



## **Bell Oaks Middle School Parent and Student Handbook**

### **Bellmawr Public School District Mission Statement**

*Learning Today-Leading Tomorrow*

Each student in the Bellmawr Public School District will develop academically, physically, emotionally, and socially in a positive learning environment that provides equitable educational opportunities for all students. All staff will hold high expectations for student achievement and accept responsibility for helping students meet those expectations. A rigorous, standards-based curriculum will be provided to all students, which includes a core that specifies the knowledge and skills that all students are to attain. All staff will be committed to fostering positive relationships between community members, parents, staff, students, and to the continuous improvement of the district. All the stakeholders will be involved in the educational process and will be partners in solving the real challenges and complex issues facing education in our community in the 21st century.

### **Bellmawr Board of Education Members**

Kelly Brennan, President  
Maria Tregear, Vice President  
TJ Joyce  
William Murray  
Lisa Young  
Robert Fowler  
Michael Williams

### **Administration**

Danielle Sochor, Superintendent of Schools  
Patrick Doyle, Business Administrator  
Richard Taibi, Chief Academic Officer  
Anthony Farinelli, Principal of Bell Oaks  
Gina Heller, Principal of Bellmawr Park  
Matthew Maguire, Principal of Ethel M. Burke  
Patricia Bartley, Director of Special Services  
Michelle Delaney, Director of Mathematics  
John DiBlasio, Director of Technology  
Derek Watson, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

## **SCHOOL DAY**

The Board of Education shall annually approve the times that school(s) will be in session, including the starting and ending time of a shortened day. A school day shall be in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3.

The schools of the district will be in session for students on those days and times recommended by the Superintendent and annually approved by the Board

The Superintendent may close schools, delay the opening of school, or dismiss school early when such alteration in the regular session is required for the protection of the health and safety of students and staff members or other good cause. A shortened school day, whether it is planned or emergent (as in the case of inclement weather), must meet certain requirements in order to count toward the one hundred eighty days requirement of N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

The Superintendent shall inform the Board President of any such alteration as soon as possible and shall prepare rules for the proper and timely notification of concerned persons in the event of any delayed opening or emergency school closing.

Bellmawr Public School District's school closing number is 564 you can also refer to the district's webpage - <https://www.bellmawrschools.org/>

Bell Oaks School Hours for Students: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

## **FOOD SERVICES**

The school brings the return of normal meal service under the USDA National School Lunch Program, which provides nutritious meals at cost for students while also offering free & reduced eligibility programs for students based on Federal family income guidelines. The Board of Education recognizes the midday meal as an important part of each pupil's school day. The Superintendent shall ensure a wholesome, nutritious food services program in the district and one which reinforces the concepts of nutrition education as taught in the classrooms of this district. The Board shall provide food service facilities for the consumption of food on school premises. All pupils not expressly excused by the Principal shall be expected to remain at school for lunch. The operation and supervision of the food services program shall be the responsibility of the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

The district shall participate in the Federal Child Nutrition Program. The Food Service Program shall be operated on a nonprofit basis. All moneys derived from the operation, maintenance, or sponsorship of the food service facilities shall be deposited in the Food Service Account. The net cash resources of the food service account may not exceed three months' operating cost. A periodic review of the food service account shall be made by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary. Any surplus funds shall be used to reduce the cost of the service to pupils or to purchase cafeteria equipment.

The Superintendent shall ensure the maintenance of sanitary, neat premises, free from fire and health hazards, for the preparation and consumption of food and the safekeeping and storage of food and food equipment in strict compliance with regulations of the New Jersey State Department of Health.

## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

### **Arrival Procedures**

Students will enter the building by grade level as follows:

- 8:25 – 8:35 AM Grade 5 Enters per Homeroom – EXIT 2
- 8:25 – 8:35 AM Grade 8 Enters per Homeroom – EXIT 5
- 8:25 – 8:35 AM Grade 7 Enters per Homeroom – EXIT 4
- 8:25 – 8:35 AM Grade 6 Enters per Homeroom – EXIT 6

### **Dismissal Procedures**

Students will exit the building by grade level as follows:

- 3:00 PM - Grade 5 - EXIT 2
- 3:00 PM - Grade 7 – EXIT 4
- 3:00 PM - Grade 6 & 8 – EXIT 6

### **Hallway Procedures**

- During the school day hallways will be unidirectional with traffic one way on each side of the hall. Students should stay to the right while transitioning in the hallways.

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE**

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, every parent, guardian, or other person having control and custody of a child between the ages of six and sixteen shall cause the child to regularly attend school. The Board of Education requires students enrolled in the school district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State.

Notwithstanding the requirement of reporting student absences in the school register for State and Federal reporting purposes, “excused” and “unexcused” student absences, for the purpose of expectations and consequences regarding truancy, student conduct, promotion, and the award of course credit is a local Board decision outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 and Policy and Regulation 5200. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 and

for the purposes of Policy and Regulation 5200, a student's absence from school will either be excused or unexcused. Unexcused absences will count toward truancy.

A parent or adult student shall provide advance notice to the school prior to the student being absent from school. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25.6, if a student is determined to be absent from school without valid excuse, and if the reason for the student's absence is unknown to school personnel, the principal or designee shall immediately attempt to contact the student's parent to notify the parent of the absence and determine the reason for the absence.

Students that are absent from school for any reason are responsible for the completion of assignments missed because of their absence. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14, a student who is absent from school for observing a religious holiday shall not be deprived of any award, eligibility, or opportunity to compete for any award, or deprived of the right to take an alternate test or examination that was missed because of the absence provided there is a written excuse of such absence signed by the parent.

Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused, from school or from class, deprive students of the educational and classroom experiences deemed essential to learning and may result in retention at grade level

Students shall be subjected to the school district's response for unexcused absences that count toward truancy during the school year as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4 and Regulation 5200.

Unexcused truant absences from school or from classes within the school day may subject a student to consequences that may include the denial of a student's participation in co-curricular activities and/or athletic competition. Repeated absences from school interfere with efforts of the Board and its staff in the maintenance of good order and the continuity of classroom instruction and such absences may result in the removal of the student from a class or course of study.

The Superintendent shall calculate and monitor the average daily attendance rate for the district and for each school in the district. Whenever the average daily attendance rate does not meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements the Superintendent or designee shall develop a district improvement plan to improve student attendance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:30-5.2.

Doctor and/or parent/guardian notes explaining pupil absence/tardiness will be submitted upon return of student to school.

Students are allowed 5 unexcused truant absences or lateness. For the sixth (6th) truant absence or lateness, the student is ineligible for extra-curricular activities, athletics, and all 8th grade activities.

The following procedure is in place to prevent a student from not receiving a thorough and efficient education:

Absence Threshold	Attendance Letter	Action
5	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance letter signed by the principal and sent home by the principal’s secretary.</li> <li>• Principal calls parent/guardian. An Attendance Action Plan is developed. Call is logged in Genesis.</li> </ul>
10	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance letter signed by the principal or his/her designee and sent home by the principal’s secretary.</li> <li>• A parent conference will be scheduled through the principal’s office or the office of his/her designee. At this conference, the principal or his/her designee will hear the circumstances of the attendance issue from the parent and may excuse absences based on documentation/evidence provided. Meeting is logged in Genesis.</li> <li>• Attendance Action Plan may be revised accordingly.</li> </ul>
15	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A certified letter from the office of the principal or his/her designee will be sent indicating that the attendance matter will be brought to the attention of the court.</li> <li>• A parent conference will be scheduled through the office of the principal or his/her designee to provide an opportunity for the parent to present circumstances that have contributed to the attendance issue and to submit documentation/evidence to resolve the issue before a court hearing.</li> <li>• A court hearing will occur attended by our truancy officer.</li> <li>• The truancy officer will be provided with all documentation that demonstrates the district’s efforts to resolve the attendance issue.</li> </ul>

Parents should call the school by 8:30 am if a child will be absent from school. Please call the main office at (856) 931-6272 to report an absence

Immediately returning from an absence, students must submit **A NOTE FROM HOME EXPLAINING THE REASON FOR THEIR ABSENCE** to the homeroom teacher. The note should contain the date of absence, full name of child, grade and homeroom of child, specific reasons for absence, and a signature of parent or guardian. Any absence of 5 or more days requires a doctor's note.

