



2026- 2027

**Boyce Middle School
Student/ Family Handbook**

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PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME LETTER

August 2026

Dear Boyce Families and Students:

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year at Boyce Middle School. We look forward to another exciting, engaging and successful year. Boyce Middle School takes pride in providing students with countless opportunities to learn and grow. We encourage ongoing parental involvement in order to be active participants in your learner's education.

The purpose of this student/family handbook is to provide you with an overview of information about the school, curriculum, activities, policies and procedures. Please read the handbook carefully to become familiar with what is expected of you and your child in order to achieve academic, social, and emotional success. Please note that a District Handbook is also available and provides you with district-wide information, required policy notifications, and compliance notices. In the case of a conflict between this supplemental handbook and the District Handbook, the District Handbook will govern.

The Boyce experience is designed for students to be exposed to a wide array of educational opportunities that are supported by an integrated curriculum and a team-teaching approach. Along with their academic subjects, students will learn respect, kindness, and understanding as they prepare to meet the challenges of life.

At Boyce Middle School we place a high-value on academics, but we also address social and emotional development with our students. We strive to equip students with tools and strategies that will benefit them in all aspects of life, while providing a climate that makes students feel safe and happy while at school.

If you have questions regarding any information in the handbook, or other school related issues, please call us at 412-833-1600 x5000 for assistance.

We look forward to working with each of you this school year and welcoming you into our Boyce family.

Mr. Tom Kaminski
Principal

Dr. Christine M. Mussomeli
Assistant Principal

District Information

Upper St. Clair District Administration

Dr. John Rozzo, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Amy Pfender, Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Rachel Andler, Director of Special Education

Dr. Lou Angelo, Director of Administrative Services

Mr. Raymond Berrott, Director of Technology

Mr. Sean Bryson, Chief of School Police

Mr. Scott Burchill, Director of Business & Finance

Mr. Danny Holzer, Director of Athletics

Dr. Lauren Madia, Director of Pupil Services

Mr. Jonn Mansfield, Director of Transportation

Mrs. Chelsea Martini, Assistant Director of Special Education

Dr. Dan O'Rourke, Director of Elementary and Middle Level Education

Mr. Dan Snyder, Director of Operations & Facilities

Dr. Tim Wagner, Director of Secondary Education

Mr. Bradley Wilson, Director of Strategic Initiatives

Upper St. Clair School District Board of School Directors

Mr. Mike Mascaro, President

Mrs. Hallie Snyder, Vice President

Mrs. Barbara L. Bolas

Mrs. Kelly Hanna

Mr. David Kyle

Mr. Justin Lamber

Mrs. Angela B. Petersen

Mrs. Jennifer Schnore

Dr. Danielle Z. Wetzel

BOYCE MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICE PERSONNEL

Mr. Tom Kaminski, Principal
 Dr. Christine M. Mussomeli, Assistant Principal
 Mrs. Amy Antonio, School Counselor (Grade 5)
 Mrs. Tonia Autieri, School Counselor (Grade 6)
 Mrs. Dee Kelly, Head Administrative Assistant
 Mrs. Jennifer Widich, Administrative Assistant - Attendance
 Mrs. Hilarie Bauer, MEd, RN, CSN - School Nurse
 Officer Mike Banaszak, School Police - Boyce MS
 Mr. Scott Roley, Head Custodian
 Mrs. Sharon Niedermeyer, Nutrition Center Manager

School Closings and Delays

The USCSD Parent Alert System will be used to communicate information regarding any necessary delays and/or cancellations. Emergency phone numbers for the Parent Alert System are requested during the “Back to School Online” process in mid August. If you have additions or changes to your emergency numbers, please contact your child’s school. In addition to automated phone calls and emails, the District will communicate delays and cancellations through the following resources:

- USCSD website: www.uscsd.k12.pa.us
- USCSD social media (@uscschools): Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram
- Local television stations: KDKA, WTAE, WPXI and local media websites

Flexible Instruction Day

Information for the District’s Flexible Instruction Day plan approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education can be found [here](#).

Standardized Testing

Keystone Exams are administered following the completion of Algebra I, Biology, and English 10 (literature). Keystone assessment dates will be announced by the respective building. Keystone and PSSA testing information is updated on the District’s website prior to the testing windows:

- [Keystone Exams](#)
- [PSSA Testing](#)

Testing Window for the Keystone Exams 2026-2027

Time of Year	Date
Winter Wave 1	December 7 - 18, 2026
Winter Wave 2	January 4- 15, 2027
Spring	May 17 - 28, 2027
Summer	July 26 - July 30, 2027

PSSA Testing Window 2026-2027

Assessment	Dates	Grades
English Language Arts	April 26 - 30, 2027	Grades 3-8
Mathematics, Science, and Make-ups	May 3 - May 7, 2027	Grades 3-8

OLSAT Administration

The administration of the assessment will be done by building:

Grade 5: Administered in mid-October

Grades 1 and 2: Administered in mid-March

BOYCE INFORMATION

BOYCE COURSE OFFERINGS

READING/ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)

Skills are taught through a multi-text approach to reading, utilizing fiction and non-fiction texts. The curriculum combines a literature-based approach to reading with direct instruction in reading skills. Students read age-appropriate novels related to the themes across the curricular areas. In addition, poetry, short stories, and non-fiction readings are read along with the novels. Writing tasks, comprehension work, and various other activities are designed to develop the students' skills and processes, as well as their higher-order thinking skills. Grammar, usage, and mechanics of the language are taught in an integrated manner within writing and reading tasks. All units of reading and English Language Arts contain objectives and skills that are evaluated using multiple assessment tools each nine weeks.

MATHEMATICS

Skills are spiraled as students continue to develop proficiency in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions and decimals. Units on algebra, data

analysis, measurement, and geometry are also part of the curriculum in 5th and 6th grade. 5th grade students focus much of the year on finalizing their mastering of decimal and fraction operations with a particular focus on robust problem solving involving these kinds of numbers. They also broaden their understanding of Geometry and Data concepts. 6th grade students review operations with fractions and decimals and are introduced to the concept of integers. Basic algebraic concepts are interwoven throughout the 6th grade year as well, and students are also introduced to proportional reasoning skills through units on ratios, proportions, and percents and spend a great deal of time beginning their mastery of these skills.

All units of study emphasize estimation strategies, problem solving, and computation for accuracy. Whole group, small group, individual, and cooperative learning strategies are all incorporated into mathematics instruction in order to meet the needs of all learners. Mathematical practices such as reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, making sense of problems and persevere in solving them, constructing viable arguments, critiquing reasoning, modeling with mathematics, using tools strategically, attending to precision, identifying and using structure, and finding and expressing repeated reasoning are reinforced on a regular basis.

Math opportunities outside of the classroom, such as Calcu-Solve, Challenge 24, PML, etc. will be communicated at the appropriate time of the school year by your learner's math teacher, school announcements, Boyce Bulletin, Principal's monthly letter, eAlerts, and/or the school webpage. Please contact your child's math teacher for additional information regarding math opportunities outside of the classroom.

SCIENCE

The 5-6 Science Program uses an inquiry-based approach that focuses on scientific skills and processes, using nationally recognized and exemplary curriculum materials. The fifth grade science units focus on Variables, Chemistry, Space Science and Our Changing Earth. Students in sixth grade science units study the investigation of plants, Magnets, Motors and Electricity, Weather and Meteorology, and Ecology.

A highlight of the Boyce Middle School science experience is the 6th grade trip to [Deer Valley YMCA Camp](#). Deer Valley is an award winning environmental educational experience that takes place in the Spring semester of the 6th grade year. Parents/ Caregivers are encouraged to participate at Deer Valley with their students. Planning and informational sessions are typically held in the Fall and early Spring. The cost for the students to attend Deer Valley may be earned through several fundraising opportunities. **ALL** adults attending the Deer Valley trip **MUST** have updated clearances on file at Central Office. Please visit [Volunteers & Clearances](#) on our District website for step-by-step instructions on the process to obtain clearances.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies Curriculum at Boyce Middle School uses history as a framework to explore other areas of the social sciences as well as to develop key skills. The social studies curriculum emphasizes reading, writing, researching skills, and analytical thinking.

The curriculum in the 5th grade focuses on introducing four major disciplines of Social Studies: civics, geography, economics, and history. Students will gain a foundational understanding of these areas which they will build upon throughout their educational careers and beyond. The history portion of the course will focus on early American history, including the Revolutionary War and Civil War.

