

BMS/CMS 2020-2021

Newsletter #3

Week of September 21-25, 2020



Updates from the Principals

We are happy to share that all core classrooms (math, science, language arts and social studies), world language and most Unified Arts/Encore classrooms have been outfitted with live stream systems (teacher microphone, ceiling-mounted webcam and speakers); physical education will not be live-streamed at this time. While students, teachers and parents have noted quality improvements regarding the live audio and video streams, our district technicians continue to investigate, assess and implement solutions. We are aware of intermittent frozen audio/video and are actively working to deliver improved service over time. In addition, our teachers continue to gain proficiency integrating the live stream systems into the management of their classrooms and instruction. Our district department chairs, coordinators and teacher-leaders continue to develop and share innovations through ongoing professional development.

Your children are a joy and inspiration to our faculty and staff. We absolutely love having them in school and yearn for the day when we can welcome back everyone without restrictions. Our students have been respectful, caring, forgiving and encouraging to one another. In this light we respectfully request that our students and families consider the continued success and viability of our middle school when making personal decisions outside of school. Please be safe and act with an abundance of caution to protect the health and welfare of our students, families, school staff and community in the battle against the spread of Covid-19.

Please tune in to the [Board of Education on Monday October 5th at 7 pm](#) for important updates regarding the opening of CMS.

Sincerely, Adam and Kris

NEW ITEMS

NEXT WEEK'S SCHEDULE: SEPTEMBER 29th-October 2nd		
DAY/DATE	SCHEDULE ROTATION	COHORT
Monday, 9/28	NO SCHOOL - YOM KIPPUR	
Tuesday, 9/29 BMS/CMS VIRTUAL BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT 2020-2021 (SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS)	D DAY	Cohort B (L through Z Students)
Wednesday, 9/30	A DAY	Distance Learning for all students following the Wednesday time schedule; the school day ends for all students at 12:30 p.m.
Thursday, 10/1	C DAY	Cohort A (A through K Students)
Friday, 10/2	B DAY	Cohort B (L through Z Students)

ANNOUNCEMENT: BMS/CMS BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT 2020-2021

On **Tuesday, Sept. 29th at 7:00 p.m.** all families will receive an email with a link to our virtual back to school night; unfortunately, we are unable to invite our parents and guardians to visit the middle school for a traditional back to school night. Our teachers created video presentations, which have been curated on one website for easy navigation. If needed, please be sure you're receiving emails from our school and district by reviewing your email settings in the PowerSchool parent portal. Please login to check your settings; contact the parent help desk for assistance at 203-341-1214.

Fire and Lockdown Drills

At this time, we've completed 2 fire drills, one with each cohort of students. On Thursday October 8th and Friday October 9th, students and staff will participate in lockdown drills that have been modified for our hybrid model; each student cohort will participate in one of these lockdown drills. For the lockdown drills, students will wear their protective face masks and will not move from their desks to maintain social distancing. Teachers will provide students with additional instructions that will apply in the case of an actual emergency.

Attendance

If your child is sick and unable to attend school, whether it be in-person or distance-online, please contact the Attendance HotLine at 203-341-1599.

