at x1008 and Mrs. Castelli can be reached at x4504.

DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY - The Director of Technology, Mr. Charles Von Hollen, oversees all aspects of the district's technology use. Mr. Von Hollen can be reached at x1005.

DEPARTMENT COORDINATORS

Department Coordinators assume the instructional and curricular leadership of the department. They are also responsible for the routine management of the school's academic departments, for assisting in developing the academic schedule, and for the development and evaluation of each department's academic program and budget.

Department	Coordinator	Extension
English	Mr. Jon Ambrosio	x4105
Math	Mr. Mike McCarvill	x4319
Science	Mrs. Katherine Martino	x4326
Social Studies	Mr. Marko Markolovic	x4301
World Languages	Mr. Matthew Castelli	x3205
Special Education	Mr. Brian Lazere	x3232
K-12 Art	Ms. Paige Buonocore	x4334
K-12 Music	Mr. Donald Whitman	x4338

FACULTY, STAFF & STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

SCHOOL COUNSELORS - The role of the middle school counselors is to help students access their education by removing barriers to learning. This is achieved via individual and large/small group interactions focused on the areas of academic skills development, behavior, social/emotional development, and high school readiness. As students progress through middle school, so does the guidance program.

The 6th grade program is designed to prepare students to participate effectively in their current and future educational programs, to help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral or adjustment problems, and to encourage parental involvement.

The 7th and 8th grade programs consist of advisory and individual or group counseling assistance to enable students to benefit from the curriculum, to help students develop and implement postsecondary awareness and career options, to help students who exhibit any attendance, academic, behavioral or adjustment problems, and to encourage parental involvement.

Students are encouraged to visit the Student Support Suite or email their counselor to make individual counseling appointments. Parents may make appointments to discuss any concerns by contacting their child's counselor:

Last names A - K: Mrs. Amanda Arzt - aarzt@blindbrook.org (x3401)

Last names L - Z: Mr. Joseph O'Connor - joconnor@blindbrook.org (x3400)

HEALTH SERVICES - Our school nurses, Ms. Erica Santelmo and Ms. Adora Mulholland, are responsible for all matters relating to individual student health issues. Our Health Office can be reached at x4230 or at mshsnurse@blindbrook.org.

SOCIAL WORKER - Mrs. Rachel Mileo works closely with our school counselors to assist students with their academic, social, and emotional needs. Mrs. Mileo also provides confidential counseling for students experiencing personal problems or difficulties at school. Mrs. Mileo is available to provide individual or group counseling, to refer students to outside agencies, or to provide parent consultations. She can be reached at x3402.

PSYCHOLOGIST - Mrs. Carrie Merlo works closely with our school counselors to assist students with their academic and personal needs, and is responsible for all individual psychological testing. She also provides confidential counseling for students experiencing personal and interpersonal difficulties at school or elsewhere. Mrs. Merlo is available to provide individual or group counseling, to refer students to outside agencies or to provide parent consultations and can be reached at x3231.

THE HOME-SCHOOL TEAM

It is well documented that children learn best and are more likely to achieve their full potential when the significant adults in their lives - parents, teachers, family and community members - work together to encourage and support them. Blind Brook Middle School therefore recognizes the importance of developing and nurturing positive and productive relationships between the home and the school.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to forming strong relationships. Not only do strong communication skills help students navigate their way through middle school, but they are critical for success in high school and beyond. We strive to support and encourage our young adolescents to develop self-advocacy skills when faced with a challenge: to talk to their teachers when they don't understand something, to make appointments with teachers for additional support or to learn more about a topic, to ask for guidance when they are in a difficult situation with someone or when they receive feedback and are unsure how to move forward. We encourage students to reach out to trusted adults such as counselors to help them think through and plan for how to approach teachers if they need assistance in building these skills. We also encourage students to stop in the main office or Student Services Suite to speak to a counselor or administrator about any questions or issues so that we can point them in the right direction.

We also know that there are times when parents should be and need to be involved, so we are including some general guidelines for who parents should reach out to first if they need to speak with someone about specific needs. We hope that you will use these guidelines as needed while, at the same time, supporting the goal of students self-advocating and building their communication skills.

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS & PARENTS

1. All electronic communications will be responded to either by telephone or e-mail within 48 business hours.
2. Parents seeking an immediate response or teacher-parent conference should call the school and leave a message detailing the urgency of the matter.
3. Problems are best understood and solved when the chain of command is used (see page 10). Teachers should be notified first. If appropriate, teachers may recommend the assistance of a coordinator to help resolve a problem. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved, parents should contact the school principal. If the matter is still not resolved, parents should notify the Superintendent of Schools.
4. E-mails
 - Should be **polite** in tone.
 - Should be **brief and informational**.
 - Should not be used to discuss specific and detailed issues related to the curriculum or classroom policies. Phone calls or personal meetings are preferred ways to address such matters.
 - May identify an area of concern to be addressed further by phone or by conference.
 - In order to maintain the confidential nature of parent-teacher communication, initial e-mails should not be carbon copied to others.
5. Concerns regarding a child's academic or social progress should be resolved by scheduling an appointment with a specific teacher, school counselor, school social worker, or school psychologist.

WHOM TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

The communication protocol (chain of command) starts with the staff member closest to the situation so that issues can be handled quickly and efficiently.

Type of Question/Concern	Primary Contact:	If Not Resolved:	If Still Not Resolved:
Concerns regarding an individual class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> behavior grades & assignments teaching strategies & materials course requirements academic progress 	Classroom Teacher	Department Coordinator	Building Administrator
Concerns across multiple classes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic, social, emotional organizational course selection & scheduling 	School Counselor	School Social Worker	School Psychologist
Concerns regarding substance abuse, gambling, etc.	Youth Prevention Specialist	School Social Worker	School Psychologist
Academic programs, curriculum, course offerings, course placement	Department Coordinator	Building Administrator	Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Attendance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absences, early dismissals Lateness 	Attendance Office	Assistant Principal	
Medical Concerns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> medication injury accommodations allergies 	School Nurse	Director of Pupil Services	Building Administrator
Physical Education / Athletics Program	Teacher or Coach	Director of Athletics, Physical Education, Health & Nursing	Building Administrator
Clubs & Co-Curricular Programs	Club Advisor	Assistant Principal	
Special Education Concerns	Teacher or Service Provider	Case Manager	Director of Pupil Services
Bussing / Transportation	Head Bus Driver	Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Facilities	
Bullying / Harassment / Discrimination	Assistant Principal (DASA Coordinator)		

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Open House - This annual event takes place each fall and provides an opportunity for parents to learn about their child's academic program and to meet his/her teachers. Please consult the district calendar for this year's date.

Parent Orientation - Special orientation evening meetings are held in the spring for parents of incoming sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. These meetings provide an overview of the academic and co-curricular programs in the middle school, as well as the behavioral expectations for students. The dates can be found on the district calendar.