The 6th grade course of study focuses on Ancient Civilizations. Students will learn about the characteristics of a civilization and compare and contrast five different Ancient Civilizations as well

as the Middle Ages. Students will also make connections between the ancient and modern worlds. The 6th grade year culminates with a personal project where students will explore one Ancient Civilization of their choosing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The K-12 Health and Physical Education program focuses on the whole child. We strive to provide a safe environment where students can learn new skills, expand their interests, and enhance their overall physical health through the exploration of basic team sports, lifetime sports, and health and physical fitness education. The goal for every child is to gain an understanding of the importance of overall health and physical activity in order to promote a healthy lifestyle. New skills are introduced, preparing the student to effectively participate in physical activities in the regular school program, extra-curriculum programs, and activities of special interest in the community and school. Adaptive physical education activities are provided for students who qualify based on their unique learning needs. Students are required to wear closed-toe, athletic shoes when participating in physical education class.

WORLD LANGUAGE

The Upper St Clair School District is committed to providing high quality second language instruction in grades 1-12, thus providing students with the opportunity to develop functional proficiency in a second language. Through years of continuous language study, many USC graduates are able to develop coveted second language skills that are sought after by universities and employers alike. The programming at Boyce Middle School marks the beginning of this path, allowing students and their families to select the language of their choice. Given that acquired language proficiency happens at a different rate for each individual and requires thousands of hours of comprehensible, comprehended input, we are committed to helping students embrace a growth mindset while differentiating language complexity for a variety of learners.

Curriculum

In 5th grade, the beginner language experience begun in elementary schools continues with a full FLEX (Foreign Language Exploratory) program in which all students rotate through three language courses (French, German and Spanish) with instructors fully certified in the language they teach. Students learn about the culture and customs associated with each language, and are also expected to develop listening and speaking skills at a novice level. At the conclusion of their fifth grade year, students will have had 12 weeks of communicative instruction in each language (50 minute classes meeting every other day) and are asked to choose a single language for continued study through middle school. A three-year commitment is required (five years for IB students), so families are encouraged to thoughtfully consider the best fit for their child. This strong foundation and attention to allowing students to make informed decisions in their own education is done so that students are motivated to excel through high school in their chosen language.

Sixth grade marks the beginning of focused language study in full year classes: 50 minute classes every other day. Effective instruction for lasting acquisition uses rich language that students can understand from the first day for meaningful, engaging communication. This approach, often referred to as Comprehensible Input (CI), is the foundation for world language instruction throughout the middle school years in USC. The priority is the development of *spontaneous use* of the language rather than rote memorization and explicit grammar instruction, and a unique and customized curriculum has been developed for USC students. A similar, high quality experience for every child regardless of language choice is offered and includes listening and reading opportunities which use engaging input that students are able to understand in the target

language. Additionally, students will be encouraged to develop the skills necessary to learn how to maximize understanding in communicative settings when listening and reading.

Activities in WL

The WL staff at Boyce has long worked together to provide high-quality opportunities throughout the school year for students to experience the cultures of the languages they are learning, to recognize the wide variety of languages spoken at home by Boyce students and to develop a respect and understanding for the increasingly interconnected world we live in. Over several class periods throughout the school year, WL teachers run events and activities for each team during their regularly scheduled World Language classes. While these events change from year to year, the end goal remains the same: to develop global awareness and cultural understanding. Given our department-wide commitment to providing Comprehensible Input, many of these traditions are taught in the target language using visual language cues and story-telling techniques to establish meaning.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

The Expressive Arts curriculum enhances the students' learning experience by incorporating practical, fine and performing arts skills into one program. The program blends the subject content of each course and requires student involvement in the form of product and personal performance.

ART

Students in art work with a variety of media in both 5th and 6th grade. Projects in the 5th grade are geared towards enabling the student to experience a variety of techniques/skills, while 6th grade students are given the opportunity to explore the media/skills in more depth. The creative experiences include two-dimensional and three-dimensional projects in drawing, painting, fiber arts, design, ceramics and construction. Interdisciplinary projects are done in both grades with an appropriate topic and art activity being correlated. The goal of the art program is to enable students to explore different types of art media and to spark a lifelong interest in Art.

CAPS (Consuming and Producing Successfully)

CAPS (Consuming and Producing Successfully) allows students to explore their role as a consumer in our society and to develop their skills as a producer in a free enterprise system. In 5th grade, students focus on the areas of community & economy, financial literacy, work & career readiness, and business management with a culminating field trip experience to Junior Achievement's BizTown. In 6th grade, students focus on entrepreneurship and marketing, combining their interests with the needs of the community to design and experience various aspects of a business start-up. Students will have the opportunity to work in the maker space and with different forms of technology.

GENERAL MUSIC

All 5th and 6th grade students use a variety of music styles and genres to study the elements of music (beat, melody, rhythm, harmony, tempo, form, articulation, tone color and dynamics) through singing, moving, listening and performing on various melodic and percussive instruments. In 5th grade students are introduced to collaborative music-making within a modern band setting and in 6th grade students study the history of video game music and compose their own music for a video game they design. Students use ukuleles in both grades to perform both melodies and chordal accompaniments within solo and group environments.

STEAM DESIGN

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) Design is an integrated, interdisciplinary, and student-centered approach to learning that encourages curiosity, creativity, artistic expression, collaboration, communication, problem solving, critical thinking, and design thinking. Fifth and sixth graders will work in the Boyce STEAM Room and Makerspace and will utilize the engineering design process to work on and complete various projects.

ADVISOR TIME

The teacher/advisor will assume a helping role as an advocate for his or her assigned students by coordinating activities that will promote a sense of belonging, improve interpersonal relationships, and enhance the self-concept of every student.

Also emphasized through our Advisor Time is the Boyce Middle School Panther Program: school-wide positive behavior program predicated on teaching students to be respectful, responsible, prepared, productive, and safe. The focus is on appropriate and positive behavior choices with weekly time devoted to discussion of behavior expectations.

GUIDANCE

All students attend a Guidance class one day during the six-day rotation. Students participate in activities and discussions on a wide variety of topics including (but not limited to) kindness, teamwork, self esteem, conflict resolution, time management, career interests and exploration, online safety and digital citizenship. The guidance curriculum has been designed to provide lessons to our students that facilitate growth and development in the areas of career, personal and social development and is constantly evolving to best meet the current needs of our students.

BAND, CHORUS, AND ORCHESTRA

All students have an opportunity to join Chorus, Band and/or Orchestra. All three programs perform multiple concerts/ events throughout the year. Students who join Chorus hone their musical skills above and beyond those introduced during their nine-week general music class. In addition to the essential elements of music, Chorus members focus on proper breathing, tone production, listening, enunciation, articulation, intonation, harmony, part-singing and choreography. Students in the band will have two lessons in each 6 day cycle, one with similar instruments and one with the full ensemble. Band/ Orchestra members will study instrumental technique, proper breathing and fundamentals, and the essential elements of music. **No prior experience is necessary!** Any student interested in participating in our music programs is eligible. Families must provide transportation to all AM or PM practices for any musical performance at Boyce Middle School. Exact dates and times for practice and performances are subject to change and TBD for the Fall.

PROGRAM OF STUDIES

The following are programs of study for each grade. Core subjects are in **bold** and held daily in the rotation. All courses meet five days each week except as noted. The World Language Program is a three-year commitment to the study of one language starting in 6th grade. Students selecting band, orchestra, or chorus will have performance opportunities throughout the school year. For additional information, please contact your child's school counselor.

5th Grade Program of Studies

English Language Arts (Reading, Grammar, Writing, Vocabulary)

Mathematics

Science

Social Studies

World Language (*Spanish, French, and German*)

Physical Education

*Music Selection (optional) - *schedules of music selection options will be provided*

Expressive Arts (*Art, Music, STEAM Design, CAPS*)

Advisor Time, Team Time, Guidance, and Pride Time

6th Grade Program of Studies

English Language Arts (Reading, Grammar, Writing, Vocabulary)

Mathematics

Science

Social Studies

World Language

Physical Education

*Music Selection (optional) - *schedules of music selection options will be provided*

Expressive Arts (*Art, Music, STEAM Design, CAPS*)

Advisor Time, Team Time, Guidance, and Pride Time

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Because of our belief in nurturance, students are heterogeneously grouped into academic teams. This enables teachers and students to develop a strong sense of bonding. Interdisciplinary teaching is strongly encouraged and the team often engages in whole group activities, which helps develop a sense of identity and belonging. Because the skills and achievement levels of our learners are distributed across a broad continuum, varied methods of instruction and strategies for grouping are used to adequately meet the students' academic needs.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

These teams consist of three teachers who present the curricula in a highly structured format, focusing on basic skills while addressing the unique needs of individual learners. Interdisciplinary teams include an English Language Arts teacher, a Mathematics teacher, and a Science/ Social Studies teacher. Emphasis is placed on the development of work habits, study skills, critical thinking, and academic development. A variety of assessments such as quizzes, tests, compositions, and projects are used to monitor student progress.