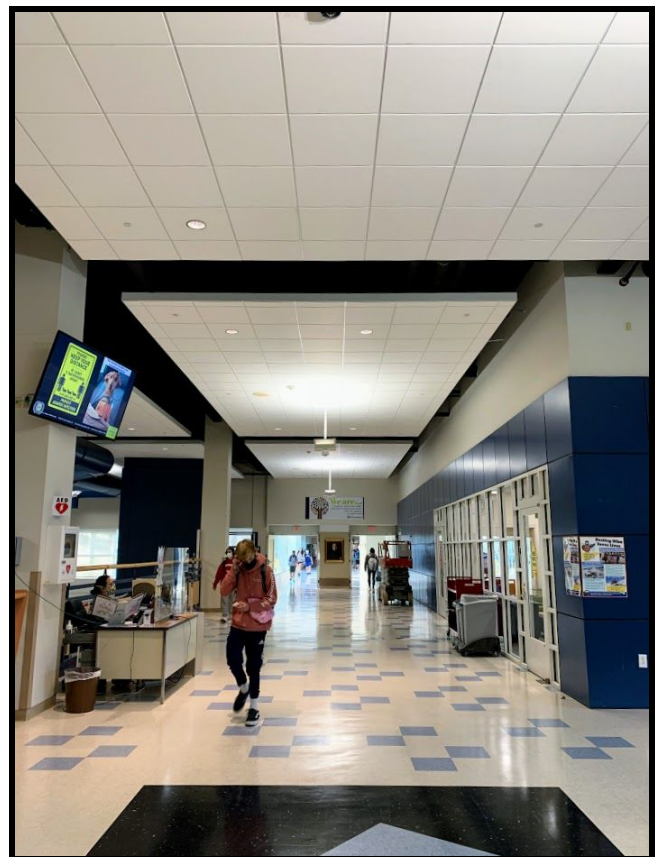
Why are some students' webcams shut off?

As we work to improve the online live stream quality and experience for students, to help mitigate some of the issues causing freezing audio/video, some students have been asked to turn-off their webcams. The goal is for all students to have their webcams on all the time, however we are not quite there yet; thank you for your patience.

Welcome to our grab-n-go food court



Good Morning!



**BOTTLE
FILLING
STATIONS**



HYBRID ART STUDIO**CLASSROOM IN QUAD MODULAR**

PREVIOUS ITEMS FROM PAST WEEKS

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Safe School Climate Policy

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

Prior Newsletters

No Bumping Cohort School Days

In the BMS/CMS Hybrid Model 2020-2021, Cohort A students attend school Mondays and Thursdays, Cohort B students attend school Tuesdays and Fridays; Wednesdays are distance learning for all students. This arrangement is true for the remainder of the school year; this does not change when there is a holiday or cancellation of school (i.e. snow day). Important to note: This approach is in contrast to the model at Staples High School. At Staples High School, when there is a school holiday, the cohort is bumped to the next school day. Reasons for this difference are rooted in scheduling and child supervision.

Mandatory Mask Break/Recess for All Students

All students go outside every school day for a mandatory mask break/recess. Students are to dress appropriately for cooler weather associated with Fall and then Winter. We will be going outside in most weather conditions except for thunderstorms and extremely cold temperatures; in these cases we will keep students indoors and socially distanced.

Protective Face Masks

When supplying your child with a protective face mask for attending school, please adhere to the updated [CDC guidelines \(linked\)](#):

DO choose masks that	DO NOT choose masks that	Special Situations: Children
 <p>Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric</p>	 <p>Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl</p>	 <p>If you are able, find a mask that is made for children</p>
 <p>Completely cover your nose and mouth</p>	 <p>Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape</p>	 <p>If you can't find a mask made for children, check to be sure the mask fits snugly over the nose and mouth and under the chin</p>
 <p>Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps</p>	 <p>Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks</p>	 <p>Do NOT put on children younger than 2 years old</p>
Caution: Gaiters & Face Shields		Special Situations: Glasses
 <p>Evaluation is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time</p>	 <p>If you wear glasses, find a mask that fits closely over your nose or one that has a nose wire to limit fogging</p>	
 <p>Evaluation is on-going but effectiveness is unknown at this time</p>		

Sick Child (non Covid related)