School attendance is mandatory in the state of New Jersey. All students enrolled in public schools in New Jersey are required to attend school "all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the school district except for absences which are excused (see below)." Failure to adhere to attendance requirements could result in retention or course completion.

The fact that a parent approves an absence and writes an excuse does not make the absence lawful or approved. STUDENTS ARE LIMITED TO A TOTAL OF 10 ABSENCES IN A SCHOOL YEAR (THIS LIMIT INCLUDES EXCUSED, UNEXCUSED ABSENCE THAT COUNTS TOWARD TRUANCY AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCE THAT DOES NOT COUNT TOWARD TRUANCY).

**Approved unexcused absences** - for which there are no penalties, are limited to those authorized in writing by a physician, dentist, judge, or school official. MEDICAL NOTES OR OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED MORE THAN FIVE DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF THE ABSENCE. STUDENTS WITH MORE THAN 8 NON-CONSECUTIVE MEDICAL ABSENCES MAY BE REFERRED TO THE INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICE OR CHILD STUDY TEAM FOR AN EVALUATION TO DETERMINE IF A CLASSIFICATION OF CHRONICALLY ILL IS WARRANTED.

1. **Approved unexcused absences** - Illnesses authorized via notes from doctors are categorized as *approved*. Illnesses covered by parental/guardian notes are only categorized as *truant unexcused*. On the eleventh (11th) truant absence, a court notification will be rendered.
2. **Unexcused cuts** - could revert to daily absences.
3. When students are absent, they may not attend an after school and/or evening activity without administrative approval.
4. Parents/guardians of a student absent ten consecutive school days must request home instruction. The parent/guardian will notify the school nurse and submit a doctor's note indicating the consecutive school days absent. Approval will be determined by the Board of Education, based on acceptance of parent notification, medical necessity and anticipated duration of illness deemed by the doctor.
5. Exceeding more than half of the allowable absences (as explained herein) could jeopardize class trip attendance.

### **APPEALS (ATTENDANCE)**

The Bellmawr Board of Education is cognizant of possible unforeseen factors, which may create hardships relating to the operation of the attendance policy.

Petition for Hearing - A written petition for a hearing must be presented to the school principal by the parent/guardian no later than five school days after the receipt of notification of the thirteenth day absent. Any and all material to be considered as basis for an appeal must be delivered to the principal prior to an assigned hearing date. Data should include documentation for all days absent, not just those days in excess of the policy.

**STATE EXCUSED ABSENCES:** The State of New Jersey recognizes the following five allowable reasons for recording as a state-excused absence:

- Religious observance (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h))
- A college visit (up to 3 days per school year for students in grades 11 and 12)
- “Take Our Children to Work Day” or other rule issued by the Commissioner
- Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-33); or 8
- The closure of a busing district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school

### **ABSENCE DUE TO RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

1. Any student absent from school because of a religious holiday will not be deprived of any award or eligibility or opportunity to compete for an award because of such absence.
2. Students who miss a test or examination because of absence on a religious holiday will be given the right to take an alternate test or examination.
3. To be entitled to the privileges set forth above, the pupil must present a written excuse signed by a parent or legal guardian.
4. Any absence because of a religious holiday will be recorded in the school register or in any group or class attendance record as state excused absence.
5. Such absence will NOT be recorded on any transcript or application or employment form or on any similar form.

### **LATE TO SCHOOL**

1. Any student who is late for school must report directly to the central office for a pass. The tardy offense will be handled accordingly.
2. Only a medical note signed by a doctor or a note from a dentist, court official, or school official will render lateness as approved. The fact that a parent approves lateness and writes an excuse does not make the lateness approved.
3. Excessive tardiness may result in suspension from school

### **BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL REGULATIONS**

1. Students are not permitted in the halls before 8:35 am.

2. At the end of the school day, students are to leave the building as soon as possible; loitering is not permitted.

### **LEAVING SCHOOL EARLY**

Parents who have arranged a doctor, dentist, or court appearance must write a note requesting permission for the student to be excused early. On that note they must include the (1) date, (2) full name of child, (3) grade and homeroom of child, (4) specific reason for early dismissal, (5) name and phone number of the doctor or dentist, and (6) signature of parent or **guardian-approval by school officials is required for any scheduled early dismissal. Notes are turned into the homeroom teacher when homeroom begins. On occasion, we may need to contact the student's home for confirmation of an early release request.**

Notes from home, asking permission for a student to be excused early are to be turned into the homeroom teacher as homeroom begins. A parent or guardian must sign out their child with the main office, before a student is released early from school. As stated in the School Attendance Policy, students who attend school for less than the four hours minimum school day will be considered absent a full day.

### **NURSING SERVICES**

All students must be up to date on their immunizations required for school attendance. Entering **6th grade students** must submit proof of Tdap and Meningococcal vaccination within 30 days of their birthdate.

It is recommended that you submit one physical exam during your child's middle school years. This could be a Universal Physical Exam or a Sports Physical. If your child is interested in participating in **sports or intramurals**, a **sports physical is required** for students in 6th through 8th grade **once a year for participation**. Sports physicals must be completed on the proper document and **submitted to the school nurse 2 weeks prior to the start of the sports season** to allow for the School Physician time to review and clear the athlete or send for further evaluation if deemed necessary.

If your child is **sick**, please **keep them home and call the school nurse** or main office to record the absence.

If you are unsure if you should send your child in, err on the side of caution and call the school nurse. **Please remember to update your contact information as needed so that you may be reached in the event of an emergency.**

If your child will be taking medication during the school year, please bring the medication in with Doctor's orders in the original container.

Please visit our school website for any forms that you may need.

## **REPORTING A STUDENT ABSENT**

Parents should call the school by 8:30 am if a child will be absent from school by dialing 856-931-6273 press 2, then leave your child's name, grade, and reason for absence.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

The Board of Education disclaims any and all responsibility for the diagnosis and treatment of an illness of any student. However, in order for many students with chronic health conditions and disabilities to remain in school, medication may have to be administered during school hours. Parents are encouraged to administer medications to children at home whenever possible as medication should be administered in school only when necessary for the health and safety of students. The Board will permit the administration of medication in school in accordance with applicable law.

Medication will only be administered to students in school by the school physician, a certified or noncertified school nurse, a substitute school nurse employed by the district, the student's parent, a student who is approved to self-administer in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3 and 12.4, and school employees who have been trained and designated by the certified school nurse to administer epinephrine and hydrocortisone sodium succinate in an emergency pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.5, 12.6, 12.29, and 12.30.

Self-administration of medication by a student for asthma or other potentially life-threatening illnesses, a life-threatening allergic reaction, or adrenal insufficiency is permitted in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3.

The school nurse shall have the primary responsibility for the administration of epinephrine and hydrocortisone sodium succinate to the student. However, the school nurse may designate, in consultation with the Board or the Superintendent, additional employees of the district who volunteer to be trained in the administration of epinephrine via a pre-filled auto-injector mechanism and the administration of hydrocortisone sodium succinate using standardized training protocols established by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) in consultation with the Department of Health when the school nurse is not physically present at the scene.