Both 5th and 6th grade students have a choice (subject to space and scheduling needs) between the traditional educational program and the International Baccalaureate, Middle Years Program (MYP). The content and curriculum are the same with either choice. All teams use various instructional strategies to support student learning.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE: MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAM

Boyce Middle School offers the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP) at the 6th grade level and a “bridge” program between the Primary Years Program and the Middle Years Program at the 5th grade level.

The MYP is designed for students in the 10-16 age range. It is a complete and coherent program that provides a framework of academic challenge and life skills appropriate to this stage of adolescence. IB students will follow the Upper St. Clair Middle School curriculum, but the method of delivery is somewhat different. The MYP includes some unique characteristics. Teachers emphasize the holistic nature of knowledge, while students are trained to be inquisitive, active learners. International awareness is spotlighted during the instruction of all subjects. Good citizenship is promoted through a community service component. The IB Program is an option provided to all students (subject to space and scheduling needs); there are no special entrance requirements. For more detailed information, please visit the [International Baccalaureate/ Middle Years Program](#) on our District website.

SCHOOL DAY: STARTING AND ENDING TIMES

Drop off for students is 8:30 AM- 8:50 AM. **Students should not report to school before 8:30 AM unless the principals grant special permission.** Walkers/Car Riders need to enter the building on the side by the Boyce School Road entrance. Walkers/Car Riders must enter cars curbside only on the Boyce School Road side of the building; students will NOT be permitted to cross over bus lanes or the road without an adult. The first bell rings at 8:45 AM and homeroom will begin at 8:55 AM. Dismissal procedures begin at 3:35 PM.

SUPPORTING ALL STUDENTS

BOYCE PANTHER PROGRAM

The Boyce Middle School Panther Program is a school-wide endeavor to encourage positive behavior of all students. The program is designed to foster the social and emotional growth of our middle school learners. The Panther Program focuses on our school-wide behavioral expectations: Be respectful, responsible, prepared, productive, and safe. Although social-emotional learning skills are taught in all settings, Advisor Time lessons have been created for teachers to implement in their classroom or Team setting. Some of the topics include kindness, safety, anti-bullying, empathy, mindfulness, growth mindset, social skills, and many more. Students are recognized for their positive behaviors and contributions to our school environment by receiving a “Panther Paw” and a small incentive token (pencil topper, bracelet, pin, etc.). The Panther Paw is then entered into a larger drawing so that students have the opportunity to earn larger rewards. Most importantly, the Panther Program **encourages and recognizes positivity in the moment.** Any staff member can issue a Panther Paw to any student. For more detailed information on our Panther Program, please contact your child’s school counselor.

BOYCE PRIDE AWARD

For the past several years, the Boyce family has embraced the challenge of kindness and caring as an area of focus. Our parents, community and teachers have identified the need for social

awareness and caring to be emphasized and the existence of Boyce Pride creates the opportunity for the PTO to support these needs by recognizing acts of caring among the students.

The desire for students to display a caring attitude can only be reinforced if we recognize acts of kindness on a continual basis. Boyce Pride is a vehicle for teachers to identify and communicate known acts of kindness to be recognized by the entire Boyce family.

Every month (September-May), Boyce staff identify students who have performed the most outstanding acts of caring. Other staff may also nominate students. The nominating staff members write a description of the act and the students are recognized at a special Boyce Pride Principal's Ceremony. The students receive the written nomination from the teacher on a certificate as well as a small honorary token. Deserving students may be recognized more than one time, but the hope is that many different students will earn recognition.

BOYCE STUDENT COUNCIL

All students have an opportunity to participate in Boyce Middle School's Student Council. At the beginning of the year students submit an application for approval to be a member of the Student Council. Under the leadership of Student Council sponsors, representatives participate in school and community service projects throughout the year. Past projects have also included assisting with move-up day, organizing fundraisers, planning special events, and much more. Student Council members must be responsible and enthusiastic students who serve as role models for their peers.

BOYCE MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Library instruction is designed to enhance and connect to the curriculum and advance students' information literacy skills. Library time occurs regularly during Team Time. Additionally, students may visit the library to check out, renew, and return books during Morning Homeroom or Pride Time.

Library Circulation Policy: In addition to books used for curriculum research, students can self select books for their personal reading pleasure. A maximum of four (4) books may be checked out at one time. Books are checked out for a two-week period and may be renewed as needed. Parents assume the cost of lost or damaged library books.

CLUBS & ACTIVITIES AT BOYCE

Students at Boyce Middle School have the opportunity to participate in a variety of Clubs/Activities offered during Pride Time. These experiences are not graded and emphasis is placed on good sportsmanship, fair play, creative inquiry, and positive social and emotional development. *More information will be shared with students in the Fall regarding the new Clubs and Activities offered for the 2026- 2027 school year. Start date TBD.*

SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

Our school counseling and guidance program is a part of the total school program and complements learning in the classroom. Counselors will loop in order to have your child for their 5th and 6th grade years. The curriculum is child-centered, proactive and developmental. Our counseling and guidance program encourages students' social, emotional and personal growth.

The counselors may work directly with students in individual meetings and group discussions. These discussions include topics such as self-understanding, getting acquainted in a new school,

dealing with divorce or separation, friendship, and other relevant topics. We also consult with parents, teachers, and other professionals to help students maximize their fullest potential.

Boyce Middle School students annually participate in several service-learning projects throughout the school year. During the holiday season, our **Friendship Gift Bags** service project promotes social and emotional learning for all participants. Participating students fill gift bags with small gifts that are both fun and practical. Additionally, our School Counselors facilitate school-wide activities which encourage inclusivity, kindness, and good-decision making, such as Random Acts of Kindness Week, Red Ribbon Week, and more. **Random Acts of Kindness Week:** All 5th and 6th grade students participate in a weeklong celebration that focuses on performing kind acts for others. Some of the activities may include decorating placemats for Friendship Village, making get well cards for patients at Children's Hospital, and all students pledging to do at least one act of kindness for another classmate each day of the week. More detailed information will be provided by your student's school counselor. Dates TBD.

HEALTH SERVICES INFORMATION - [Health Services Information](#)

School Nurse- The Boyce Middle School Health Office is staffed by a registered nurse every day. Please feel free to phone the school office if you would like to speak with the nurse or have any health related questions:

Mrs. Hilarie Bauer, MEd, RN, CSN, Boyce Middle School Nurse, 412-833-1600 x5005

Mrs. Holly Fisher, RN, CSN, USCSD School Nursing Curriculum Leader, 412-833-1600 x4005

HOMework

Homework at the middle school level instills a sense of responsibility and accountability in all students. The staff at Boyce Middle School is committed to assigning homework that is meaningful and relevant. These formative years are a critical time in creating and establishing positive and constructive study skills. Students need to spend time outside of school to properly complete their work. There will be long-range assignments that require planned study time. Students should prioritize assignments, follow the study suggestions below, and allow sufficient time to complete each assignment. Planning and organization are the keys to successful study skills. Students should:

- Read the entire assignment quickly to grasp the basic idea then re-read slowly for content, relationships, and details.
- Set aside a regular time every day for study at home. Keep a list of assignments in the binder reminder book. Take home all the books, papers, and materials needed.
- Have a quiet place at home in which to write, read comfortably, and keep all study materials.

Homework is usually not assigned over weekends or holidays. It is imperative that parents check their child's homework every night. Homework assignments are communicated in various methods based on team teacher procedures (e.g., teacher's Canvas pages, Canvas calendar, binder reminders, "Thursday Folder" etc.).

NUTRITION CENTER (School Cafeteria)

Students are assigned a thirty-minute lunch period in the cafeteria every day. Students may either pack a lunch or purchase a breakfast or lunch in the cafeteria. Upper St. Clair uses a point of sale system (POS), [SchoolCafé](#), a state-of-the-art service that offers families the convenience of

managing student meal accounts online – including depositing payments, checking account balances, monitoring purchases and receiving email notifications for low balances. Daily menus will vary and are posted monthly online on the Boyce website. A hot or cold breakfast is available from 8:30 AM- 8:50 AM. Milk is included with breakfast and lunch. Students will eat lunch with their academic team. Please refer to your learner's Team schedule for specific lunch and recess times.

Students will always be served a school lunch; therefore, students who forget their lunch, and/or do not have money in their lunch account, will be served a school lunch. A Nutrition Center staff member will contact the parent/ guardian regarding any account balances.

RECESS TIME

Recess is offered each day at Boyce Middle School. During this time students will either be in the classroom or outside (every effort will be made to ensure that students can participate in recess outside if weather permits). Recess is a time to engage in non-competitive physical activities, explore individual interests and develop positive social relationships. To the extent possible, the Chromebook will not be used during indoor recess time.