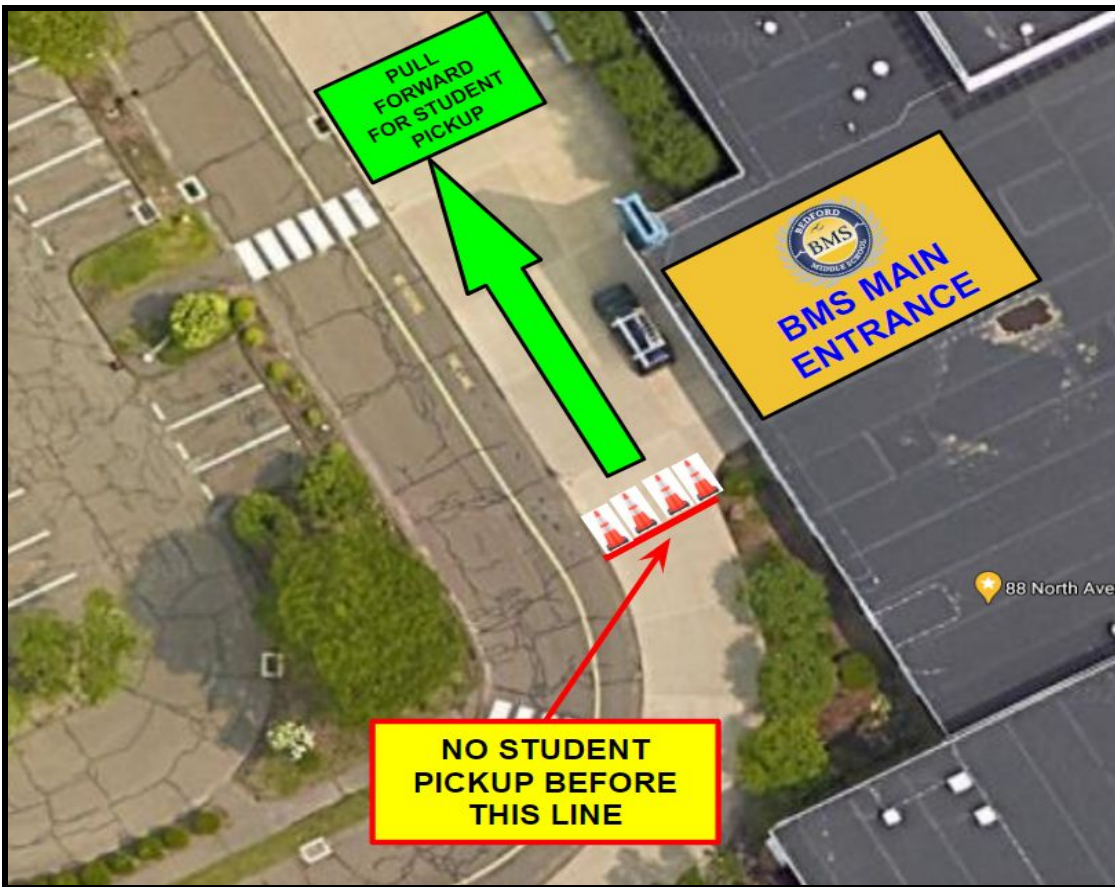
Question: If my child is sick (non Covid related) and can't come into school on their scheduled cohort day, can they login to their live streamed classrooms?

Answer: If your child cannot come into school on their scheduled day because they are sick/ill (non Covid related), they are permitted to login to their classroom live streams, however, please use caution and best judgement. While we do not want to push our students too much when they may require rest and recuperation, we also do not want to actively prevent access. Parents and siblings are not permitted to attend an online class in the place of their student; only our middle schoolers may attend online.

School Bus Courtesy Riders

This is a reminder that BMS/CMS students are not permitted to courtesy ride on other buses or vans. This means that students are only permitted to ride their district-assigned school bus or van; students may not ride on other buses/vans for playdates, visits, tutoring, etc.

ALERT Student Pickup at Dismissal - PLEASE PULL FORWARD!



No Visitors Inside BMS

At this time, parents, guardians, and siblings are not permitted to enter BMS at any time before, during or after school. Parents, guardians and siblings may visit the main entrance and use the intercom to communicate with

the main office staff for pickup of items per arrangement, drop-off of required documents, etc. In all cases, items are left on the “Pick Up/Drop Off” cart located adjacent to the intercom at the main entrance.