Parent-Teacher Association - The Blind Brook PTA encourages the involvement of all parents with students in grades K-12. PTA meetings are held monthly and are listed on the district calendar. The PTA provides a wide variety of services to the schools, including funds to support various educational programs, a periodic newsletter, special programs for parents, and other worthwhile activities. The fund-raising efforts of the PTA provide important curricular enrichment activities as well as seed money for new programs and equipment that enhances the educational program for all students.

Parent Workshops - The world we live in is vastly different from the one we grew up in. Join the BBMS faculty, staff and administration in a series of workshops designed to develop the whole child by providing parents with the tools needed to help their children be as successful as possible in middle school and beyond. Throughout the year we will explore topics relevant to raising an early adolescent in the 21st century.

Principal Conversations - The Principal meets with parents of students in grades 6-8 to explore issues of mutual interest in the operation of the school with the aim to improve the overall quality of education. All parents are welcome to attend. Please consult the district calendar for actual dates.

Shared Decision Making Team

The BBMS Shared Decision Making Team (SDMT) works in an advisory capacity to monitor implementation of school and district goals. In doing so, the SDMT may identify issues, suggest strategies, recommend procedures, and evaluate feasibility to implement programs that enhance the educational performance of students in the Blind Brook Schools.

THE SCHOOL DAY & DAILY PRACTICES

DAILY SCHEDULE

The school building opens to students at 7:30 am each day, with classes beginning at 7:50am and ending at 2:40pm. Each grade level has its own schedule consisting of seven instructional periods, one 30-minute lunch period, and 40 minutes of WIN (What I Need):

The red, yellow, and green boxes in the schedule represent students' 50 minute team-based academic classes (ELA, math, science, and social studies) which rotate and drop over the course of the 10 day cycle. The white boxes represent the 40 minute non-team-based classes (world language, physical education, music, health, exploratory, electives, etc.) which meet at the same time each day. The teal boxes represent the WIN period.

BBMS 2026-2027		
8th	7th	8th
Block 1 7:50 - 8:43	Block 1 7:50-8:43	Block 1 7:50-8:33
Block 2 8:46-9:26	Block 2 8:46-9:26	Block 2 8:36-9:26
Block 3 9:29-10:19	Block 3 9:29-10:09	Block 3 9:29-10:19
Block 4 10:22-11:12	Block 4 10:12-11:02	Block 4 10:22-11:02
Block 5 11:15-11:55	Block 5 11:05-11:55	Block 5 11:05-11:55
LUNCH 11:55-12:25	Block 6 11:58-12:38	LUNCH 11:55-12:25
WIN 12:25-1:05	Lunch 12:38-1:08	WIN 12:25-1:05
Block 6 1:07-1:57	WIN 1:08-1:48	Block 6 1:07-1:47
Block 7 2:00-2:40	Block 7 1:50-2:40	Block 7 1:50-2:40

WIN Period: The WIN period is designed to meet students' ever-changing individual and varied needs. Each Wednesday, all students will attend small-group Advisory programming during this time. During the rest of the week, students will have access to extra help, remediation, enrichment, executive functioning support, social and emotional support, quiet homework/study time, special programming, etc., based on what they need that day. Prior to WIN period each day, students will check the *FlexTime Manager* app to see if any teacher has pre-scheduled them for a mandatory activity (ie - extra help, making up work, etc.) that day. Students who are not pre-scheduled will be able to view all of the available options for the day and sign up.

EXTRA HELP

Going to teachers for support, extra help, to make up work, and other reasons is essential to academic success in middle school. Middle school students have opportunities every day to work with teachers and support professionals during the WIN period. While the WIN period is designed to promote student choice and voice, teachers reserve the right to require student attendance during this time. If a student fails to meet with a teacher as requested, disciplinary action and/or parental notification will ensue.

BACKPACKS

For the health and safety of students and faculty, backpacks are required to be kept in students' lockers throughout the school day. Students are permitted to carry a small sling or tote bag to facilitate the carrying of small items which might be needed throughout the day (ie - pencil case, eyeglasses case, calculator, etc.).

BUS TRANSPORTATION - Transportation will be provided for all resident children who legally attend public, private, or parochial school from 1.5 to 15 miles from their homes, as required by State Education Law. Any pupil in middle school will be eligible if he or she lives more than 1.5 miles from the school. For questions related to transportation, please contact Mr. Juan Zhindon at x2441 or jzhindon@blindbrook.org

In addition to the regular afternoon buses, a late bus is available Monday through Thursday at 3:50 PM. Please contact Mr. Juan Zhindon for additional information.

In order to ensure student safety, students are only permitted to ride on their assigned bus. That said, we recognize that there are occasional days where a student may ride a bus home with a friend. These will be limited to no more than 10 times during a school year. In situations where your child will be riding the bus with a friend, a note from you, the parent/guardian, is required. This note should be emailed directly to Juan Zhindon, Head of Transportation, at jzhindon@blindbrook.org. This note should be sent no later than the morning of the transportation so Mr. Zhindon has time to review it and inform the driver before dismissal. This timing is important to ensure effective communication to all personnel involved.

Please note that we cannot allow students to ride home with a friend without prior approval in writing. Sending your note in a timely manner ensures the effectiveness of this process

Your email should include the following details:

- Your child's name
- The name of the friend they will be riding with
- The bus number or route you are requesting they ride on
- The reason for the change in transportation

CONTACTING STUDENTS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Student's phones, smartwatches, and personal electronic devices must be turned off and kept in lockers until the school day ends. Devices that are visible, audible, or otherwise in use during the school day will be confiscated for student pick-up at the end of the day. Subsequent offenses will result in appropriate disciplinary consequences and the parents will be required to pick up the item(s) at school.

If a student needs to contact a parent: There is a phone available in the main office which students may use to contact a parent.

If a parent needs to contact a student: Students cannot receive phone calls or texts during the school day. If there is an urgent need to relay a message to your child, please email the message to Ms. Paisley at lpaisley@blindbrook.org.

DROPPING OFF FORGOTTEN ITEMS

Students at Blind Brook Middle School are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning materials. If you must drop something off for your child, please leave it on the table across from the Security booth. In order to support the continuity of learning, please note that students will not be called down to pick up items which have been dropped off. Instead, students are permitted to pick forgotten items up between classes, during lunch, or after school.

FOOD, DRINK & SNACKS

To ensure the safety of those in our community with severe allergies, BBMS is a nut-aware facility. Students may not bring peanuts, peanut butter, or any other nut products to school or school events.

Snacks: Students are encouraged to bring healthy snacks to school. Students may eat snacks in between periods if they appropriately discard trash/recyclables and are not late to their next class. Individual teachers will also review their classroom rules for snacks and will decide the appropriate time and place for snacks in the classroom. Students may not visit the cafeteria during any time other than their lunch period.

Drinks: Water is the only drink permitted outside of the cafeteria. Students are encouraged to use reusable bottles and refill them at one of the water bottle refill stations.

The MS cafeteria and commons must be kept clean at all times. Students are members of the school community and have a role in maintaining the facilities. Students are expected to work cooperatively with their tablemates to leave a clean table at the end of lunch. Lack of cooperation or disrespect for the lunch monitors will result in disciplinary consequences.