STUDY SKILLS

Both 5th and 6th grade students will be learning important skills during their time at Boyce. By establishing study routines at home, students will be able to transfer these skills to any learning environment:

Study habits to reinforce at home:

- Establish a quiet place for your child to study
- Review notes daily to prepare for upcoming tests/quizzes
- Encourage your child to ask questions and for help at school
- Don't over schedule your child
- Encourage your child to read nightly
- Help your child set realistic short-term and long-term goals
- Support your child in achieving his or her goals
- Review your child's Canvas calendar, binder reminder, FOCUS, or Team communication tools nightly.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM

Assessment and Grading at the Middle School Level:

Reassessment/Mastery Requirement

Reteaching and reassessing students in grades 5-8 on any Academic Knowledge indicator will be required based on the following guidelines.

Eligibility and Requirements for Student Reassessment

90% - 100% - Students Not Eligible for Reassessment

Rationale: Students have mastered the content; the goal is to focus on mastery and prevent “point chasing.”

75% - 89% - Student Needs to Advocate for Reassessment

Rationale: One aspect of effective grading practices is encouraging personal responsibility.

Below 75% - Required Reassessment

Rationale: It is important for students to master the content. We are required to help all students meet the standards.

Grading and Scoring Procedures

1. Scoring a Reassessment

- Students who are reassessed can receive a maximum of 90% as their reassessment score.

Rationale: To avoid point-chasing while also preventing one assignment from setting a student back too far.

Example Original score 4/10 | reassess 10/10 | gradebook earned back 5 total points to 9/10.

2. Gradebook Record Keeping and Communication

- Points earned back are reported in a separate assignment on Canvas labeled **REASSESS** w/original assessment name.
- This REASSESS assignment should be listed as being worth 0 points.
- The additional points earned are added to the original assessment's total.

Rationale: Ensure that initial score is available as well as final grade for purposes of knowing how much support was needed and also for purposes of making effective course recommendations for the future. This process provides better communication to parents on the support needed for the student to reach mastery.

Example:

Punnett Quiz Out of 15	REASSESS Punnett Quiz Out of 0
5	8.5
13	–

Students are not compared to one another but are graded according to their own abilities. Student achievement is indicated by the following letter grades: **O** = Outstanding, **G** = Good, **S** = Satisfactory, **N** = Needs Improvement and **U** = Unsatisfactory. The students are also graded in the areas of Daily Performance and Academic Knowledge. **Incomplete (I) Grade:** In unusual circumstances (extended illness, death in the family, etc.) teachers may issue a temporary “I” grade. Students are expected to contact the teacher and arrange for work to be completed. Students have ten school days after the end of the nine-week period to complete this work. Failure to complete required work may result in an “N” grade.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

CANVAS/ FOCUS Parent Portal: Canvas and the FOCUS parent portal are online management systems that can be accessed by students and parents/guardians to monitor student progress daily, weekly, and quarterly. Information regarding parent accounts will be provided through the District website, and in the Back-to-School information that all families receive. Please visit [Academics- Canvas](#) on our District website for more information, including how-to instructions for setting up a parent account.

Canvas: Live updates of student grades/ progress/ assignments/ homework/calendar feature.

FOCUS: Report Cards and progress reports are available at specific dates throughout the school year. Report cards are posted on FOCUS and are distributed via email at the end of each nine weeks. If you are unable to access your child's Report Card, please contact the Boyce Middle School Main Office at 412-833-1600 x5000 for assistance.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

Additional district information is available through the website www.uscsd.k12.pa.us. This includes, but is not limited to, school board meeting minutes, district-wide announcements and upcoming events. The middle school rotation day calendar is also available on the District website.

EMAIL/ VOICEMAIL

Each teacher/ staff member can be contacted through district email or voicemail. Please visit the district website for a listing of email addresses and voicemail telephone numbers or contact the Boyce Middle School main office at 412-833-1600 x5000.

EVENING EVENTS

Parents/caregivers are invited to view the school and meet the teachers. Brief programs are held in each classroom to outline the curriculum and programs. *Fall Open House is an "adults only" event for teachers and families and is intended to provide an overview of our curriculum and programming.* If you would like to speak to your child's teacher in depth regarding a specific area of need/ concern related to your particular child, please schedule a parent conference at a later time. A spring Celebration of Learning open-house event will also be held. You are encouraged to bring your child and celebrate their academic accomplishments for the school year!

FALL Open House - September 24, 2026, 6:00 PM- 8:00 PM *Early dismissal for Boyce students at 1:40 PM

SPRING Celebration of Learning - May 27, 2027, 6:00 PM- 8:00 PM *Early dismissal for Boyce students at 1:40 PM

PARENT CONFERENCES

Family involvement and interest in a student's education is encouraged. Unlike the elementary schools, there is not a specific parent/teacher conference day scheduled at the middle level. At any time, if there is a question or concern regarding your child's experience at Boyce, a conference may be scheduled by calling the main office. At times, teachers may request conferences with families. Conferences may be scheduled during team planning time or before or after school and can be conducted virtually to better accommodate family schedules.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)

PTO meetings are typically held bi-monthly during the school year and are open to parents or guardians who want to learn more about the school or contribute to the educational process. The meetings are held virtually or in the Large Group Instruction room (LGI) bi-monthly at 9:30 am. Information regarding PTO, including officer contact information, dates of meetings, committee chair positions and contact information and more can be found by visiting the [Boyce PTO webpage](#).

Binder Reminders (Student Planner): All Boyce students are encouraged to use a binder reminder (student planner). The PTO distributes the binder reminders at the beginning of the school year. The binder reminder is used to record and track assignments and is a great way to stay organized. It also serves as another communication tool between school and home. There is no cost for the binder reminders as long as the PTO activity fee is paid in full. Please visit [Boyce PTO](#) for more detailed information.

ADDITIONAL BOYCE INFORMATION

SHARING SCHOOL SNACKS/TREATS IS PROHIBITED

Due to concerns regarding food allergies and sensitivities, as well as housekeeping issues, food is not permitted for treats. Families may occasionally provide a special lunch or treat for **their own child** to be consumed during their scheduled lunch time only. Families should refrain from providing lunches/snacks/treats/drinks for their child to share with others as **students are not permitted to share food items**. If a student wishes to share a treat with classmates, non-food items such as books, pencils, games or supplies for the classroom are recommended.

STUDENT PHOTOS

A professional photographer takes pictures of the students once per year. Parents will receive instructions as to the procedure for purchasing these pictures. Anyone who misses this day or needs retakes will be notified at a later date.

TELEPHONE CALLS

Telephone calls to the school requesting that messages from parents be delivered to students should be limited to emergency situations only. We encourage students to refrain from calling home during the school day; however, if a student needs to call home, they must do so in the Boyce main office. Students are not permitted to use cell phones, smartwatches or other personal electronic devices during the school day.

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers must have updated clearances on file at Central Office to be approved as a volunteer in any building throughout the school district. Families are encouraged to contact the PTO if interested in providing assistance or volunteering in the school. More detailed information regarding the process for obtaining and/ or updating clearance can be found at [Volunteers & Required Clearances](#) on the District website.

WATER BOTTLES

All students and staff have access to water fountains throughout the school building. Our water fountains are cleaned regularly, properly maintained, and accessible to everyone. We recognize that students may need additional hydration throughout the school day. Students are permitted to have refillable water bottles in class. At the discretion of the classroom teacher, students may lose this privilege if the water bottle becomes a distraction to the learning environment.

General Guidelines for Water Bottle Usage at Boyce MS:

- Students are permitted to carry water bottles at Boyce Middle School
- Students are only permitted to have **WATER** in the water bottle
- Reusable/refillable bottles are preferred
- If the water bottle is interfering with the learning of the student/other students, the teacher will ask the student to remove the water bottle from the workspace or classroom
- Water bottles should be kept away from any technology and/or device

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND SCHOOL SAFETY

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The District is committed to following best practices in the area of school safety. The Chief of School Police leads the security function and is the school safety and security coordinator. Experienced, armed school police officers who are all Act 120 certified are located in every school building. In addition, Act 235 certified school security officers are located at the high school and are available to travel throughout the district when necessary. School police contact information can be found on the District website under the [Safety & Wellness](#) banner. Chief of School Police Sean Bryson can be reached at 412-833-1600 ext. 2560.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The school has an emergency response plan. Various emergency situations including severe weather, evacuation, and lockdowns are included in this plan. Students will be informed and instructed by their teachers as to the appropriate response and action to take during these drills. If you have any questions regarding emergency drills, please contact the school administrators.