In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.6.d, no school employee, including a school nurse or any other officer or agent of a Board of Education or a physician or an advanced practice nurse providing a prescription under a standing protocol for school epinephrine pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.5 and/or hydrocortisone sodium succinate pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.29, shall be held liable for any good faith act or omission consistent with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.5 and N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.29, nor shall any action before the New Jersey State Board of Nursing lie against a school nurse for any such action taken by a person designated in good faith by the school nurse pursuant

to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.6.d and N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.33. Good faith shall not include willful misconduct, gross negligence, or recklessness.

The school nurse or designee shall be promptly available on site at the school and at school-sponsored functions in the event of an allergic reaction or an emergency requiring the administration of hydrocortisone sodium succinate. In addition, the parent must be informed that the school district, its employees and agents shall have no liability as a result of any injury arising from the administration of epinephrine or hydrocortisone sodium succinate to the student.

The parent of the student must sign a statement acknowledging their understanding the district shall have no liability as a result of any injury arising from the administration of the epinephrine via a pre-filled auto-injector mechanism or the administration of hydrocortisone sodium succinate to the student. In addition, the parent shall indemnify and hold harmless the district and its employees or agents against any claims arising out of the administration of the epinephrine via a pre-filled auto-injector mechanism or the administration of hydrocortisone sodium succinate to the student.

The permission for the emergency administration of epinephrine via a pre-filled auto-injector mechanism containing epinephrine to students for anaphylaxis and/or the emergency administration of hydrocortisone sodium succinate for adrenal insufficiency is effective for the school year it is granted and must be renewed for each subsequent school year.

Each school in the district shall have and maintain for the use of students at least one nebulizer in the office of the school nurse or a similar accessible location. Each certified school nurse or other persons authorized to administer asthma medication will receive training in airway management and in the use of nebulizers and inhalers consistent with DOE regulations. Every student that is authorized to use self-administered asthma medication pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3 or a nebulizer must have an asthma treatment plan prepared by the student's physician which shall identify, at a minimum, asthma triggers, the treatment plan, and other such elements as required by the State Board of Education.

All student medications shall be appropriately maintained and secured by the school nurse, except those medications to be self-administered by students. In those instances, the medication may be retained by the student with the prior knowledge of the school nurse. The school nurse may provide the principal and other teaching staff members concerned with the student's educational progress with such information about the medication and its administration as may be in the student's best educational interests. The school nurse may report to the school physician any student who appears to be affected adversely by the administration of medication and may recommend to the principal the student's exclusion pursuant to law.

The school nurse shall document each instance of the administration of medication to a student. Students self-administering medication shall report each incident to a teacher,

coach, or other individual designated by the school nurse who is supervising the student during the school activity when the student self-administers. These designated individuals shall report such incidents to the school nurse within twenty-four hours of the self-administration of medication. The school nurse shall preserve records and documentation regarding the self-administration of medication in the student's health file.

## **INTERVENTION & REFERRAL SERVICES**

The Board of Education directs the establishment and implementation of a coordinated system in each school building in which general education pupils are served, for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist pupils who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing pupils' learning, behavior, or health needs in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.1.

Students who are experiencing learning, behavior, or health difficulties shall be referred to the school's Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Team. The intervention and referral services shall be provided to aid students in the general education program and, may be provided for students who have been determined to need special education programs and services pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.1(a). The intervention and referral services provided for students who have been determined to need special education programs and services shall be coordinated with the student's Individualized Education Program Team, as appropriate.

The functions of the system of Intervention and Referral Services in each school building shall be to:

- Identify learning, behavior, and health difficulties of pupils;
- Collect thorough information on the identified learning, behavior, and health difficulties;
- Develop and implement action plans which provide for appropriate school or community interventions or referrals to school and community resources, based on the collected data and desired outcomes for the identified learning, behavior, and health difficulties;
- Provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff who identify learning, behavior, and health difficulties;
- Provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff who participate in each building's system for planning and providing intervention and referral services;
- Actively involve parent(s) or legal guardian(s) in the development and implementation of intervention and referral services action plans;
- Coordinate the access to and delivery of school resources and services for achieving the outcomes identified in the intervention and referral services action plans;
- Coordinate the services of community-based social and health provider agencies and other community resources for achieving the outcomes identified in the intervention and referral services action plans;
- Maintain records of all requests for assistance, intervention and referral services action plans, and related pupil information pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.2(a)9.

- Review and assess the effectiveness of the provisions of each intervention and referral services action plan in achieving the outcomes identified in each action plan and modify each action plan to achieve the outcomes, as appropriate; and
- At a minimum, annually review the intervention and referral services action plans and the actions taken as a result of the building's system of intervention and referral services and make recommendations to the building principal for improving school programs and services, as appropriate.

Records of all requests for assistance, all intervention and referral services action plans, and all related student information shall be maintained in accordance with Federal and State laws and regulations and New Jersey administrative code pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.2(a)9.

The I&RS Team shall review and assess the effectiveness of the provisions of each intervention and referral services action plan in achieving the outcomes identified in each action plan and modify each action plan to achieve the outcomes, as appropriate.

At a minimum, the I&RS Team shall annually review the intervention and referral services action plans and the action plans taken as a result of the building's system of intervention and referral services and make recommendations to the principal for improving school programs and services, as appropriate.

At the end of the school year, the principal shall, in consultation with the I&RS Team, develop a report on the concerns and issues identified by the I&RS Team and the effectiveness of the services provided in achieving the outcomes identified in the intervention and referral services action plans. This report shall be provided to the Superintendent of Schools.

### **I&RS PROCEDURE**

The Superintendent of Schools will establish and implement district-wide procedures for each school building in which general education pupils are served for the planning and delivery of intervention and referral services that are designed to assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties and to assist staff who have difficulties in addressing pupils' learning, behavior, or health needs in accordance with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8.1.

Each Building Principal will establish an Intervention and Referral Services Team referred to as the I&RS Team. The I&RS Team will be comprised of the following:

- The principal or a member of the teaching staff other than special education, who is appointed by the principal to act on his/her behalf and with his/her authority, shall act as chairperson;
- A member of the Child Study Team (CST) (after final Tier 3).
- The staff member who referred a pupil in need of assistance or identified a school issue for discussion; and

- Such other school staff members as may effectively aid in the development and implementation of the assistance plan for a particular pupil.
- The district will provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff who participate in each building's system for planning and providing intervention and referral services.

### **Student Referral**

- A pupil not known to have a disability who is experiencing difficulty in the classroom may be referred to the I&RS Team by the classroom teacher or by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) shall be informed of any such referral.
  - The district will provide support, guidance, and professional development to school staff who identify learning, behavior, and health difficulties.
- When it appears that a referred pupil may have a disability, the I&RS Team shall refer the pupil to the CST for evaluation pursuant to Policy No. 2460 for a determination of the pupil's eligibility for special education and/or related services.
- The I&RS Team shall consult with the pupil's regular classroom teacher, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and any school employee as appropriate to gather relevant information regarding the pupil's educational status, attendance, classroom behavior, and school conduct.
- The school nurse shall review the pupil's health records and inform the committee of any condition relevant to the pupil's difficulties. Any information regarding any infection with HIV virus or AIDS may be released only with the written permission of the adult pupil or the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
- As appropriate, the I&RS Team may consult with community-based social and health agencies that provide services to the pupil or the pupil's family.

### **Care Solace**

We are committed to the well-being of our students, staff, and families to create a safe and healthy learning environment. In support of our ongoing commitment, we partnered with Care Solace to provide an additional layer of care for our community.

Care Solace helps individuals find mental health care providers and substance use treatment centers. Their Care Companion™ team is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and 365 days per year to quickly connect you to carefully verified providers in your community.