Please note: Snacks and food are not allowed to be delivered to the school by food vendors (ie- pizza, sandwiches, etc.). In addition, parents/guardians are asked not to bring snacks to the school as they will not be delivered to students.

CAFETERIA SERVICES - Information and menus can be found on the [Food Services webpage](#).

LIBRARY / INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA CENTER (IMC)

The Instructional Media Center is open daily from 7:30am - 3:30pm and provides a quiet place for research, reading, and individual and small-group work.

Fiction and nonfiction books can be checked out for a three-week period and renewed once for an additional three weeks. Reference books do not circulate outside the library. Check-out may be restricted for books and other materials that are used for a project by multiple classes. For example:

- At a teacher's request, a group of books must remain in the library at all times.
- At a teacher's request, a group of books may be restricted to overnight check-out.

Please note: The library may be closed for testing and other special events.

For additional information, please contact Mrs. Marnita Brown, Library Media Specialist, at mbrown@blindbrook.org or x4401.

LOCKERS

Upon entering BBMS, students will be given a school-issued combination lock which the student will use from grades 6-12. At the beginning of each school year, students will be assigned a locker which must be kept locked at all times. Students should not share their locker combination with anyone and may only use their assigned locker. For safety reasons, only school-issued locks may be used. Any other locks will be removed. Replacement locks are available in the main office for \$5.

School lockers remain the exclusive property of the school. Administration may open lockers at any time if deemed necessary.

Students must keep the following items in their locker during school hours: coats/jackets, instruments, lunch, cell phones, smart watches, and any other items not being utilized in classes.

LOST AND FOUND

All personal belongings should be labeled with the student's name. If an item goes missing, look in the main office Lost and Found. Should a student find someone else's item, it should be brought to the main office. At the end of each school year, unclaimed items are donated to local charities.

REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCE / LATENESS / EARLY DISMISSAL

Absences:

- Parents/Guardians are required to contact the Attendance Office by 10:00 am each day that a student is absent from school (msattendance@blindbrook.org).
- Students should email their teachers and check Google Classroom for missed work.
- Students who are absent from school may not participate in or attend any school-sponsored event or extracurricular activity that day.
- After an absence of three days, parents may arrange to pick up assignments by contacting the school counselor.

Lateness to School:

- The school day begins at 7:50 AM. Should a student arrive late, he/she must sign in at the Security Desk and submit a note from a parent/guardian. The Attendance Office will be notified for record keeping purposes.
- On the day of the lateness, it is the student's responsibility to meet with teachers to establish a schedule to complete any missed work.

Early Dismissals:

- If it is known before the student comes to school that he/she will need to leave early or miss a class that day, parents/guardians should contact the Attendance Office indicating the reason he/she is being picked up early (msattendance@blindbrook.org or x3098). When the parent/guardian arrives at the school, he/she must sign the student out at the Security Desk. The student will then be called down for dismissal.
- Please note that students may only be picked up by a parent/guardian or an adult listed in eSchool as an emergency contact and that photo ID is required. Please also note that high school students and/or siblings are prohibited from picking middle school students up for early dismissal.
- Students who return from an appointment may sign themselves back into school without a parent or guardian present. Students will receive a pass to return to class.
- While we understand it is not always possible, parents are asked to schedule appointments outside of the school day so students do not miss instructional time.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

In order for students to attend a school-sponsored function (ie - clubs, class activities, sports, evening activities such as dances/dress rehearsals/performances), it is necessary that they attend classes for at least one half of the school day on the day of the activity. District policy defines one half of the school day as being either from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm or from 12:00 pm to 2:40 pm. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the school administration.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

- *For device issues, please email Mrs. Jenifer Vazquez (jvazquez@blindbrook.org), Technology Staff Developer, to coordinate a repair. BBMS students can borrow a loaner from the library while their device is being repaired.
- *For communication questions/issues, such as School Messenger or the eSchool Parent Portal, please contact Mr. Charles Von Hollen (cvonhollen@blindbrook.org), Director of Technology.
- *For help with general technology issues, such as your student's Google Classroom, please email Mrs. Jenifer Vazquez (jvazquez@blindbrook.org), Technology Staff Developer.

SCHOOL RULES & EXPECTATIONS

ANTI-HARASSMENT & NON-DISCRIMINATION

The District is committed to creating and maintaining an environment which is free from discrimination and harassment. In accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, the District does not discriminate on the basis of any legally protected class or category. Further, the District prohibits discrimination and harassment on school property and at school functions on the basis of any legally protected class including, but not limited to:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| a) Race | g) Gender identity or expression |
| b) Color | h) Military status |
| c) Religion | i) Sex |
| d) Disability | j) Age |
| e) National origin | k) Marital status |
| f) Sexual orientation | |

Generally stated, harassment consists of subjecting an individual, on the basis of his or her membership in a legally protected class, to unwelcome verbal, written, or physical conduct which may include, but is not limited to: derogatory remarks, signs, jokes, or pranks; demeaning comments or behavior; slurs; mimicking; name calling; graffiti; innuendo; gestures; physical contact; stalking; threatening; bullying; extorting; or the display of circulation of written materials or pictures.

This conduct may, among other things, have the purpose or effect of: creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; substantially or unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or a student's education performance, opportunities, benefits, or well-being.

The Dignity for all Students Act (DASA) addresses harassment, bullying, and discrimination prevention. Ms. Cheryl Rosenka, Assistant Principal, serves as the DASA Officer for Blind Brook Middle School.

Students are provided with education and information about DASA each year so that they know they can report concerns to *any* adult in the building and that person will make sure it gets to the DASA Officer. For more information or to report an incident, please visit the [Blind Brook Dignity Act webpage](#).

The District has designated the following District employees to serve as its Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance Officers:

Ms. Alexandra Lafontaine-Casabona, Director of Pupil Services (acasabona@blindbrook.org)
Ms. Karen Chalif, Middle School Principal (kchalif@blindbrook.org)

Additional information can be found in [Policy #3420](#)

ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance in all classes is directly related to academic success and therefore critical. It also represents each student's most basic responsibility as a member of the Blind Brook Middle School community. Therefore, every student is to attend all classes unless absent from school. The school will identify patterns of absence, tardiness or early departures from school, and, as appropriate, intervene to encourage student attendance and discourage unexcused absences.

Classifying absences, late arrivals, and early departures:

Excused absences are those attributable to illness, dental and medical appointments, sickness or death in the family, religious observance, required appearance in court, quarantine, or other health-related special services. Supporting documentation must be presented for each excused absence (e.g., letter from a physician, etc.) upon the student's return to school.

If an absence is excused, the student will be given an opportunity to make up tests, homework or other missing assignments. Teachers may additionally require students to make up missed classwork. Students are responsible for meeting with their teacher(s) immediately upon returning to school to establish a make-up schedule for work missed during an absence. Normally, teachers will allow one day to make up assignments for every day that a student is out. However, teachers are flexible in considering the circumstances and the nature of the assignments.