FIRE DRILLS

State law requires monthly fire drills and emergency evacuation drills. There will be ten scheduled fire drills held during the school year. The classroom teachers will review detailed exit maps with the students to instruct them where to go and when to return. When the fire alarm sounds, students will immediately stand and form organized lines as they leave the room. No one is to pass another person, break the line or stop at lockers. Talking and running is not permitted.

VISITORS

The health and safety of students and staff is a priority. Entrance to the building may be made only through the front doors at the main office. The building has been equipped with entrance cameras and entrance buttons. Visitors must identify themselves and the purpose of their visit before being admitted. All visitors must sign in by showing identification, registering through the Raptor system and obtaining a visitor's pass at the Main Office. **An appointment must be made in advance when a visitor wishes to meet with any school staff member.** Please contact the

Boyce Middle School main office at 412-833-1600 x5000 to schedule an appointment. Visits by students' friends are discouraged and may not be approved. Students will only be released to parents or caregivers listed in our student data management system (FOCUS).

STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

At Boyce Middle School, we strive to teach all children to work and grow together in a mutually respectful school environment. Students are expected to **Be responsible, Be respectful, Be prepared, Be productive and Be safe**, in their daily interactions with adults, peers, and each other.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance (Policy 204)

Regular attendance in school is vital to a student's success. **Compulsory school age** in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires that all students between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school regularly. Students who are enrolled in school, but are not within this age range are also bound by the compulsory school attendance law. Parents/guardians are expected to encourage their children to attend as many school days as possible **so long as they are not ill**. The local education agency and parents/guardians will work collaboratively to support student school attendance.

As stated in the Attendance Policy 204:

The following conditions constitute reasonable cause for absence from school:

1. Illness, including if a student is dismissed by designated District staff during school hours for health-related reasons.
2. Obtaining professional health care or therapy service rendered by a licensed practitioner of the healing arts in any state, commonwealth or territory.
3. Quarantine.
4. Family emergency.
5. Recovery from an accident.
6. Required court attendance.
7. Death in the family.
8. Participation in a project sponsored by a statewide or countywide 4-H, FFA or combined 4-H and FFA group, upon prior written request.
9. Participation in a musical performance in conjunction with a national veterans' organization or incorporated unit, as defined in law, for an event or funeral.
 - a. The national veterans' organization or incorporated unit must provide the student with a signed excuse, which shall include the date, location, and time of the event or funeral.
 - b. The student shall furnish the signed excuse to the District prior to being excused from school.
10. Observance of a religious holiday observed by bona fide religious group, upon prior written parental request. (as noted in Policy 204). In addition, students may be released from school for a total of not more than 36 hours per year in order to attend classes for religious instruction.
11. Non School-sponsored educational tours or trips/family educational trips as outlined in the District Educational Trip form.
12. College or postsecondary institution visit, with prior approval.
13. Other urgent reasons. Urgent reasons shall be strictly construed and do not permit irregular attendance.

An absence for any other reason is considered an unlawful/unexcused absence. When in doubt of the legality of an absence, parents are requested to contact the child's school principal.

After a student's absence from school, parents must send a signed note with the student explaining the reason and date(s) of the absence. The student must present this excuse to the Attendance Office upon returning to school. If the excuse is not provided within three (3) school days, the dates of absence will be labeled as **unexcused absences**.

When a student misses three (3) consecutive days and no communication from the parent/guardian has occurred, the school nurse or counselor will call home to check on the student to determine if the school can take steps to support the student during his/her absence and/or support transition back to school.

When a student misses more than ten (10) cumulative days, parents will receive written notice that an official doctor's excuse will be required for all subsequent absences for the remainder of the school year. Failure to obtain an official doctor's excuse will result in an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences will be addressed in the manner described under the truancy section of school attendance.

Definitions of Truancy

- A student is considered "truant" after three (3) or more unexcused absences during a single school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.
- A student is considered "habitually truant" after six (6) or more unexcused absences during a single school year by a child subject to the compulsory school attendance law.

Parents/guardians will be notified following each unexcused absence/occurrence. When a student is considered truant (**three unexcused absences**) the school principal will notify the parents. This notification:

- Will be in writing to the person of parental relation with a child within ten (10) school days.
- Will include a description of the consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future.
- Will include steps to arrange an attendance improvement conference.

If the child, of compulsory school age, continues to be truant and incurs additional unexcused absences that accumulate six (6) unexcused absences becoming "**habitually truant**," the procedures to follow are based on the age of the child.

- Habitually truant children **under 15 years of age**:
The school shall:
 - Refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program
 - Refer the child to the county children and youth agency (CYS) for services or possible disposition as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act
 The school may:
 - File a citation against the parent of a habitually truant child under 15 years of age in a magisterial district court.
- Habitually truant children **15 years of age and older**:
The school shall:
 - Refer the child to a school-based or community-based attendance improvement program;
 - or
 - File a citation against the student or parent in a magisterial district court
 - If a habitually truant child aged 15 or older incurs additional absences after a school refers that child to an attendance improvement program or the child refuses to participate in an attendance improvement program, the school may refer the child to the local CYS agency for possible disposition as a dependent child.

In addition, a habitually truant student may not transfer, during the school year, to a cyber charter school unless a judge determines that the transfer is in the best interest of the student.

School Attendance Improvement Plan Conference (SAIC)

Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing and by phone of the scheduled School Attendance Improvement Plan Conference (SAIC).

Schools must create attendance improvement plans prior to referring truancy to the courts. A school attendance improvement conference is defined as a conference where the child's absences and reasons for the absences are examined in an effort to improve attendance with or without additional services. The conference will include the following individuals:

- The child
- The person in parental relation to the child
- Other individuals identified by the person in parental relation who may be a resource (e.g., grandparent, sibling, family friend, advocate, etc.)
- Appropriate school personnel
- Recommended service providers (case managers, behavioral health providers, etc.)

The school must hold the conference even if the parent or guardian declines to participate or fails to attend after the school provides advance written notice and makes attempts to communicate via telephone. A legal requirement does not exist for either the child or parent to attend the conference. The school must document the outcome of any attendance improvement conference in a written attendance improvement plan. Schools may not take further legal action to address unexcused absences until after the date of the scheduled attendance improvement conference has passed.

Magisterial Referral

After all necessary steps have been taken to foster a collaborative relationship between the local education agency and parents/guardians, a citation may be filed in the office of the appropriate judge whose jurisdiction includes the school in which the student is or should be enrolled if a student continues to be habitually truant from school. Judges have considerable discretion to impose appropriate penalties in individual cases.

Tardies

Any student entering school after the official beginning time must report to the attendance office to obtain a class admission slip. Any student who is tardy more than ten (10) days without proper medical documentation may be required to submit a doctor's note for subsequent excused tardiness. The school principal will notify parents when the child has accumulated four unexcused tardies. Disciplinary consequences may be assigned.

Attendance Reminders for families:

Student attendance is calculated by instructional minutes. There are a total of 333 instructional minutes at Boyce. Homeroom and Pride Time count as instructional time. Lunch, recess, and passing time do not count toward instructional time.

- Full-day attendance: Present for at least 173 instructional minutes
- Half-day attendance: Present for at least 73 instructional minutes
- Absences: Families are expected to turn in a note within three days of a student's return to school following an absence. The note can be brought to the office or emailed to boattendance@uscsd.k12.pa.us. Absence notes can also be uploaded directly into the FOCUS Parent Portal.
- Pre-Approved Absences: The Administration recognizes that middle school-age children will occasionally be absent from school attending an educational trip/ tour with family or other

organizations. An educational trip form may be obtained from the Boyce Middle School Main Office staff or by visiting our website: [Educational Trip Form](#). The form must be completed and submitted for approval to the Main Office at least one week prior to the intended date of absence. Families will be contacted if the request is denied.

- Students arriving after the homeroom period must sign in at the Main Office with a written excuse. Students must sign out in the Boyce Main Office if they are leaving before the end of the school day.

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Student Discipline (Policy 218)

The District believes that student conduct is closely related to learning. An effective educational program requires a safe and comfortable school environment.

Student discipline and the enforcing of school rules will be done respectfully, promptly, consistently, confidentially, and equitably regardless of the personal characteristics of the individual student. Discipline is motivated by the intent to correct and promote positive behavior and growth, as well as to maintain order.

The Board shall adopt a Code of Student Conduct to govern student discipline, and students shall not be subject to disciplinary action because of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin or handicap/disability. Each student must adhere to Board policies and the Code of Student Conduct governing student discipline

Any student disciplined by a District employee shall have the right to notice of the infraction.