Students, staff, and families may access Care Solace services in two ways:

- **Call (888) 515-0595** at any time. Support is available in 200+ languages. A dedicated Care Companion™ will help you every step of the way to research options, secure appointments, and follow up to make sure it is a good fit.
- For an anonymous search, answer a few questions to get matched with an extensive list of care providers at [www.caresolace.com/bellmawrschools](http://www.caresolace.com/bellmawrschools).

Care Solace is now available for use **at no cost to you**. They will connect you with providers accepting all medical insurances including Medicaid, Medicare, and sliding scale options for those without insurance. All information entered on the Care Solace tool is completely confidential and securely stored.

Please note, this service is an optional resource available by choice and is not mandatory to use. Care Solace is not an emergency response service or mental health services provider. In the event of a life threatening emergency, please call 9-1-1 or the National Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-8255.

If you are interested in counseling-related services for your child, yourself, or another family member, please contact Care Solace for valuable assistance. This is a complimentary resource provided by Bellmawr Public Schools.

## **SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT**

The 504 plan refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary, or postsecondary schooling. The focus is to ensure that the educational system provides the full range of reasonable accommodations necessary for students to participate in and benefit from public education programs and activities.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities as defined under the Section, including both students and staff. This applies to any entity who receives federal financial assistance.

The regulations require identification, evaluations, provision of reasonable accommodations, and procedural safeguards to students enrolled in Bellmawr Public Schools.

### **How is a disability defined under Section 504?**

The definition of disability is a person who has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Examples include caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking breathing, learning, and working. It also defines a person of having a disability as anyone who has a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such impairment.

### **How is the determination for eligibility made?**

An evaluation is conducted to gather information on how the disability is substantially impacting on a major life function. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but it must come from various sources including, but not limited to the school nurse, classroom teacher(s), guidance counselors, and outside persons with relevant information.

Evaluation procedures may include review of records, assessment information, interviews with persons knowledgeable about the child's functioning, observations, individualized assessments.

The 504 Team, a group of people knowledgeable about the student, collaboratively develop the 504 Plan, if appropriate. The purpose of the group is to examine the information regarding the person, and determine if reasonable accommodations are necessary, and subsequently what those accommodations will be if the person is considered eligible.

The term substantial is not defined within the law. Therefore, the 504 Team considers the impact of the impairment on the major life function specific to the individual. The 504 Team is directed to determine if the student is afforded and equal opportunity to participate and/or benefit from education when compared to non-disabled, age-appropriate peers. A frame of reference for their responsibility is to use the average student in the general population for the purposes of comparison.

Periodic reevaluation is required by Section 504. Reevaluation of the 504 Plan is recommended once per school year or upon significant change in school placement or program.

### **504 PROCEDURES**

1. Request in writing forwarded to the Guidance Office.
2. Guidance Office Administrative Assistant contacts parent to arrange a meeting date with Building Principal, Guidance Counselor, Teacher, and Nurse (If needed).

3. Guidance Office Administrative Assistant sends home 504 Meeting Notice, Parent Input for 504 form, and Parent Rights packet.
4. Guidance Office Administrative Assistant notifies parties of meeting via email and sends the 504 Referral Form and Teacher Input 504 Form to be completed by the classroom teacher. (Both Forms must be completed prior to meeting)
5. Notice of 504 Accommodation Plan meeting results is completed by Guidance Counselor at the meeting. If ineligible, parent signature is required, and paperwork filed under Inactive.
6. If Eligible, Section 504 Accommodation Plan is completed at meeting using Tracker document.
7. Copies of 504 plans are given to building principal and teacher. Original kept in the Guidance Office.
8. Case Manager gives information for Guidance Office Administrative Assistant to create folder and put information into Genesis.

### **HOME INSTRUCTION FOR GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS**

The Board of Education shall provide instructional services to an enrolled general education student at the student's home or other suitable out-of-school setting under the following conditions:

- The student is mandated by State law and rule for placement in an alternative education program, but placement is not immediately available.
- The student is placed on short-term or long-term suspension from participation in the general education program; or
- A court order requires the student receive instructional services in the home or other out-of-school setting.

The school district in which a student resides shall be responsible for the costs of providing instruction in the home or out-of-school setting either directly or through online services, including any needed equipment, or through contract with another Board of Education, Educational Services Commission, Jointure Commission or approved clinic or agency. The district shall provide services no later than five school days after the student has left the general education program.

### **LOST & FOUND**

When a student loses something, they should check in with the principal's office, to see if it has been turned in, if it hasn't, the administrative assistant will take the students name then reach out to other staff members to see if anyone has the item.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

End of Marking Periods:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Marking Period see school calendar
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marking Period see school calendar
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Marking Period see school calendar
- 4<sup>th</sup> Marking Period see school calendar

Back to School Night: October 5, 2023

Parent /Teacher Conferences: 11/20/23 and 11/21/23

## **GRADING SYSTEM PROCEDURE & GRADING SCALE**

### **Preparation for Grading**

- Each pupil must be informed of the behavior and achievements expected of him/her at the outset of each course of study or unit of study.
- Each pupil must be kept informed of his/her progress during the course of a unit of study. Pupils who so request are entitled to see the grades resulting from their performance during the grading period.
- Each method of grading shall be appropriate to the course of study and the maturity and abilities of the pupils.
- Pupils should be encouraged to evaluate their own achievements.
- The process of review and revision will involve teaching staff members, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and, as appropriate, pupils.

### **Grading Periods**

- Grades will be awarded at the end of four marking periods in each school year.
- Pupils will be given notice of their mid-term progress at mid-point of each marking period.
- Pupils will be given a final grade in each subject at the end of the school year.
- Grades will be recorded on report cards for parent(s) or legal guardian(s) notification in accordance with Policy No. 5420 and Regulation No. 5420.

### **Meaning of Grades**

- The following grades will be given in each academic subject at the end of each marking period:
- A grade of A indicates superior performance. It may be given to a pupil whose achievement is significantly above grade level; whose work achieves a quality and quantity

that consistently excels; and who demonstrates a high degree of initiative, application, and purpose.

- A grade of B indicates above average performance. It should be given to a pupil whose achievement is above grade level; whose work frequently excels; and who generally demonstrates strength in the subject.
- A grade of C indicates average performance. It should be given to a pupil whose achievement in most areas of the subject are average; whose work is acceptable; and who demonstrates a satisfactory degree of proficiency.
- A grade of D indicates below average performance. It should be given to a pupil whose achievement in the subject is barely passing; whose work is the minimum acceptable for credit; and who demonstrates only weak proficiencies in the subject.
- A grade of F indicates failing performance and that no credit can be given for the subject. It should be given to a pupil who has not met the minimum requirements of the course; who has demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to master the basic elements of the course; or who has failed to meet the minimum attendance standards necessary to pass a course of study.
- Letter grades may be modified by plus or minus signs.

The following grading scales and indicators shall be used:

### **Grades 5 to 8**

Report Card Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A+	100 – 97
A	96 – 93
A-	92 – 90
B+	89 – 87
B	86 – 83
B-	82 – 80
C+	79 – 77
C	76 – 73
C-	72 – 70
D	69 – 67
D-	66 – 65
F	64 – 50

Middle School: The following weights must be utilized for assessments when computing grades:

Tests	35%
Quizzes	30%
Classwork	25%
Homework	10%

### **HOMEWORK POLICY**

At the elementary level, assignment of homework is planned for and with pupils in terms of their needs for independent or reinforcement of work. All homework assignments should be in terms of sound educational purposes. Unless the homework is assigned according to ability grouping, the minutes per night of the assignment should be based on the length of time in which an average child could complete the work. A recommended schedule for homework is as follows:

#### **Grade 5**

Homework assignments at this grade level usually may be given four nights per week. It is suggested that assignments not exceed thirty minutes per night per subject. However, when in the opinion of the teacher, more homework is necessary, an assignment over the weekend will be given.