Unexcused absences are those attributed to anything other than the items listed above including family vacations, visits and events, camp attendance, oversleeping, car trouble, missing the bus, non-school sponsored athletic/music/dance events, etc. Teachers are not obligated to provide make-up tests or accept homework or other assignments from students who have missed class due to an unexcused absence.

Lateness to Class:

- The number of times a student is late to his/her individual classes will also affect the student's attendance; every three latenesses will count as one absence, which will be counted toward the total absentee count. Students who are asked to stay after class by a teacher will be given a late pass to present to the teacher of the next class. Should a student accrue three unexcused latenesses in any class, the student will be required to attend detention.

Refer to the [Blind Brook Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy](#) for additional information.

Religious Observances:

The Board of Education recognizes that school will occasionally be in session on days during which students and their families must be absent to observe their religious beliefs. Out of respect for a student's observance of these holidays, teachers will be sensitive to the needs of the student by allowing them to make up all classwork, homework, and tests without penalty. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to notify the school prior to the absence in order to assist the staff in instructional planning and in meeting the needs of the student.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

Students are issued a school locker, iPad, required textbooks, novels, and team uniforms. Students are held strictly accountable for the care of these items and will be charged for the full replacement value in the event of damage or loss.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Blind Brook Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment. As such, the district has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, and integrity.

The [Blind Brook Code of Conduct](#) clearly defines the expectations for acceptable conduct on school property; identifies the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct; and ensures that discipline, when necessary, is administered promptly and fairly.

The following is a list of behaviors which violate School District rules and expectations:

Level I

- Continued violations of the dress code
- Littering and/or failure to properly discard lunch waste
- Continued failure to carry out teacher directions in class activities and assignments
- Disruptive or disorderly behavior including (but not limited to) excessive noise, throwing food/beverages, or running in the halls
- Use of profanity or obscenity
- Eating food in non-designated areas or times without permission
- Unauthorized use of electronic devices

Level II

- Unmodified or more severe Level I misbehavior
- Defacing school or personal property
- Minor theft
- Truancy
- Insubordination
- Cheating, Plagiarism, Lying (Academic Integrity)
- Horseplay or Physical Aggression
- Gambling
- Leaving school buildings and/or grounds without permission
- Cutting class, tardiness
- Verbal abuse and harassment of students, faculty, and staff
- Discrimination
- Inappropriate use of the Internet
- Inappropriate use of electronic devices including taking pictures, recordings, and sharing
- Forgery or fraud, including use of another person's identity for cafeteria, library, or computer access without permission
- The use of racially insensitive and/or inappropriate language

Level III

- Unmodified or more severe Level II misbehavior
- Physically threatening other students or staff; physical harassment; intimidation
- Severe taunting, bullying
- Stealing
- Conduct which creates a substantial risk of physical injury
- Fighting
- Vandalism
- Repeated verbal abuse and harassment of students, faculty, and staff
- Sexual harassment or lewdness, including indecent exposure
- Pernicious use of the internet
- Selling, using, distributing, or possessing obscene material
- Possession of drug paraphernalia; possessing, using or being under the influence of unauthorized substances on school property or at school-sponsored activities
- Displaying what appears to be a weapon
- Threatening to use any weapon

Level IV

- Unmodified or more severe Level III misbehavior
- Possession and/or sale of stolen property
- Coercion of others
- Tampering with any emergency equipment
- Intentional misuse of 911
- Bomb threats or other threats to school property, students, or personnel
- Possession and/or use of firecrackers or explosives
- Arson
- Sexual assault
- Possession of a weapon
- Providing, selling or using illegal chemical substances and/or alcohol on school property or at school sponsored activities

In addition to the disciplinary response for misconduct, the following information can also be found in the [Blind Brook Code of Conduct](#):

How to Report Violations.....	page 18
Dignity for All Students Act.....	page 18
Disciplinary Procedures and Referrals (Detention, Suspension, etc.).....	page 20
Academic integrity.....	page 28
Discipline of Students with Disabilities.....	page 30
Bus Rules.....	page 40
Athletic Code of Conduct.....	page 41
Student Searches and Interrogations.....	page 42

Refer to the following Board Policies for additional information:

[Policy 7313 - Suspension of Students](#)

[Policy 7330 - Searches and Interrogations](#)

[Policy 7340 - Bus Rules and Regulations](#)

[Policy 7360 - Weapons in School and the Gun-Free Schools Act](#)

DRESS CODE

All students are expected to give proper attention to personal cleanliness and to dress appropriately for school and school functions. A student's dress, grooming, and appearance shall:

1. Be safe, appropriate and not disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
2. Recognize that garments that expose excessive skin, such as, but not limited to, tube tops, net tops, halter tops, plunging neckline (front and/or back), short shirts / skirts / shorts / skorts, and see-through garments are not appropriate.
3. Ensure that underwear is completely covered with outer clothing.
4. Not include the wearing of hats in the elementary and middle school buildings except for a medical or religious purpose. Approved, building-wide activities are exempt.
5. Include footwear at all times. Footwear that is deemed "unsafe" by the building principal or designee will not be allowed.
6. Not include items that are vulgar, obscene, libelous, or denigrate others on account of race, color, religion or religious practice, creed, national origin, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, sex or disability.
7. Not promote and/or endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs, and/or encourage other illegal or violent activities.

Students who violate the student dress code shall be required to modify their appearance by covering or removing the offending item, and if necessary or practical, replacing it with an acceptable item. Any student who refuses to do so shall be subject to discipline, up to and including in-school suspension for the day. Any student who repeatedly fails to comply with the dress code shall be subject to further discipline, up to and including out of school suspension.

Party Souvenir Clothing

Shirts and other clothing items which are given at bar/bat mitzvahs, confirmations or other parties are discouraged at the middle school because they highlight divisions between friend groups and heighten the anxiety of young adolescents about social issues. Wearing this party clothing to school is a student/parent decision, but we hope that all understand the negative effects of such traditions on the environment of our middle school.

LIBRARY / INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA CENTER (IMC)

The Instructional Media Center is open daily from 7:30am - 3:30pm and provides a quiet place for research, reading, and individual and small-group work. The following expectations are in place:

- Students will work quietly and productively.
- Students will respect the right of others to work undisturbed.
- No food/drink is permitted in the library with the exception of tightly closed water bottles.

Students who do not behave appropriately will not be permitted in the library except when accompanied by a teacher during class time.

Students must reimburse the school district for lost or damaged library materials. Students who do not clear their library account jeopardize the receipt of their final report card.

PHONES & PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In accordance with Education Law §2803, students are prohibited from using personal internet-enabled devices during the school day anywhere on school grounds, unless authorized by a teacher, administrator, or District personnel.

Please note that students bring personal possessions to school at their own risk. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or broken devices.

Phones, Smartwatches, Fitbits, Kindles, Nooks & e-readers:

- Must be TURNED OFF and IN THE STUDENT'S LOCKER at all times during the school day.

Computers, Laptops, Tablets:

- All BBMS students are given a school-issued iPad. Personal laptops and other computing devices are not permitted during the school day.

Cameras & Recording Devices:

- Cameras and recording devices may only be used with prior approval of the Administration.