Off-Campus Activities

This policy shall also apply to student conduct that occurs off school property and would otherwise violate the Code of Student Conduct if any of the following circumstances exist:

1. The conduct occurs during the time the student is traveling to and from school or traveling to and from school-sponsored activities, whether or not via school district furnished transportation.
2. The student is a member of an extracurricular activity and has been notified that particular off-campus conduct could result in exclusion from such activities.
3. Student expression or conduct materially and substantially disrupts the operations of the school, or the administration reasonably anticipates that the expression or conduct is likely to materially and substantially disrupt the operations of the school.
4. The conduct has a direct nexus to attendance at school or a school-sponsored activity, for example, a transaction conducted outside of school pursuant to an agreement made in school, that would violate the Code of Student Conduct if conducted in school.
5. The conduct involves the theft of vandalism of school property.
6. There is a relationship between the proximity of learning or timing of the conduct in relation to a student's attendance at school or school-sponsored activities.
7. The conduct constitutes bullying or harassment or cyberbullying as defined by Board Policy.

As it would be impossible to identify and list all types of student infractions or administrative actions, disciplinary consequences will be administered based on an

individual basis for violations not specifically outlined in this handbook at the discretion of the building administrators.

MINOR VIOLATIONS	POSSIBLE Administrative Actions
Excessive Noise	Warning, Detention, and/or disciplinary referral
Unjustified tardiness to assigned places	Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Disorder/ disruption in class or hall	Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Damaging books or other materials	Payment, possible suspension, limitations or restrictions on material access
Loitering in the halls or lavatory	Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Poor conduct in the Nutrition Center	Corrective action such as clean up, alternative eating area assigned, Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Failure to pay library or other financial obligations, return school materials (including iPad) such as books, equipment, supplies.	Payment, possible detention, suspension, limitations or restrictions on material access, and/ or referral to law enforcement
Class cut	Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Any behavior which is a distraction to the educational process, but does not endanger the safety of people or property.	Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Cheating	Possible failure for that piece of work, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral
Violation of activity rules	Warning, Detention, and/ or disciplinary referral, suspension from activity
MAJOR VIOLATIONS	POSSIBLE Administrative Action (Disciplinary referral will be issued for major infractions)
Use of any unauthorized electronic device during the school day, including school bus and field trips	Detention, suspension, device may be taken and held in the Main Office and released only to a parent/ guardian. Possible student expulsion
Engaging in conduct that violates the Criminal Code, the laws of Pennsylvania, Township of Upper St. Clair ordinances or its published- posted policies and regulations	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution
Possession and/ or use of any weapon or use of any object to cause bodily harm	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution
Possession and/ or use of any tobacco product or e-liquid, including but not limited to vapes, e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco, etc.	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution, Tobacco educational program

Possession, use, transportation, or being under the influence of drugs	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution, D & A educational program
Possession, use, transportation, or being under the influence of alcohol	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution, D & A educational program
Sale of drugs, alcohol, and/ or tobacco/vaping products	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution, D & A educational program
Possession/ use of any look-alike chemicals or paraphernalia associated with the use of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substance	Suspension, possible expulsion, and/ or possible criminal prosecution, D & A educational program
Throwing objects at vehicles, school, or people	Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, removal of privileges
Leaving school grounds without permission	Detention, suspension, police notified, removal of privileges
Profanity/disrespectful speech or actions	Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, possible expulsion
Fighting or rowdy/physical behavior that disturbs the learning environment and/or threatens the safety of others	Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, possible expulsion
Theft	Restitution where possible, Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, payment
Vandalism and defacing school property and/ or the property of others (including the school-issued technology device)	Payment, Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution
Tampering with safety equipment, such as fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, sprinklers, surveillance cameras	Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, Fire Marshall notified, payment, possible expulsion
Possession and/or ignition of any fireworks, smoke bombs, matches, lighters, incendiary devices, etc.	Confiscation, Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, possible expulsion
Misuse/abuse/forgery of early dismissals, hall passes, excuses, and/or other school communications	Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, possible expulsion
Repeated minor infractions	Detention, suspension, possible criminal prosecution, possible expulsion
Bullying	May include, but not limited to: Counseling within the school, Parental conference, Loss of school privileges, Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus. , Exclusion from school-sponsored activities, Detention, Suspension, Expulsion, and /or other Counseling/Therapy.

Harassment, sexual harassment, other harassment, discrimination, or related retaliation	May include, but not limited to: Counseling within the school, Parental conference, Loss of school privileges, Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus. , Exclusion from school-sponsored activities, Detention, Suspension, Expulsion, and /or other Counseling/Therapy.
Hazing	May include, but not limited to: Counseling within the school, Parental conference, Loss of school privileges, Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities, Detention, Suspension, Expulsion, and /or other Counseling/Therapy.
Any behavior resulting in unsafe conditions or that interferes with the rights of others or that violates the policies of Upper St. Clair School District: Including but not limited to Harassment, Cyberbullying/ Bullying, Terroristic Threats, Other Threats, Weapons, Repeated infractions, etc.	May include, but not limited to: Counseling within the school, Parental conference, Loss of school privileges, Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities, Detention, Suspension, Expulsion, and /or other Counseling/Therapy.
Violation of school district policies or regulations	May include, but not limited to: Counseling within the school, Parental conference, Loss of school privileges, Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus. Exclusion from school-sponsored activities, Detention, Suspension, Expulsion, and /or other Counseling/Therapy.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT CONDUCT POLICIES

USC School Board policies and notifications most relevant to students and families are included throughout this Handbook. The policies and notifications in the Handbook are not all inclusive. All policies and regulations are on file as the "School Board Policy Manual" and can be viewed at the Administrative Offices and on the District's website here - [School Board Policy Manual](#).

Bullying-Cyberbullying (Policy 249)

The District is committed to providing a safe, positive learning environment for students. The District recognizes that bullying creates an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, detracts from the safe environment necessary for student learning, and may lead to more serious violence. Therefore, the Upper St. Clair School District prohibits bullying by all students.

Bullying is defined as intentional electronic, written, verbal or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's education, Creating an environment that a reasonable person in the

complainant's situation would find threatening, intimidating or abusive, or causing a substantial disruption of the orderly operation of school. Cyberbullying is included within the definition of bullying.

Students are encouraged to use the district's report form, available from the building principal, or to put the complaint in writing; however, oral complaints shall be accepted and documented. The person accepting the complaint shall handle the report objectively, neutrally and professionally, setting aside personal biases that might favor or disfavor the student filing the complaint or those accused of a violation of this policy.

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct.

Nondiscrimination and Title IX Sexual Harassment (Policy 103)

The District provides an equal opportunity for all students to achieve their maximum potential through the programs and activities offered in the schools without discrimination on the basis of race, color, age, creed, religion, sex/gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, national origin, marital status, pregnancy or handicap/disability.

Additionally, Upper St. Clair School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex and further prohibits discrimination in its all education programs and activities operated by the District, including in its admission and employment practices as required by Title IX. Any questions or concerns regarding sex discrimination can be reported to a Title IX Coordinator. A full copy of the District's Title IX Notice can be found in the [compliance notifications](#) section of this handbook or on the District's website.

Electronic Devices (Policy 237)

The Board prohibits use of electronic devices by students during the school day in district buildings except as may be specifically permitted by the exceptions in this policy; on district property; on district buses and vehicles; during the times students are under the supervision of the district; and in locker rooms, bathrooms, health suites and other changing areas at anytime. Exceptions may be granted for health and safety emergencies, educational purposes, or when permitted by the building principal or the high school's bring your own device policy.

Grades K–6: Personal Electronic Devices Prohibited Use During School Hours

- The District strongly encourages that PEDs not be brought to school.
- If a PED other than a smartwatch is brought to school, it must remain powered off and stored in a backpack or designated area throughout the day.
- Smartwatches
 - Smartwatches must be on "Do Not Disturb" mode during instructional hours and are not to be used for texting or calls during class.
 - Should a student's Smartwatch pose a disruption to the learning environment, teachers and administration will collaborate with parents. Together, they will utilize the school's tiered behavioral support and response framework to address the issue.

PED usage is never permitted in bathrooms, locker rooms, and swimming pool areas. Further, they are not to be used during any drill that could compromise safety.

A system of tiered behavior support and response will be implemented in the event an infraction occurs.

Dress Code (Policy 221: Dress and Grooming)

Consistent with Policy 221-Dress and Grooming, the students, faculty and administration believe that student dress is primarily the responsibility of the family and that the school district must support the efforts of our parents in this enterprise. We have confidence that our students and parents will make appropriate decisions on both school attire and appearance. Students must wear styles and clothing which do not constitute a health or safety hazard, and do not cause a substantial disruption of the school program or interfere with the rights of others and does not cause damage to school property or school buses. However, it remains the final decision of the school in cases of dress code abuses. Students may be required to wear prescribed clothing in specific classes such as gym, art, science laboratory, etc. Students are not permitted to wear hats while in the building during school hours. Further, Pennsylvania law prohibits discrimination which includes protections for hair/styles and religious head coverings.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

No student shall be deprived of equal treatment and equal access to the educational program, due process, a presumption of innocence, and free expression and association, in accordance with Board policy and school rules.