#### **Grade 6**

Homework assignments at this grade level may be given five nights per week. It is suggested that assignments not exceed thirty minutes per night per subject.

#### **Grades 7 and 8**

Homework assignments at these grade levels may be given five nights per week. It is suggested that assignments not exceed sixty minutes per night.

- All assignments should take into consideration
- The individual differences of pupils,
- The need for pupils to carry on independent work,
- The need to help pupils develop effective home study habits,
- The need for children to build meaningful concepts,
- The need for pupils to become resourceful in the application skills and subject matter
- The need to develop interrelatedness between home and school activities.

Any homework assignments made should be clearly understood by the pupil so that they can be accomplished independently after instruction has been given at school. When children do independent work of any type outside of school, the teacher should see that the results are promptly checked, shared with the class, or put to use.

Some types of activities which may be planned with pupils in terms of needs are:

- Individual practice in basic skills already introduced,
- Making up work that is missed due to illness,
- Recreational and research reading,
- Special-day projects,
- Preparation of collections or exhibits,
- Experimentation in a field of science already demonstrated at school to note further findings,
- Interviewing appropriate persons,
- Continuing listening to activities such as recordings, radio, or TV broadcasts,
- Continuing creative art experiences,
- Playing games that build interest in arithmetic, reading, spelling, social studies, etc., and
- Participating in family trips to places of interest related to special interests.

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is a partner and co-worker by participating with the child in locating materials, sharing his/her knowledge, experimenting with the child in an art of science media, listening to or viewing the child's schoolwork in process and assisting in its application to part of school life. Parent-teacher conferences are times to plan the child's all-around progress and growth. It is very essential that parent(s) or legal guardian(s) provide a good atmosphere for work at home. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) should observe pupils at work and be available to provide guidance if the need arises, but self-direction is one of the major goals of homework.

### **PRE-ALGEBRA & ALGERBA CRITERIA**

Pre-Algebra: Criteria for Grade 7

- LinkIt! Form C: Meeting or Exceeding
- Pre-Algebra Readiness Assessment: Score of 60% or higher
- Grade Average for Marking Periods 1, 2, and 3: B or higher
- Teacher Recommendation: Based upon homework completion, proficiency of basic skills, displays mathematical processing, produces quality work, and contributes regularly to the learning environment.

Algebra: Criteria for Grade 8

- LinkIt! Form C: Meeting or Exceeding
- Algebra Readiness Assessment: Score of 60% or higher
- Pre-Algebra Average for Marking Periods 1, 2, and 3: B or higher
- Teacher Recommendation: Based upon homework completion, proficiency of basic skills, displays mathematical processing, produces quality work, and contributes regularly to the learning environment.

## **HONORING PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT**

Pupils in grades three through eight who distinguish themselves by high academic achievement will be listed on an honor roll at the end of each marking period.

## **RENAISSANCE PROGRAM**

The Renaissance program offers a different approach to recognizing students: to identify, recognize, and reinforce the actions of the students demonstrating character, kindness, academic excellence, and academic improvement – all qualities of Renaissance students and staff. These ideas are designed to acknowledge more students for earned accomplishments.

Gold Card recognition: GPA 4-4.69, no administrative detentions/infractions, no more than 3 unexcused absences or tardies

Green Card recognition: GPA 3.69-3.99, no administrative detentions/infractions, no more than 3 unexcused absences or tardies

## **DRESS CODE**

### **Pupil Dress and Grooming**

All pupils must come to school **dressed** in neat, clean clothing which is serviceable, practical and appropriate fitting for everyday activities of a classroom. Pupils who attend school in attire or accessories which create a distraction or are inappropriate will not be permitted to attend class. Parents will be called to bring proper school attire. The administration reserves the right to make a judgment as to the acceptability of specific attire in individual cases. This pertains to all in and out of school events, including field trips, dances, and graduation ceremonies.

### **Allowable Dress & Grooming**

- Students must wear clothing of appropriate length including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or of the equivalent and shoes.
- Footwear is required at all times and must be secured to foot, i.e.: no slip-on shoes, flip-flops, or slippers.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides.
- Clothing must cover undergarments, waistbands and bra straps excluded.
- Fabric covering all private parts must not be see through.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, field trips, etc.

### **Non-Allowable Dress & Grooming**

- Clothing may not depict, advertise, or advocate the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or other controlled substances.
- Clothing may not depict pornography, nudity, or sexual acts.

- Clothing may not use or depict hate speech targeting groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, or any other protected groups.
- Clothing that is frayed, shredded, or ripped may not expose under garments or private parts. Any fray, shred or rip must be appropriate length (arms at side; fist length).
- Tanktops/sleeveless shirts, hats, pajamas, and hoodies must be worn down indoors.
- If the student's attire or grooming threatens the health or safety of any other person, then discipline will follow code of conduct.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

The Bellmawr School District has a full time Child Study Team (CST) who provide consultative, evaluative, and prescriptive services to teachers and parents regarding students who are experiencing school related difficulties. The CST also provides services for families of children who may be experiencing developmental delays as they approach school age under Child Find. The members of the Child Study Team as determined by the New Jersey Department of Education are a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher consultant, and a school social worker. Also, at times, the speech language pathologist therapist may act as a member of the Child Study Team.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

A wide variety of special education programs are available for students between the ages of 3 and 21 who require specialized instruction and/or related services such as speech/language services, occupational and physical therapy, and behavioral consultation, to meet their educational needs. Educational program options include instruction in a regular class with all the necessary and appropriate supports, supplemental instruction, resource center programs, special class programs within the school district, special education programs in out-of-district public or private schools, and individual instruction at home or in other appropriate approved state facilities.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

The entire student body will utilize Chromebook devices and the Google Classroom Platform. Each student will possess an email address that can be used for school purposes only. At the outset of the school year parents/guardians will be asked to sign the student loaner agreement as well as the internet access form. These documents can be found in Parent Portal and on our website. In our district the students and staff have access to the latest updates in technology, such as infrastructure and access to online curriculum and programming. Staff members utilize online tools for most of their academic requirements.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

The Middle School comprehensive counseling program focuses on solving problems and navigating obstacles so that students can reach their full potential. Numerous services are provided to enhance students' academic, social/emotional, and career development. They include:

- \* Individual Counseling
- \* Small Group Counseling
- \* Walk-in service (any student can come to my office anytime for assistance)
- \* Classroom SEL and Career Exploration Lessons
- \* High School planning
- \* Peer mediation
- \* Referrals to community services

All students in grades 6-8 will have guidance check-ins periodically throughout the year. The objectives of these short appointments will be to:

- introduce the counselor and services offered
- discuss academic/social/personal goals
- connect students to school resources options
- answer any questions/ assist with any immediate issues
- assist with High School planning for grade 8

If you would like to enroll your child in individual counseling sessions to address a specific issue such as anxiety, motivation, family change, bereavement, organizational/time management, or other areas that may impede academic success and personal and social/emotional health, please contact the Guidance Department at the Bell Oaks Middle School.

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Bellmawr School District is committed to the development of the whole child by incorporating social and emotional learning. All stakeholders will work hard each day to support each child as a whole and to promote academic, social, and emotional growth because we believe children have the potential to be successful both in and out of the classroom. Please join us as we embark on this new journey for our school district.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves the process through which children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Our Social Emotional Learning model empowers teachers and students with a framework to cultivate Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills and Responsible Decision Making. This will be achieved through intentional practice in a safe, structured environment so that the balance between Self-Efficacy and Social Harmony can be obtained.