Devices that are visible, audible, or otherwise in use during the school day will be confiscated for student pick-up at the end of the day. Subsequent offenses will result in parent/guardian notification and the parent/guardian will be required to pick the device up at the end of the day.



PROHIBITED ITEMS

Any equipment that interferes with the educational environment is not permitted in the school building or on the school grounds at any time. This includes, but is not limited to: skateboards, rollerblades, laser pens/pointers, rollers on shoes, and any item (toys, etc.) that resemble a weapon of any kind. This list is not exclusive and any other item that is unsafe or disruptive to the educational process will be prohibited.

BICYCLES, SKATES, SCOOTERS AND SKATEBOARDS

Students who use a bike, in-line skates, scooter or skateboard as a means of transportation to school do so at their own risk. New York State law requires the use of a helmet when riding a bicycle, scooter, or in-line skates. Bicycles that are ridden to school must be parked and locked in the bicycle rack at the front of the school.

TECHNOLOGY - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The [Acceptable Use Policy](#) (AUP) details the full terms and conditions for use of the internet, district network, and technology. Please note that each user is responsible for all actions on his or her individual account and that exemplary behavior is expected at all times.

- Users must not provide others with access to their individual accounts.
- Using or sharing another user's login name and password is prohibited.
- Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files, other data, or passwords belonging to other users.
- Malicious use of the Internet or the network to develop programs that harass other users or infiltrate a computer or computer system and/or damage the software components of a computer or computer system (e.g., create viruses) is prohibited.
- Hate mail, harassment, profanity, obscenity, discriminatory remarks, misrepresentation, impersonation, and/or other similar behavior are prohibited on the Internet and the network.
- Intentional uses of the Internet or the network to access or process pornographic material, text files unrelated to course work or academic research, materials for use in illegal activities, or files dangerous to the operating integrity of the network and its users are prohibited.
- Users shall not reveal anything that would enable others to locate or exploit them, e.g., last name, home address, credit card, photos of themselves/others or social security number. Similarly, users shall not reveal such information about others over the Internet.
- Users shall not agree to meet with someone they have met online. Any contact of this nature, or the receipt of any message you feel is inappropriate or makes you feel uncomfortable, should be reported to school authorities immediately.
- Users shall not intentionally try to circumvent District security or filtering.
- Use of the Internet, network, or district web-based e-mail tool to hack into other users accounts is prohibited.
- Users shall not post chain letters or send an unnecessary message to a large number of e-mail addresses.
- The use of text messaging, instant messaging, or any digital communication during an exam or during instructional time is prohibited.

Please note that the contents of your personal files on the District system may be monitored if a policy or legal infraction is suspected. Routine maintenance and monitoring of the system may lead to discovery that you have violated this policy and/or have engaged in illegal activity on the District's system. An individual search will be conducted if there is reasonable suspicion that you have violated this policy. The investigation will be reasonably related to the suspected violation.

In the event of a claim that a violation of this policy has occurred, an investigation will be conducted and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, if necessary. Depending on the result of this investigation, additional restrictions may be placed on an individual's use of the District's Internet connection. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted through the District computer system.

Extra- & Co-Curricular Activities

CLUBS & ACTIVITIES

In addition to academics, BBMS offers a variety of opportunities for students to explore other areas of interest. These offerings vary by year depending upon student interest and the availability of faculty advisors. A schedule of clubs and extracurricular activities will be published in the fall and may include offerings such as the below list. Please note that club offerings change from year to year.

Ancient & Medieval Board Games
Art Club
Backyard Games
Debate Team
Design Club
Destination Imagination
Drama Club
Jazz Ensemble

Student Leadership Club
Middle School Musical
Newspaper Club
Robotics
Select Band
Select Chorus
Student Advocacy Council
Yearbook

As we strive to provide extracurricular programming which meet the needs and interests of all students, we encourage students to propose the creation of new clubs/organizations by speaking with a building administrator.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

In order for students to attend a school-sponsored function (ie - clubs, class activities, sports, evening activities such as dances/dress rehearsals/performances), it is necessary that they attend classes for at least one half of the school day on the day of the activity. District policy defines one half of the school day as being either from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm or from 12:00 pm to 2:40 pm. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the school administration.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

The Interscholastic Athletic Program is an important part of the overall education program for young men and women. All students are encouraged to take advantage of this very exciting aspect of our school. All students, whether participating or enjoying the activity as a spectator, should always be mindful of the rules of good sportsmanship.

Blind Brook is a member of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Conference III and participates in League C for the majority of our interscholastic sports for J.V. and Varsity levels. As per New York State law, students are not eligible to participate in the interscholastic athletic program until they enter 7th grade at the [modified](#) level. Middle school students may play on Varsity or J.V. teams only if they pass the State mandated [Athletic Placement Process \(APP\)](#) and if their skill level indicates they will be able to have significant playing time.

More information about the interscholastic athletic program can be found on the athletics website and in the [Interscholastic Athletic Handbook](#). Please contact Mr. Greg Warren (gwarren@blindbrook.org or x4500) with any questions.

Health Services

Parents of students with health issues should inform the school nurse at the beginning of the school year or when such issues arise. Examples include vision or hearing problems, diabetes, epilepsy, rheumatic fever, recent surgery, medication or anything that might impact a student's activities at school.

To ensure the safety of those in our community with severe allergies, BBMS is a nut-aware facility. Students may not bring peanuts, peanut butter, or any other nut products to school or school events.

SCHOOL NURSE

Our school nurses, Ms. Erica Santelmo and Ms. Adora Mulholland, are on duty between the hours of 7:40 AM and 2:40 PM and are responsible for all matters relating to individual student health issues. They can be reached at x4230 or via email at MSHSNurse@blindbrook.org.

ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

When students are ill during the school day, they must obtain permission from the teacher to go to the Health Office. No student may leave school grounds for illness unless excused by the nurse. Students may refer themselves to the nurse between classes.

ACCIDENTS & INJURIES

Every accident in the school building, on the school grounds, at practice sessions, or at any athletic event sponsored by the school must be reported immediately to the person in charge, to the school nurse, and to the administration.

USE OF MEDICATION

New York State law prescribes specific guidelines for the legitimate use of medication by students in school. Our procedures for the administration of internal medication to students during school hours are as follows:

1. The school nurse must have on file a written request from the family physician indicating the frequency and dosage of the prescribed or over-the-counter medication.
2. The school nurse must have on file a written request from the parent to administer the medication as specified by the family physician.
3. The labeled medication must be delivered directly to the school nurse by the parent.

In the event of illness or accident, school personnel will give emergency care only. Parents are responsible for any additional care needed.

CHILD ABUSE IDENTIFICATION & HOTLINE

Effective January 17, 2017, Section 409-l of the Education Law was adopted and requires that all public school districts post the toll-free telephone number (1-800-342-3720) of the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) to receive reports of child abuse or neglect, along with directions for accessing the [OCFS website](#) in English and in Spanish.