It is the responsibility of each student to:

- Be honest and ethical: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty.
- Put forth his/her best efforts in the classroom to develop and improve his/her learning.
- Contribute to making the school a better place in which to learn.
- Exercise proper care when using school equipment.
- Assist in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the school community.
- Be aware of the rules and policies of the school and follow them.
- Attend school daily and report to all classes on time.
- Make-up work when absent from school.
- Respect school property.
- Follow the dress code.

A comprehensive list of student rights and responsibilities can be found in Board Policy **235 - Student Rights and Responsibilities** and [Chapter 12](#) of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students have the responsibility to respect the intellectual and academic property and activities of themselves and others. Cheating, plagiarism, vandalism, theft, or computer tampering will not be tolerated.

SCHOOL BUS DISCIPLINE

All students shall be subject to disciplinary action for all acts of disobedience or misconduct, as outlined in School District Policy, while riding school buses to and from school and at the bus stop.

The bus driver shall be responsible for maintaining order on the school bus. In the event of misconduct by any student, the driver shall immediately report such misconduct to the Director of Transportation or the school principal where the student is in attendance. If disciplinary action is recommended, a written report of misconduct shall be filed. The building administrator(s) will follow established School District policy when dealing with bus misconduct.

DAMAGED ITEMS

Students are responsible for the care of all items assigned to or used by them for school purposes. Families may be required to reimburse the School District for school-issued items lost, damaged, or defaced. This includes, but not limited to school-issued texts, library books, school materials, facilities, computers, Chromebooks, iPads, iPad/ Chromebook accessories and other school property.

LOCKER USE

Lockers are for storing school materials and personal items such as backpacks and outerwear. Every student is assigned a locker. **Students are not permitted to share lockers, use lockers that are not assigned to them, or open lockers assigned to others** as they are accountable and responsible for their own belongings. Locker cleanouts will be held frequently. Lockers are the property of the School District and may be searched at any time by school personnel or law enforcement officials (Searches, Policy 226). Each teaching team establishes times for visits to lockers once the school day has begun.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are solely responsible for their personal property. Students are cautioned not to bring cell phones, smartwatches, expensive gaming devices, large amounts of money, or any other valuable items to school. Any electronic device brought to school by a student should remain off and in the student locker during school hours. The school district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIORS

Behavioral Expectations for Boyce Middle School Students: What does it *look like and mean to be* respectful, responsible, prepared, productive, and safe in our school?

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN THE NUTRITION CENTER:

Be Respectful	• I can clean up my area • I can raise my hand when I need to leave my table • I can keep my tone of voice at an appropriate level • I can wait patiently in line • I can include others at my table • I can say "please" and "thank you" • I can eat my food and not waste
Be Responsible	• I can handle my food only! • I can clean up after myself if I accidentally drop food or spill something • I can help my friends maintain a clean table and area • I can keep my lunch number private

Be Prepared	• I can be ready to use my lunch number • I can be ready to go to the snack line when my table is called • I can be ready to return to class when lunch is over
Be Productive	• I can make my choice before lunch to save time • I can arrive to the cafeteria on time every day • I can eat my lunch in the time allotted
Be Safe	• I can behave as if I were in a public restaurant • I can stay seated • I can keep my hands, feet and unkind words to myself • I can wait patiently at my table until my table is dismissed by an adult • I can inform an adult if there is a problem

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AT RECESS:

Be Respectful	• I can clean up my materials • I can include others in games and activities • I can share • I can play fair
Be Responsible	• I can take turns • I can take care of materials and equipment • I can let an adult know if materials are broken
Be Prepared	• I can be ready to go to recess promptly • I can be ready to return to class when recess is over
Be Productive	• I can follow the rules • I can be active and give myself a “brain break”
Be Safe	• I can let an adult know if a student is hurt or needs help • I can use materials properly • I can listen to the supervising adults

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN THE HALLWAY:

Be Respectful	• I can talk quietly so that I do not disrupt others in class • I can wait quietly for my teacher to open the door to my next class
Be Responsible	• I will use my locker only! • I can use the locker “parking lots” to safely store my Chromebook
Be Prepared	• I can get my materials from my locker and return to class quickly
Be Productive	• I can take the quickest route to my destination
Be Safe	• I can walk to my destination • I can make sure my items are in my locker and not on the floor

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS ON THE BUS:

Be Respectful	• I can sit with someone new • I will not treat 5th graders and 6th graders differently
Be Responsible	• I can throw away my trash in the trash can • I can keep my personal device to myself
Be Prepared	• I will know my AM and PM bus number • I can remember to take my items home • I can enter and exit the bus quickly
Be Productive	• I can sit with someone to make room for others to sit • I can follow the bus rules
Be Safe	• I will stay seated while the bus is moving • I can use my “inside voice” and not distract the driver • I can know what to do in an emergency

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN THE RESTROOM:

Be Respectful	• I can maintain my privacy and the privacy of others • I can help maintain a clean restroom
Be Responsible	• I can practice good hygiene by frequently washing my hands • I will use the toilet and sinks appropriately
Be Prepared	• I can use the restroom during breaks in my schedule • I can use the restroom before class
Be Productive	• I can arrive promptly and leave soon after washing my hands • I can use the restroom closest to my classroom
Be Safe	• I can keep soap and water in the sink • I will throw garbage away in the trash cans ONLY!

TECHNOLOGY

Boyce Middle School Guide to AI & Academic Integrity

1. What is Academic Integrity?

Academic integrity means being honest, fair, and trustworthy in all of your schoolwork. When you turn in an assignment, it must represent your own thoughts, effort, and learning. Cheating, copying, or lying about how you completed your work is not permitted.

With the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, students must understand a clear rule: **Having AI write your papers, generate your answers, or significantly alter your original work—and then turning it in as your own—is plagiarism.** Your work must always be *your* work.

2. How to Use AI the Right Way (Acceptable Use)

AI should be viewed as a tutor or learning assistant to help you understand concepts, not as a replacement for your own brainpower. Students may use AI in the following ways, **provided they have permission**:

- **Follow Teacher Instructions:** Teachers will explicitly state if AI is allowed on any given assignment or project. If a teacher says no, AI tools must not be used. If you are ever unsure, ask before using them.
- **Clarify Difficult Concepts:** You may ask AI to explain complex topics in simpler terms, define challenging vocabulary words, or provide real-world examples to help you study.
- **Brainstorming and Inspiration:** If you are stuck at the beginning of a project, you may use AI to generate a list of broad ideas to kickstart your own creative process.
- **Protect Personal Privacy:** To maintain digital safety, students must never type personal information—including names, addresses, phone numbers, or passwords—into any AI tool.
- **Practice Transparency (Show Your Work):** If AI was used to assist you in the learning or brainstorming phase, you must credit the tool. Inform your teacher which AI program you used, the prompts you typed, and how the tool helped you.

3. When AI Becomes Cheating or Impermissible (Unacceptable Use) and is a violation of District Policy and the Student Code of Conduct

Using AI as a shortcut to avoid doing your own work is not permitted. The following actions are examples of unacceptable use:

- **Copying and Pasting:** You may not copy text generated by an AI and paste it directly into your assignments, essays, or homework and pretend you wrote it.
- **Failing to Verify Facts:** AI can make mistakes or even fabricate (make up) facts and sources. Students are responsible for the accuracy of their work and must always double-check information with trusted sources such as textbooks or library databases.
- **AI-Generated Media**
 - **Cyberbullying:** Using AI to create fake photos, videos, or altered audio ("deepfakes") of students or staff is strictly forbidden. Using AI tools to mock, harass, threaten, or bully any member of the school community will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including suspension and law enforcement involvement.
 - **Criminal Conduct/Sexual Harassment:** Creating and/or disseminating AI-generated intimate or sexual images is strictly prohibited. This conduct will be referred to law enforcement and will be investigated under the district's policies prohibiting harassment. Violations will result in disciplinary action. Incidents

involving dissemination or transmission may be subject to criminal prosecution for unlawful dissemination of an intimate image pursuant to 18 Pa.C.S. § 3131 in addition to any other applicable charges.

Use of the District's Internet and Computer Networks (Policy 815)

The District complies with CIPA (Children's Internet Protection Act) and COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act). The District monitors student usage of district-issued devices. However, parents/guardians should monitor their child's technology usage to ensure safety and consistency with your family's technology rules/expectations.