Prior to beginning the school year, all of our teachers received specific training in trauma-informed teaching strategies and social-emotional learning (SEL). This focused training supports student social and emotional health both in the classroom and in a distance learning context. Teachers are currently embedding supportive strategies into their daily lessons to develop student social and emotional strengths. As they monitor their students, they are keeping an eye out for those who may need greater support.

We will be asking for your child's feedback through an online Social and Emotional Survey in order to learn more about student experiences in our district for students in grades 3 through 8. The feedback received from the online survey will provide invaluable insights into student experiences and how to improve and adapt our district to your child's needs.

The survey will be given online, and students will complete the survey at school or remotely. It will take 20 to 30 minutes for students to complete, and our teachers will guide them through the process. All survey responses about classrooms are kept confidential. The results for this survey are only collected as summary data and will be shared by the Superintendent.

The questionnaire will focus on the following topics and be administered during instructional time.

- **School Belonging:** How much students feel that they are valued members of the school community. Example Question: How connected do you feel to the adults at your school?
- **Mindset:** Behavioral: Students' perceptions of whether they have the potential to change certain behavioral factors that affect their performance in class. Example Question: In (subject), how possible is it for you to change.... Behaving well in class?
- **Grit:** Perceptions of how well students are able to persevere through setbacks to achieve important long-term goals. Example Question: If you fail to reach an important goal, how likely are you to try again?
- **Teacher/Student Relationship:** How strong the social connection is between teachers and students within and beyond the classroom. This scale is available from both a student's and teacher's points of view. Example Question: How excited would you be to have this teacher again?
- **Engagement:** How attentive and invested students are in class. Example Question: When you are not in class, how often do you talk about ideas from class?
- **Emotion Regulation:** Students' ability to react with composure in situations that typically produce negative emotions. Example Question: When you are feeling pressured, how easily can you stay in control.

Thank you for allowing us to improve your child's experience. If you have any questions, please reach out to our school counselors or classroom teacher.

Bell Oaks	Brian Reilly	856-931-6273 ext. 1367	<a href="mailto:breilly@bellmawrschools.org">breilly@bellmawrschools.org</a> .
Bell Oaks	Robin Belz	856-931-6273 ext. 1200	<a href="mailto:rbelz@bellmawrschools.org">rbelz@bellmawrschools.org</a> .

## **HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, AND BULLYING**

### **Policy Statement**

The Board of Education prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of a student. A safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe and disciplined environment. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that may involve a real or perceived power imbalance. Since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

For the purposes of this Policy, the term "parent," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.3, means the natural parent(s) or adoptive parent(s), legal guardian(s), foster parent(s), or parent surrogate(s) of a student. Where parents are separated or divorced, "parent" means the person or agency which has legal custody of the student, as well as the natural or adoptive parent(s) of the student, provided such parental rights have not been terminated by a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

### **Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Definition**

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

1. Is reasonably perceived as being motivated by either any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic;
2. Takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, as provided for in N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15.3;
3. Substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that
  - a. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, that the act(s) will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property;
  - b. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students;

*All action steps/consequences listed through do not include an exhaustive list of strategies. The items in each step also are not listed in chronological/progressive. All strategies should be administered in the least restrictive manner possible. In all cases, administration will keep the age and/or developmental level of each student in mind when administering consequences.*

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

Schools are required to address harassment, intimidation, and bullying occurring off school grounds, when there is a nexus between the harassment, intimidation, and bullying and the school (e.g., the harassment, intimidation, or bullying substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students).

“Electronic communication” means a communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including, but not limited to a telephone, cellular phone, computer, or pager.

### **Student Expectations**

The Board expects students to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other students and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities and the care of school facilities and equipment consistent with the Code of Student Conduct.

The Board believes that standards for student behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the students, parents, school employees, school administrators, school volunteers, and community representatives, producing an atmosphere that encourages students to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school district and community property on the part of students, staff, and community members.

Students are expected to behave in a way that creates a supportive learning environment. The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of staff to use instances of violations of the Code of Student Conduct as opportunities to help students learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with students shall apply best practices designed to prevent student conduct problems and foster students' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

The Board expects that students will act in accordance with the student behavioral expectations and standards regarding harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including:

1. Student responsibilities (e.g., requirements for students to conform to reasonable standards of socially accepted behavior; respect the person, property and rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to those who hold that authority).

*All action steps/consequences listed through do not include an exhaustive list of strategies. The items in each step also are not listed in chronological/progressive. All strategies should be administered in the least restrictive manner possible. In all cases, administration will keep the age and/or developmental level of each student in mind when administering consequences.*

2. Appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, and good citizenship.
3. Student rights
4. Sanctions and due process for violations of the Code of Student Conduct.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(a) and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a)1, the district has involved a broad-base of school and community members, including parents, students, instructional staff, student support services staff, school administrators, and school volunteers, as well as community organizations, such as faith-based, health and human service, business and law enforcement, in the development of this Policy. Based on locally determined and accepted core ethical values adopted by the Board, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1(a)2, the Board must develop guidelines for student conduct pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1. These guidelines for student conduct will take into consideration the developmental ages of students, the severity of the offenses and students' histories of inappropriate behaviors, and the mission and physical facilities of the individual school(s) in the district. This Policy requires all students in the district to adhere to the rules established by the school district and to submit to the remedial and consequential measures that are appropriately assigned for infractions of these rules.

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1, the Superintendent must annually provide to students and their parents the rules of the district regarding student conduct. Provisions shall be made for informing parents whose primary language is other than English.

The district prohibits active or passive support for acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Students are encouraged to support other students who:

1. Walk away from acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying when they see them;
2. Constructively attempt to stop acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
3. Provide support to students who have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
4. Report acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the designated school staff member.

## **Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions**

### **Consequences and Appropriate Remedial Actions – Students**

The Board of Education requires its school administrators to implement procedures that ensure both the appropriate consequences and remedial responses for students who commit one or more acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, consistent with the Code of Student Conduct. The following factors, at a minimum, shall be given full consideration

*All action steps/consequences listed through do not include an exhaustive list of strategies. The items in each step also are not listed in chronological/progressive. All strategies should be administered in the least restrictive manner possible. In all cases, administration will keep the age and/or developmental level of each student in mind when administering consequences.*

by school administrators in the implementation of appropriate consequences and remedial measures for each act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying by students.

Appropriate remedial action for a student who commits an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying that takes into account the nature of the behavior; the nature of the student's disability, if any, and to the extent relevant; the developmental age of the student; and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. The appropriate remedial action may also include a behavioral assessment or evaluation including, but not limited to, a referral to the Child Study Team as appropriate; and supportive interventions and referral services, including those at N.J.A.C. 6A:1

## **Bell Oaks Middle School Code of Conduct**

### **Intent**

This handbook will serve as a general guide for our tiered system of support and intervention based on conduct infractions. Infractions, consequences, and restorative practices will be outlined to provide general guidance and transparency for staff, students, families, and administration. While the infractions listed in this guidance account for most situations full discretion falls on the building administrator when developing a prescriptive plan for handling issues of student misconduct. It is our intention that this manual will provide all stakeholders a clear understanding of the school rules that have been established, the consequences that accompany infractions, and methods that will be used to help support students as they examine the impact of their actions.