Additionally, on January 25, 2017, the Commissioner added new emergency regulations in compliance with Section 409-l which require that districts:

- (1) Post such information on the district and/or school's website(s), if such a website exists; and
- (2) Post such information in highly-visible areas of school buildings; and
- (3) Make such information available at the district and school building-level administrative offices, where applicable; and
- (4) Provide such information to parents and persons in parental relation at least once per school year in a manner as determined by the school, including, but not limited to, through electronic communication and/or sending such information home with students; and
- (5) Provide each teacher and administrator in the school with such information.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

English as a New Language (ENL) is a specially designed program for students with limited proficiency of the English language. Any student whose first language is not English and who has not yet developed the English language proficiency needed for social and academic success in our school is eligible for the program. Proficiency is determined by an evaluative process approved by the State Education Department.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Tutors shall be employed, as determined by the superintendent, on an hourly basis, upon certification by a physician that a student will be absent for an extended period of time. Where, in the district's judgment, a student shall be eligible for homebound instruction, middle school students (6-8) will receive ten hours of instruction per week.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

MTSS is the practice of providing high-quality academic and behavioral instruction/intervention matched to student needs. While the goal of MTSS is to help those students who are at risk of not meeting state and/or district learning standards, MTSS represents an important educational strategy to close achievement gaps for all students.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-tiered prevention system to facilitate student achievement. The process begins with high quality research-based instruction in the general education setting provided by the general education teacher (Tier 1). Instruction is matched to student need through provision of differentiated instruction in the core curriculum and supplemental intervention delivered in a multi-tiered format with increasing levels of intensity and targeted focus of instruction, depending on a student's responsiveness.

As required by New York State Education Department regulations, all BBMS students are screened three times per year to assess their academic progress towards meeting the state learning standards. Should a student's performance on the screener, coupled with additional assessment data, indicate that he/she is at risk of not meeting the state learning standards, he/she/they will be identified as being in need of supplemental, small-group intervention (Tier 2). Should the student continue to display chronic or severe academic delays, he/she/they will be recommended for intensive individual intervention (Tier 3). If the student continues not to make sufficient progress, it may be determined that a referral for a comprehensive evaluation to determine eligibility for special education is needed. For additional information, please contact your child's school counselor.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Board of Education of the Blind Brook-Rye Union Free School District, as a part of a long standing commitment to excellence in education for all students, supports the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities, offered in the least restrictive placement appropriate, to meet the needs of its students under the auspices of the Committee on Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education.

In support of State and Federal laws pertaining to students with disabilities, the Board of Education supports a full continuum of services in the district to enable it to meet, within the District, the needs of the majority of its identified students.

These programs and services are designed

- To afford each student with the appropriate level of support necessary to meet New York State Standards
- To provide each student with those special educational services necessary to enable the student to meet his/her annual goals
- To afford each identified student with the opportunity to participate to the greatest extent appropriate in all programs and activities offered by the district
- To give each identified student genuine opportunities to develop those skills and make those connections necessary to meet post -secondary goals.

(Blind Brook-Rye UFSD Special Education Plan 2016-2018)

For further specific information on Blind Brook Special Education procedures and programming please refer to [The Blind Brook-Rye Committee on Special Education and Section 504 Handbook](#).

CHILD FIND NOTICE -

"Child Find" requires all public school districts to have in place a system to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities who reside in the district, including children who are homeless or in foster care, and students whose parents choose to enroll them in nonpublic schools located within the district. In order to meet our Child Find obligations, our district pursues multiple avenues, including publication on our website regarding the referral process and ongoing training for staff regarding our obligations.

If a parent or guardian suspects that his/her child may have a disability that adversely affects the student's education or access to school, the parent or guardian may initiate a referral to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) or the §504 Committee by sending a letter requesting an evaluation either to the child's building principal or to the Director of Pupil Services.

School professionals, in cooperation with the building level Instructional Support Team (IST), also refer students suspected of having a disability to the CSE or §504 Committee, as applicable. Building principals and chairpersons of both the CSE and the §504 Team are authorized to initiate such referrals directly. In addition, school personnel, a child's physician and judicial officers may request a

referral to the CSE. In cases where a request is denied, the CSE must notify the child's parent, in writing, of the right to initiate a referral directly.

Regardless of the source of a referral, a parent must provide written consent to enable the district to conduct an initial evaluation. Upon receipt of the parents' written consent, the district has 60 calendar days to complete the evaluation process and to convene a meeting of the CSE or the §504 Team, where applicable.

The CSE has 60 school days from the date of written consent to conduct an evaluation to implement an IEP, in those cases where the CSE recommends that the student be classified as a child with a disability and recommends placement in the public schools.

Please refer to the [Blind Brook CSE/504 Handbook](#) for additional information.

WORKING PAPERS - Please contact Ms. Debra Navaretta in the HS Guidance Office (dnavaretta@blindbrook.org or x4200).

ACADEMIC POLICIES & PROCEDURES

GRADING GUIDELINES

GRADING PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE

Blind Brook Middle School recognizes that every graduating class faces new challenges. It is the goal of the Administrators, Teachers, and Support Staff to help students meet those challenges by preparing students for high school, college and career readiness. While students must attain basic literacy and numeracy, they must also attain essential skills which include critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork.

Blind Brook Middle School believes that grades serve a valuable instructional purpose by helping students and parents/guardians identify the student's areas of strengths and areas needing improvement; recognizing that each student is an individual. Parents/guardians and students have the right to receive grades that represent an accurate evaluation of the individual student's achievement.

Grades are based on impartial, consistent observation of the quality of student work and student mastery of course content and academic standards. Students shall have multiple opportunities to demonstrate this mastery through a variety of channels such as class activities, homework, quizzes, tests, essays, labs, projects, and portfolios.

The Blind Brook Middle School's grading policy shall be administered in a uniform manner based on standards that apply to all students in that course and grade level. Teachers shall inform students and parents/guardians, in advance, how student achievement will be evaluated in the classroom.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The majority of special education students receive the same district curriculum and assessments as the general education students. Accommodations and modifications are available if they are listed on a student's IEP or 504. A copy of the student's IEP or 504 is available to all teachers of the particular student. General education teachers should confer regularly with special education teachers regarding the progress of individual special education or 504 students.

DEFINITIONS:

Formative Assessment - An assessment for learning that occurs during the learning process and provides information to both teachers and students that enable them to make adjustments to increase learning. Examples may include: homework, classwork, quizzes, labs, draft essays, etc.

Summative Assessment - An assessment of learning that occurs after instruction to determine what students know, understand, and can do at one point in time. Examples may include: unit exams, major projects, final essays, lab practicum, midterm and final exams, Regents exams.

Grading Components May Include the Following Formative and Summative Assessments:

1. Essay examinations
2. Short answer objective tests or quizzes
3. Problem situation tests
4. Oral presentations
5. Projects or independent study/research paper
6. Analysis of creative projects
7. Compositions appropriate to the subject area
8. Journals or learning logs
9. Daily recitations or homework papers
10. Demonstrated proficiency in English usage
11. Skill demonstrations or performances
12. Teacher observations of participation

Make-Up Work

A student who misses homework assignments or other assignments or due dates because of excused absences will be allowed to make up work. Arrangements for completing the work should be made upon the student's return to school and include a schedule for completion of work. Students must initiate contact with the teacher.