2026-2027 Chromebooks

The Upper St. Clair School District provides every student with a Chromebook.

USCSD will be financially responsible for:

- Defective equipment
- Hardware issues
- Non functioning components
- All physical components of the 1:1 device due to accidental damage
- Theft of a device (must provide a copy of the police report)

Students/Parents will be financially responsible for:

- Intentional damage, abuse, vandalism, or improper use/care, which results in structural damage including, but not limited to: bending, missing parts/components, dents, scratches, cracks, modifications, or disassembly of the device, etc.
- Excessive wear and tear
- Missing or damaged charger, charging/power cable and/or stylus
- Loss of a Chromebook

***The Upper St. Clair School District will determine if damages were accidental or the result of intentional damage, abuse, or improper use/care.*

Students are responsible for any and all damage to their Chromebook unless determined otherwise by the Upper St. Clair School District administration. If it is determined through an investigation that the student's device was damaged by another student, all students involved will be financially responsible for the damage incurred.

Chromebook Repair Costs:

If a device needs to be repaired due to intentional damage, abuse, vandalism, or improper use/care, the costs will be billed based on the published fee schedule for the 2026-2027 School Year.

You can find the repair costs for Chromebooks by visiting: <https://support.uscsd.k12.pa.us/kb/article/691>

*1:1 devices are owned by the Upper St. Clair School District and all repairs must be completed by the district. Students must use the help desk procedures to request a repair. Parents/Students are not authorized to repair or have third parties repair any 1:1 device.

As per Board Policy 815 - [Acceptable Use of Internet, Computers and Network Resources](#) - any outstanding technology invoices must be paid in full by the end of the school year.

Information for Students Traveling Internationally

The use of student Single Sign-on (SSO) accounts to access all district resources, including your Chromebook, is geo-restricted to within the United States. Additional steps are required to access your student SSO account when traveling internationally. These additional steps, as outlined below, must be completed before departing from the United States.

1. Set up the Microsoft Authenticator app on your phone. If you do not have one, you may complete the setup using a Parent's or Guardian's phone. It is important to set up Microsoft Authenticator on the phone you will take on your trip.

For detailed instructions on how to set up Microsoft Authenticator, please see the article: uscscd.org/studentmfasetup

2. The default method that Microsoft Authenticator uses to deliver authentication prompts is a push notification. To receive the push notification, ensure the phone with Microsoft Authenticator is connected to cellular data or WiFi before signing in to your student account.
3. You will be prompted to use the Microsoft Authenticator app whenever you attempt to sign in to district systems such as Canvas or Focus or to log in to your Chromebook when you are located outside of the United States.

You must complete the setup of the Microsoft Authenticator app **before** departing the United States to access your student account or log in to your Chromebook while traveling internationally. The Technology Department cannot override this security requirement nor provide alternative means to access your account or Chromebook while traveling internationally.

If you have questions or need additional help, please submit a ticket by visiting uscscd.org/support.

For the most up-to-date instructions, please visit support.uscscd.k12.pa.us/kb/article/669 (Student sign-in required).

Boyce Middle School Student Expectations for Chromebook Usage

I understand that the Chromebook is an educational tool for learning:

- I will only use my Chromebook for educational purposes.
- I will only use my assigned Chromebook.
- I will use my Chromebook in ways that are appropriate and meet the Upper St. Clair School District expectations and policies.
- I will use my Chromebook in ways that demonstrate academic integrity.
- I understand that my Chromebook is subject to inspection at any time without notice because it is the property of the Upper St. Clair School District.

I understand that I am responsible for the general care of the Chromebook:

- I will know where my Chromebook is at all times.
- I understand that the Chromebook is registered to me and is *not to be loaned out to others*.

- I will ensure that my Chromebook is placed in a secured location when not being used.
- I will handle my Chromebook carefully to avoid damage.
- I will keep food and beverages away from my Chromebook.
- I will charge the battery daily to be prepared for school.

I understand that there are some specific restrictions regarding Chromebook usage:

- I understand that my Chromebook is not to be taken into a restroom or locker room.
- I understand that pictures, video, apps and other media that are not educational do not belong on my Chromebook.
- I understand that I am not permitted to take pictures or videos of others without their clear permission because doing so is a violation of their privacy and school rules.

I understand the procedures for handling repairs and/ or damages:

- I will not modify or change settings/configurations of the Chromebook.
- I understand that the USCSD Technology Department is responsible for repairing my Chromebook, and I will not attempt to repair or disassemble my device for any reason.
- I will be responsible for all damage or loss caused intentionally, or for damage caused by carelessness, neglect or abuse.
- I will file a report in the Principal's Office in the case of theft, vandalism, or damage.

I agree to use my Chromebook **respectfully** and **responsibly** by following the rules and expectations of my school and school district. I will be **prepared** by having my Chromebook charged and ready for learning every day. I will use my Chromebook **productively** for educational purposes only and I will handle it **safely** with care. I agree to return the Chromebook, stylist, and charger in good working condition. If a student withdraws from the District, the Chromebook will be returned at that time.

COMPLIANCE NOTIFICATIONS

Annual Compliance Notifications include the following and additional notifications that can be found on the District's website at [Compliance Notifications](#).

Nondiscrimination Notice:

The Upper St. Clair School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex/gender, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Director of Pupil Services, Dr. Lauren Madia, has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached using the contact information listed below.

Title IX Notice:

Upper St. Clair School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex and further prohibits discrimination in its all education programs and activities operated by the District, including in its admission and employment practices, as required by Title IX. Inquiries regarding the application of Title IX and its implementing regulations may be made to the District's Title IX Coordinator, or the Office of Civil Rights, or both.

The Title IX Coordinator for student/family concerns is:
 Dr. Lauren Madia, Director of Pupil Services / Student Title IX Coordinator
 District Administration Building (Student Support Services)
 1775 McLaughlin Run Road
 Upper St. Clair, PA 15241
 412-833-1600 Ext. 2113
lmadia@uscscd.k12.pa.us

A copy of the Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures may be found on the [District's Publicly Accessible Website](#). Any information regarding conduct that may constitute sex discrimination under Title IX, as well as complaints of sex discrimination under Title IX may be reported to Dr. Amy Pfender (Employees), 412-833-1600, ext. 2062 or Dr. Lauren Madia (Students), via the contact information provided above.

Discrimination-Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students (Policy 103)

Child Find Notice of Special Education Services & Program

Each school district, along with other public agencies in the commonwealth, must establish and implement procedures to identify, locate and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services because of the child's disability. This notice is to help find these children, offer assistance to parents, and describes the parents' rights with regard to confidentiality of information that will be obtained during this process. The content of this notice has been written in English but can be translated into other languages. If a person does not understand any of this notice, he or she should contact the District's Director of Special Education (412-833-1600 ext. 2064) and request an explanation [Compliance Notifications / Child Find - Special Education Services](#)

Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act program is designed to address situations that students in housing transitions have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. The Upper St. Clair School District is responsible for the timely identification of children and youth who are homeless and/or unaccompanied. Homeless children and youth should have access to the education and other services that they need to enable them to meet the same student academic achievement standards in Pennsylvania to which all students are held. Specifically, students and their families who meet the definition of homeless children and youth are entitled to: immediate enrollment in school, transportation to their school of origin, qualification for free meals at school, referrals for appropriate medical care, family engagement support, and services that support academic success. In the event that a child is unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, the District will provide a Liaison to support enrollment and other educational matters. The District refers children and families experiencing homelessness to community partners and agencies to assist with additional needs.

Please contact the Director of Pupil Services and McKinney-Vento Liaison, Dr. Lauren Madia, 412-833-1600 ext. 2113. More information about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act can be found on the [District website](#).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. The rights are identified in the annual compliance notification section at:

[Compliance Notifications / Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.](#)

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed without a parent's prior written consent. Directory information is defined in the notice linked above. If you do not want the School District to disclose information designated as directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify Student Support Services in writing by September 15. Please note, the opt-out for the PTA directory is separate from the directory information opt-out and is not collected or monitored by the School District.

If a person does not understand any of this FERPA notice, he or she should contact the school district (Dr. Lauren Madia, 412-833-1600 ext. 2113) and request an explanation.

BOYCE MIDDLE SCHOOL

1500 Boyce Road

Upper St. Clair, PA 15241

P: 412-833-1600 Ext. 5000 F: 412-854-2161

<https://boyce.uscsd.k12.pa.us/>

The information in this Student-Family Handbook is accurate and in accordance with the existing policies of the Upper St. Clair School District at the time of its printing. If you have any questions regarding the information in this Student-Family Handbook, please contact school administration for assistance.