### **Philosophy**

The staff, faculty and administration of the Bell Oaks Middle School are dedicated to providing a learning environment that fosters student growth. In an effort to help each child learn from all situations we have developed a plan for providing learning opportunities from conduct infractions. As with any environment rules and structure help everyone stay safe and secure. It is our goal with the support and cooperation of all stakeholders to provide clear and consistent rules and policies that support the growth and development of all students. In this guide you will find a logical sequence of consequences and restorative practices that build student character through examine how behaviors impact those around them. While consequences will be tied to infractions our goal is to provide support, strategies, and thinking frames to help students become better problem solvers and better able to manage their emotions and self-regulate. It is our intent that by providing a clear explanation of infractions all learning community members will maintain consistent and developmentally appropriate actions and interactions that serve to support our students. The school administration and/or Board of Education have the right to administer discipline for any other offense that is in violation of the law of school district policy or procedures, or in violation of acceptable standards of conduct for our students.

*All action steps/consequences listed through do not include an exhaustive list of strategies. The items in each step also are not listed in chronological/progressive. All strategies should be administered in the least restrictive manner possible. In all cases, administration will keep the age and/or developmental level of each student in mind when administering consequences.*

## Students at the Bell Oaks Middle School

Student Rights & Responsibilities	Expectations for Student Behavior
1. Access to a positive and nurturing learning environment 2. Equitable access and opportunities to learn 3. Clearly designed and explained disciplinary code of conduct that support restorative practices 4. Open and accessible line of communication to support staff, faculty, and administration 5. Actions taken to address infractions will correlate to the seriousness of the offense, and will factor in student background and history	Students will be PRESENT <b>P</b> prepared and ready to learn <b>R</b> respect school rules, property, and staff <b>E</b> engaged in learning <b>S</b> safe making safe decisions and choices <b>E</b> empathetic to others and situations <b>N</b> navigate interactions with respect and understanding <b>T</b> timely, in school using time and resources wisely

## CHARACTER STRONG PROGRAM

Bell Oaks Middle School students and staff partake in weekly Character Strong program lessons which combine social-emotional learning and character development in unique and engaging ways. Each lesson helps students develop relationships and improve discussion skills to build a stronger and more positive middle school culture. Some topics covered: Empathy, Healthy Habit Development, Growth Mindset, Resilience, Emotional Intelligence, Mindfulness, Kindness, Respect, Acceptance, & more.

### Expectations for Parent Involvement

The code of conduct is designed to support and ensure a safe learning environment for all students. The elements within the code of conduct take most meaning and works best when there is a relationship of trust and support between school and home. When a valued relationship is present the collaboration, open lines of communication and transparency build a mutually respected and supportive relationship centered on supporting the needs of the students.

### Parent Involvement

*Code of Conduct is designed to be a general guide for staff, students, and parents. There are certain circumstances that may require alternate actions that are not listed in the guidelines. Administration upholds the rights to make decisions/administer consequences based on the infraction(s) that is developmentally appropriate. We ask that parents/families,*

- Review and discuss the Code of Conduct with your child
- Become familiar with the Code of Conduct as a parent and direct any questions to the building principal.
- Understand and support the need for appropriate rules and regulations regarding safety and conduct to maintain a positive and supportive learning environment
- Understand that all students are expected to adhere to the *Code of Conduct* and that interventions will reflect student's age, maturity level, and behavioral history/background.

*All action steps/consequences listed through do not include an exhaustive list of strategies. The items in each step also are not listed in chronological/progressive. All strategies should be administered in the least restrictive manner possible. In all cases, administration will keep the age and/or developmental level of each student in mind when administering consequences.*

- Participate in or support your child as he/she participates in restorative practices as requested by teacher(s) and/or administration

### **Staff Statement of Responsibility**

All Staff will work toward establishing an environment that values and teaches respect for all; an environment that is culturally sensitive and models positive behavioral interactions that clearly show that no tolerance exists for certain types of behaviors including, but not limited to, bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Teachers have the responsibility to maintain a climate of mutual respect and dignity for all students, and to make every effort to treat each instance with fair and impartial judgment reflecting the age, maturity level and behavioral history/background of their students. Rules of confidentiality must be followed in all circumstances. We expect staff will,

- Know school policies and rules, and enforce them in a fair and consistent manner
- Conferencing with parents and/or principal. It is essential that parents are made aware of the problem in a timely fashion and are asked for their help in eliminating the problem
- Model positive behavior patterns that student can emulate including positive praise statements
- Provide learning opportunities through modeling, role playing, and scenario breakdown to help students learn and follow the Code of Conduct
- Support the school initiative by acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviors
- Uphold the actions set forth in the Code of Conduct as it applies to consequences and restorative practices that are aligned with developmentally and culturally responsive and appropriate actions.

### **TIER I & II INFRACTIONS COVERED IN THE STEP PLAN**

**Restorative Practices:** Bell Oaks Middle School staff will be using a restorative practice model when student conflicts occur to provide a more supportive and inclusive school culture through practices such as conferencing, mediation, and goal setting. Our restorative practices will take a social and emotional approach to student trauma and avoid less effective discipline measures, such out-of-school suspensions, whenever possible.

**Discipline Step Plan:** To best support our students and improve discipline policies, Bell Oaks Middle School staff uses a *discipline step-plan* to make data-driven decisions concerning behavioral incidents by tracking behaviors, reviewing expectations, and creating goals. The purpose is to address less severe discipline incidents in the classroom as efficiently as possible without sending students to the front office and missing valuable classroom time. Each student's classroom behavior incidents (Tier-1) are added to an online *discipline step-plan* and reviewed by students, parents, and staff members throughout the year. Minimal consequences for negative actions are based on severity of incident and frequency of infraction (step number). Positive rewards can be given for minimal step plan incidents and/or improved behaviors (restorative).

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## Chart of Discipline – Tier III & IV Infractions

Student Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Disrespectful Behavior/Language	1-2 Administrative Detentions, Parent meeting with VP	2 Administrative Detentions, Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Possession of Smoking Products/Smoking/Vaping	1 Suspension, possible exclusion from school related activities, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	3 Suspensions, exclusion from school related activities, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Parent meeting with administration	5 Suspensions, referral to Police	
Stealing	1-2 Suspensions, restitution, Parent meeting with VP	3 Suspensions, restitution, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Parent meeting with VP & P	5 Suspensions, refer to Police	
Setting Off Fire Alarm/Bomb Threats	10 OSS, Police notified, Parent meeting with administration	10 OSS, Police notified, Parent meeting with administration	10 OSS, Police notified, Parent meeting with administration	
Possession of Drug paraphernalia not containing any controlled dangerous substance. (These penalties are minimum. Any violation could result in a more severe penalty)	5-day Suspension Medical Exam to re-enter, Police notified, Parent meeting with admin, start restorative practices plan	10-day Suspension Medical Exam to re-enter, Police notified, Parent meeting with admin	10-day Suspension Medical Exam to re-enter, Police notified, Parent meeting with admin	

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Student Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Possession of any controlled dangerous substance or Possession of drug paraphernalia containing trace elements controlled dangerous substance Or Under the influence of a controlled dangerous substance	1st Offense and all Subsequent Offenses Parents notified Student sent to school nurse Minimum 10 day external suspension Medical examination and doctor's note will be required to re-enter school. Entrance into a treatment program may be required before returning to school. Police will be informed and appropriate action taken. A hearing will be held with the Board of Education			
Distributing, transferring or selling controlled dangerous substance large enough to indicate possible intent to distribute, transfer or sell or proof of intent to sell.	1st Offense and all Subsequent Offenses Parents notified Student sent to school nurse Minimum 10-day external suspension Medical examination and doctor's note will be required to re-enter school. Entrance into a treatment program may be required before returning to school. Police will be informed, and appropriate action taken. A hearing will be held with the Board of Education.			
Insubordination – Gross Disrespect Towards School Employee	2 Administrative Detentions	3 Administrative Detentions, Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	Suspension, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Incitement to Fight	2 Admin Detentions	1 Suspension, Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	3 Suspensions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Scuffling (Pushing/Shoving/Endangering welfare of others)	2 Admin Detentions or Suspension depending on severity.	1-2 Suspensions, Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan	3 Suspensions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Terroristic Threats Any verbal or written threat (includes online) made to a staff member or student	Direct Threat – Any Offense – 3 or more Suspensions, Police, Parent meeting with Admin, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	Indirect Threat - Any Offense - 1 or more Suspensions - depending on severity, Police possible, Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept		