Teachers are not obligated to provide make-up tests or accept homework or other assignments from students who have missed class due to an unexcused absence.

Late Work

- Students will receive a score of 0 for an assignment or assessment in which he/she made no attempt or which is missing.
- Credit for late work shall be awarded according to the following guidelines:
 - If the student was present in class on the due date or absent due to an unexcused absence, the work will be penalized based on the teacher's grading policies (as per course syllabus).
 - If the student was not present in class on the due date because of an excused absence, full credit will be given for the completed work

GRADING AND RETURNING OF STUDENT WORK

- Teachers will make reasonable efforts to grade and return student work within a two week period (exceptions include long term assignments, projects, and essays).
- Teachers will communicate to students and parents when a particular assignment may take longer to return.
- Major projects and assignments completed within a marking period must be graded and included in the grade calculation for that marking period, unless otherwise communicated.

- Student grades may not be subject to a percentage grade reduction for lateness to class, absence, behavior, or disciplinary action. Such actions, however, could impact the final grade because of missed work and incomplete assignments.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students are to write down, complete, and submit assignments as instructed by the teacher.
- Students will complete assessments as instructed by the teacher and the directions provided in the assessment.
- Students will record assessment dates as they are announced.
- Students will take advantage of opportunities to review and discuss assessments with teachers.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Teachers will clearly communicate their overall grading system to parents and students via the course syllabus.
- Teachers will post homework assignments online daily, allowing for access by students and parents (note: this does not include the actual documents).
- Teachers will announce and post major assessments and coordinate dates through an internal shared calendar.
- The grading and return of student work will generally occur within two weeks (exceptions include long term assignments, projects, and essays).
- Teachers must notify parents of unsatisfactory or declining progress throughout the marking period.
- Teachers will communicate with parents and school administration when students are at risk for receiving a failing grade on a progress report or a marking period grade.
- Teachers will give students an opportunity to review and discuss material before an assessment.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Parents/Guardians should be familiar with the grading policies for each course.
- Parents/Guardians will communicate appropriately with teachers regarding any questions about grades or the grading system.
- Parents should understand that individual grades are only a snapshot of the student's performance and are a component of the student's overall achievement and/or performance.

HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT COURSES

Blind Brook Middle School offers the following 8th grade courses which allow students to earn high school credit. Grades in these courses are calculated into the student's high school average and appear on the high school transcript. Students earn one high school credit for each course successfully completed:

- Regents Algebra 1
- Regents Earth & Space Science
- Italian 1
- Spanish 1

HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

BBMS recognizes that homework is an important part of academic growth in middle school. It has the potential to affirm the learning partnership among students, teachers, and parents/guardians. We believe that family and leisure activities are important as well and the amount and type of homework should reflect this belief. We acknowledge individual student differences in ability, achievement levels, and needs, and that some students may take more or less time to complete assignments. The purpose of this homework policy is to guide teachers, parents/guardians, and students in ensuring that homework is meaningful and supports the learning experience for all students.

Definition of Homework

Homework is any activity or assignment directed by the teacher to be performed outside the classroom that may include, but is not limited to: practicing skills learned in class, gaining knowledge for the following day's lesson, reading, studying, projects, research, or completion of assignments. Short term assignments are defined as class work that is finished at home or work due 1-2 school days after assigned. Long term assignments are generally more project based assignments and exceed the 1-2 school day duration of short term assignments.

Purpose of Homework

BBMS recognizes that homework should be purposeful, meaningful, and of high quality. The purpose of homework may be categorized within four broad categories: pre-learning, checking for understanding, promoting the development of skills and conceptual understanding, and fostering the development of critical thinking skills.

- Pre-learning refers to any learning task that seeks to introduce students to a concept or topic by providing background information in advance. These assignments may provide teachers with valuable information regarding the knowledge and understanding that students bring to the class, stimulate interest in the topic, and/or serve as a springboard for the next day's lesson.
- Assignments that check for understanding provide the teacher with insight into student learning. These tasks help teachers to monitor progress and adjust instruction as necessary to meet the individual needs of students.
- Skill development assignments are designed to provide students with opportunities to review, practice and further develop content-related skills and conceptual understanding. These assignments aim to reinforce classroom learning and help students self-assess their individual levels of mastery.
- Processing assignments are used to provide students with opportunities to extend their understanding of concepts introduced in class, further develop their critical thinking skills by finding connections, applying skills or knowledge learned, analyzing, evaluating, or synthesizing information to develop deeper understandings.

In addition, homework fosters student achievement, independence and responsibility, provides opportunities for students to develop good study habits, develop and enhance time management skills, assess their understanding of discipline-related concepts and skills, encourage self-initiative and self-advocacy, and serves as a link between school and the home by providing parents/guardians with insight as to what is being taught in the classroom.

Assignment of Homework

The assignment and coordination of homework for each course shall be the responsibility of the teacher. Long-term assignments and tests should be coordinated across each grade level whenever possible. Teachers are encouraged to assign homework that adapts to the maturity and learning needs of individual students, and to provide a balance between long-range and short-term assignments. Homework should be a properly planned part of the curriculum extending and reinforcing the learning experiences of the school. It should be reviewed with the class or answers posted so students have specific feedback on their work. General study skills and specific study skills for each discipline should be taught by the teacher.

Quantity of Homework

The district's goals, consistent with New York State Regents Standards for Education, require students to assume increased responsibility for their assignments as they progress in school. Homework assignments, given at all grade levels, reflect the increased instructional demands students encounter as they proceed through school. Homework may be assigned every school night and the time allotted will increase gradually from grade to grade. Teachers will set forth homework expectations at the beginning of the year in their course syllabus.

There are variations in the amount of time each child will spend on homework as each child will address homework assignments at different rates. Certain eighth grade classes/programs, such as Regents Algebra, Regents Earth Science, and Level 1 World Language classes, may have additional homework requirements as they are considered high school classes.

In addition to homework, all children in the district are urged to read at home for 20 minutes daily. Research has shown that children who read for 20 minutes daily outperform those who do not. Experience has shown us that this amount of daily reading practice allows all of our students to become the best readers and writers they can be. It is recommended that children read to or with their parents/guardians, as well as independently.

Special Education Pupils

Classified pupils in special education or mainstreamed classes will receive homework based upon the modifications noted within their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The special and individual needs of these pupils will dictate the amount and structure of their homework assignments. The special education instructional staff is available to assist mainstream teachers regarding individual pupils' assignments.

Student Responsibilities

- Record homework assignments in the student planner or digitally.
- Apply each teacher's guidelines for homework and study skills to your classes.
- Know the assignment for each course, each day and be able to find assignments if absent from class.
- Ensure homework is completed to the best of his/her ability and with academic integrity.
- Complete homework in the given time frame.
- Manage time on projects and studying.
- Ask for assistance from teachers, classmates, and parents/guardians as needed.
- Make up work from class absence in a timely manner.
- Take initiative by reaching out to teachers when unclear about a homework assignment/task.

Parental Responsibilities

Parents are expected to encourage completion of homework, monitor assignments, and provide conditions that are conducive to their successful completion. As homework is an integral part of a child's educational success, parents are important in establishing positive attitudes, good study habits and supporting students' success with homework. Parents are encouraged to:

- Show interest in schoolwork their children bring home.
- Provide a suitable place to study, free from disturbances/distractions.
- Supply needed materials for completing homework.
- Offer to clarify instructions.
- Ensure that work is completed when notified that the student is not completing homework.
- Encourage their children to do their best work and praise them for their efforts.
- Assist children with their management of time.
- Monitor the television, internet, and digital device use of their children.
- Stay in close communication with teachers.
- Acknowledge errors but refrain from doing the work for the child.
- Encourage students to seek extra help at school when having difficulty.

Notify the teacher if:

1. The child experiences extreme difficulty with the homework and/or takes an excessive amount of time.
2. Materials are unavailable.
3. A situation in the family's personal life conflicts with homework.
4. The child's uninterrupted time spent on homework regularly exceeds the expected amount of time.
5. The student is participating in non-school sponsored academic intervention.

Teacher Responsibilities

- Assign relevant, challenging, and meaningful homework.
- Posting homework online and notifying parents and students how to access the assignment.
- Provide students with information on general study skills and study skills that are relevant to the specific discipline.
- Give clear instructions and ensure students understand the expectations, including how homework will be assessed.
- When study guides and/or review packets are provided, they should be provided with enough time for students to get feedback or ask questions about the material.
- Schedule periodic check-ins for long-term assignments that are appropriate for the developmental stage of the students.
- Offer assistance when needed (WIN).
- Provide verbal or written feedback to students as promptly as possible.
- Maintain homework records and communicate with parents/guardians promptly if homework completion or effort begins to negatively impact the grade, or after two assignments are missed in any given quarter.
- Discuss in Team Meetings to ensure the amount of homework assigned is reasonable, taking into account competing home obligations, extracurricular activities, and homework or assessments planned or assigned by other teachers.

MATH ACCELERATION AND PLACEMENT PROCESS

Seventh grade students are placed in either Math 7 or Accelerated Math 7 (7A) based on the results of the Math 6 placement criteria. These criteria include a placement test, quarterly grades in Math 6 during the first three quarters, a student behavior rubric, midterm assessment, STAR/New York State Assessment results, etc.

The progress of all students in the accelerated program will be monitored carefully. The teacher, math coordinator, and school counselor will review student grades at the end of each marking period. If a student is not performing up to accelerated math standards by achieving at least a B-, the principal, teacher, coordinator, and counselor will meet with the student and a parent(s). At that point, the staff may recommend that the student transfer from the accelerated to the regular math class. However, it will be the family's decision to have the student transfer or stay in the accelerated class. A copy of the math department's recommendation will be placed in the student's file.

The progress of all students in the regular program will also be monitored carefully by the mathematics department. Any seventh grade student who satisfies the following criteria may be recommended for transfer into the accelerated math program on a trial basis and given assistance in catching up to the class. This will be done at the end of the first and second quarters, and again in June, at the end of seventh grade.

- A course grade of A for each marking period.
- A standardized test score history that indicates strong math aptitude.
- Demonstration of the proper work habits needed for success in the accelerated program, including coming to class prepared, participating in class discussions and activities, being able to work cooperatively with classmates, and respecting classmates' right to learn in a positive environment.
- The recommendation of the Math 7 teacher.

- A student who wishes to transfer into 8th Grade Accelerated Math from Math 7 must take a Blind Brook designed exam during the intervening summer that covers the accelerated math 7 curriculum. The student must score at least 83% on this exam.

Students will not be transferred from regular Math 8 to accelerated Math 8 once the school year has begun. Accelerated Math 8 students will take the Algebra I Regents at the end of the year.

No student will be moved into an accelerated class if the class is already at maximum capacity.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Blind Brook Middle School employs a variety of methods to inform students and parents of student progress in a class. The school recognizes that reporting of a simple letter-grade on a quarterly basis is inadequate if the goal is to provide helpful information that will lead to improvement of student performance. For this reason, the school supplements Quarterly Report Cards with Progress Reports, parent conferences, and teacher contact and communication via phone or email. Effective and timely home school communication is most important in your child's success in school. If you have any questions about your child's progress, please contact his/her teacher or school counselor.

Report Cards

A report card is issued electronically at the end of each quarter (approximately every ten weeks) with grades reported alphabetically. The exception to this is in eighth grade high school level courses, in which grades are reported numerically. Comments are added as necessary to include additional information to support the grade.

Progress Reports

As a means of supplementing report cards, progress reports are issued electronically at the midpoint of each marking period. A careful reading of this report can be helpful in assessing the student's overall strengths and areas in need of improvement.

RETENTION / SUMMER SCHOOL

While every attempt will be made by the middle school staff to promote student success, failure does occasionally occur. A student who, in a given year, fails a course required by state law or commissioner's regulation must exercise one of the three following options:

- Attend and successfully pass an equivalent course in a Blind Brook approved summer school.
- Receive 30 hours of tutoring during the summer by a teacher certified in the subject being taught and approved by Blind Brook (with the district syllabus), and pass a final examination prepared by or approved by the school. The teacher will provide documentation for all the work done in the course.
 - Families are financially responsible for expenses incurred for summer school or tutoring.
- Repeat the course during the following year, although this may limit the student's choices of other courses.

When circumstances warrant and scheduling options permit, the student will be scheduled as well in the next class in the sequence. If the student is successful in this next course, at the end of the first semester and upon the recommendation of its teacher, the student will be released from attendance at the lower level course.

A student who, in a given year, fails two courses required by State law or commissioner's regulation must exercise one of the three following options:

- Attend and successfully pass an equivalent course in an approved summer school.
- Receive 30 hours of tutoring during the summer by a teacher certified in the subject being taught and approved by Blind Brook (with the district syllabus), and pass a final examination prepared by or approved by the school. The teacher will provide documentation for all the work done in the course.
 - Families are financially responsible for expenses incurred for summer school or tutoring.
- Repeat the two courses failed during the following year, which will limit the student's choices of other courses. When circumstances warrant and scheduling options permit, the student will be scheduled as well in the next class in the sequence. If the student is successful in this course, at the end of the first semester and upon the recommendation of its teacher, the student will be released from attendance at the lower level course. The principal has the option of waiving a non-academic course so the two levels of the same course can be accommodated for one semester.

A student who fails summer school or a tutoring experience must repeat the course. A student who fails three or more such courses will be retained in grade. This decision may be appealed to the principal in writing by the student or his/her parents within ten working days of notification of the failure. Such an appeal must state the reasons for not retaining the student. The principal, after consultation with appropriate school personnel (teacher, counselor, department coordinator, CSE chairperson), will render a final determination within ten working days of receipt of the appeal. Student records will reflect both summer school grades and grades earned during the year.