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Student Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Harassment	Discipline will depend upon severity of the case. May result in a HIB investigation in addition to disciplinary penalties. Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	Discipline will depend upon severity of the case. May result in a HIB investigation in addition to disciplinary penalties. Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	Discipline will depend upon severity of the case. May result in a HIB investigation in addition to disciplinary penalties. Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	
Threats Made to Another Student (verbal, online)	2 Admin Detentions or Suspension depending on severity.	1-2 Suspensions, Parent meeting with VP, start restorative practices plan	3 Suspensions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Sexual Harassment	1 Suspension, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Affirmative Action meeting	3 Suspensions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Affirmative Action meeting	5 Suspensions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Affirmative Action meeting	
Assault of Another Student	5 Suspensions, referral to Police, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	10 Suspensions, referral to Police, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	10 Suspensions, referral to Police, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Fighting	1-3 Suspensions, Police Notified, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	3-5 Suspensions, Police Notified, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	Up to 10 Suspensions, Police Notified, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	

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Student Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Assault Towards School Employee	Up to 10 Suspensions, Police Notified, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	Up to 10 Suspensions, Police Notified, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	Up to 10 Suspensions, Police Notified, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	
Weapons	Up to 10-days OSS, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, Police referral	Up to 10-days OSS, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, Police referral	Up to 10-days OSS, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, Police referral	
Cheating/Plagiarism/Forgery	Parent meeting with Teacher and VP to discuss consequences, no credit given for assignment	Parent meeting with Teacher and VP to discuss consequences, no credit given for assignment	Parent meeting with Teacher and VP to discuss consequences, no credit given for assignment	
Discriminatory Comment (Racial, Ethnic, etc. This may include written or verbal. Parents Immediately notified and peer mediation, if possible. Possible charges with police.	Major - 1 or more Suspensions Minor - 1 or more A.D. or Suspensions May result in a HIB investigation in addition to disciplinary penalties.	Major - 3 or more Suspensions Minor - 1 or more Suspensions May result in a HIB investigation in addition to disciplinary penalties.		

*All action steps/consequences listed through do not include an exhaustive list of strategies. The items in each step also are not listed in chronological/progressive. All strategies should be administered in the least restrictive manner possible. In all cases, administration will keep the age and/or developmental level of each student in mind when administering consequences.*

Student Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Violation of Dress Code (In each case the student receives a violation letter to parent) Students who do not comply with dress code may be excluded from certain school programs	Warning – Parents notified – student must change into appropriate clothing	Referral to Vice-Principal – Parent notified – Administrative/lunch detention - student must change into appropriate clothing	Referral to Vice-Principal – Parent notified – Two Administrative/lunch detentions - student must change into appropriate clothing – restorative and behavior plan	
Truancy	2-3 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Police contacted	5 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Police contacted	5-10 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept, Police contacted. Referral to Family Court and DCPD	
Possession of Alcohol or Consumption of alcohol in any amount or Under the influence of alcohol	Parents Notified Sent to Nurse Up to 10 Days Suspension Medical Exam and Doctor's Note to re-enter, Police notified	Same as 1st Minimum of 10 days Police notified		
Cutting Class (including Homeroom)	2 Admin Detentions	5 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with VP	5 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	
Unexcused Lateness	Warning	Warning	1 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting Principal	3-5 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Principal,

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Student Offense	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
				restorative practice plan
Cutting Detention	3 Admin detentions, Parent meeting with Teacher and VP to discuss consequences	3-5 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Teacher and VP to discuss consequences, start restorative practices plan, Guidance Dept	5 Admin Detentions, Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences	1 ISS 3 Saturdays – S.R.
Destruction of School Property/Vandalism	Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, full restitution, possible Police notice	Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, full restitution, possible Police notice	Parent meeting with Principal and VP to discuss consequences, full restitution, possible Police notice	
Possession of Cell Phone/electronic device	Warning	1 Admin Detention and returned to parent	3 Admin Detentions, returned to parent, restorative practice plan	
Violation of Technology Acceptable Use Policy	Parent meeting with VP to discuss consequence – will depend on severity of incident – restrictions on tech privileges	Parent meeting with VP to discuss consequence – will depend on severity of incident - restrictions on tech privileges	Parent meeting with VP to discuss consequence – will depend on severity of incident - restrictions on tech privileges	

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## Social and Emotional Learning through Transformative and Restorative Practices

Tier 1/Universal Prevention Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach behavior expectations</li> <li>• Implement positive behavior management</li> <li>• Delivery of social skills/PBIS/SEL curriculum</li> <li>• Provide academic enrichment activities</li> <li>• Institute a system of rewarding behavior</li> <li>• SEL Theme Days</li> <li>• Ready to Learn Breathing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share expectations for behavior</li> <li>• Responsive Classroom</li> <li>• Establish a formal home-to-school communication system</li> <li>• Implement behavior conferences/contracts</li> <li>• Discussion Cards</li> <li>• SEL Morning Scenarios</li> </ul>

Progressive Discipline Action Steps For 1 <sup>st</sup> Tier-1 Offenses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-teach the behavioral expectations</li> <li>• Parent conference</li> <li>• Loss of privileges</li> <li>• Review preventative strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restorative Questions</li> <li>• Reflective activity</li> <li>• Written reflection</li> <li>• Retreat to Calming Center</li> </ul>

2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier-1 Offense OR 1 <sup>st</sup> Tier-2 Offense (in addition to strategies outlined above)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restitution</li> <li>• Require the student to complete a community service task</li> <li>• Provide a peer/staff mentor</li> <li>• Provide PD/support for staff</li> <li>• Peer mediation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check-in/check-out (CICO) with Principal/Mentor</li> <li>• Behavioral contract &amp; daily log</li> <li>• Intervention group</li> <li>• Student selected method of apologizing/making amends to those impacted</li> </ul>

3 <sup>rd</sup> Tier-1 Offense OR 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tier-2 Offense (in addition to strategies outlined above)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OFFICE REFERRAL</li> <li>• Referral for counseling</li> <li>• Complete a functional behavioral assessment</li> <li>• Establish targeted behavior modification plan</li> <li>• Enroll staff in additional PD/support sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement restorative consequences/sessions</li> <li>• Referral to school intervention team</li> <li>• Schoolwide behavioral contract w/student &amp; parent.</li> <li>• Out-of-School Suspension (minimal days)</li> </ul>

3 <sup>rd</sup> Tier-2 Offense OR 1 <sup>st</sup> Tier-3 Offense (in addition to strategies outlined above)	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted School Day</li> <li>• Possible out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days)</li> <li>• Enroll student in an intensive intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to mental health agency</li> <li>• Referral to building intervention team</li> <li>• Provide staff w/specific behavior management PD</li> </ul>
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**4<sup>th</sup> Tier-2 OR 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier-3 Offense**  
(in addition to strategies outlined above)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out-of-school suspension (up to 10 days)</li> <li>• Placement in alternative setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to outside agency/law</li> <li>• Superintendent and/or BOE hearing</li> </ul>
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**5<sup>th</sup> Tier-2 OR 3<sup>rd</sup> Tier-3 Offense**  
(in addition to the strategies outlined above)

Removal from school/suspension or placement in alternative setting

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