Reaching Your Child’s Teachers or Counselor

The most efficient way to reach your child’s teachers or school counselor is through email. Some conversations are not appropriate for email exchange; in this case, please email the teacher or counselor with a request to set up a date and time for a brief phone call to occur (calls may be voice-only, or through Zoom/Google Meets; your child’s teacher or counselor will let you know what will work best).

What About Substitute Teachers?

At BMS/CMS, we have two “building substitute teachers” who report daily, and are deployed throughout all grades and areas of learning. We also have “daily substitute teachers” who report to our school intermittently as vacancies arise. While our substitute teachers are familiar with our students, staff, safety procedures and health protocols, they do not live stream instruction when covering a classroom. When teachers are absent from their classroom, the teacher will post the assignment, task and instructions to their Schoology page, which students will access using their Chromebooks in school and at home.

School-Issued Chromebook Issues?

If your child is experiencing substantial and prolonged audio/video issues when accessing the live streamed instruction while at home through Zoom, we’re here to help. Please contact our Library Media Specialists for assistance; if they cannot help you directly, they are well-positioned to direct you to the folks who can.

CMS Library Media Specialist John Horrigan: jhorrigan@westportps.org

BMS Library Media Specialist Kelly Zatorsky: kzatorsky@westportps.org

Need More Tech Help?

If you’re not receiving emails or notifications from BMS/CMS or Westport Schools, or you want to take a look at your child’s course grades and just can’t seem to figure out PowerSchool, please look for the helpful resources posted here: [DISTANCE LEARNING & HYBRID TECH HELP](#)

Parent Tech Help Desk Phone: 203-341-1214 Parent Tech Help Desk eMail: parenthelpdesk@westportps.org

More Zoom Help?

- [Zoom Livestream: How to login for students](#) [\(DOCUMENT W/LINKS\)](#)
- [Student Livestream: How to access your livestream class](#) [\(VIDEO\)](#)

Special Request for All Parents and Guardians

[NOTE: This request was previously sent by email to all Westport Schools parents and guardians]

We are opening up the Returning Student Form in the PowerSchool Parent portal for each family, new or veteran. The form serves three main purposes, it will allow each family to:

- Confirm and/or update family contact information, including the identification of which contact should be labeled with the priority of 1, also referred to as Guardian 1. (Guardian 1 is who information is sent to in the rare instances when only one link or form per family can be sent.)
- Confirm and/or update demographic information and annual medical information

- Electronically sign all other required annual forms

We are requesting that a Returning Student form be completed for each child in the family by **October 5, 2020**; on average it will take 10 minutes or less per child.

Please note: If your physical address has changed from what is on record, you must update that information in-person at the schools and provide two proofs of residency.

Directions

To begin, *one family member* with a PowerSchool login needs to sign in to the PowerSchool **Parent** Portal at <https://powerschool.westportps.org>. (The student side of the portal will not have access.)

1. Select the first child you wish to update/verify along the top
2. Click on the **"2020-21 Returning Student Registration"** icon in the left menu
3. Enter the child's birthdate for verification
4. Click **Next**

Please note: Once one family member starts the form, it is not available to anyone else. The same family member must complete the form.

FAQ

I can't remember my login for the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

Please contact the parent help desk at parenthelpdesk@westportps.org or 203-341-1214.

Do I have to answer all the questions?

Questions marked with a red asterisk (*) are required.

What if I make a mistake?

If you would like to make a change, prior to submitting the form, you can either navigate back to the page using the "< Prev" and "Next >" buttons. Or if you are on the Review page, click on the underlined field. If you have already submitted the form, then you will need to contact your student's school, so they can make the changes for you.

I've completed the form, now what?

Once you have finished entering your information, click "Submit." This will send all of the information you've entered to the school. If you cannot click on this button, you will need to make sure that you have answered all required questions.

What if I have more than one student in the district? Do I need to do this for each child?

Yes, because you'll need to provide information that is specific for each child.

To fill out the form for the next child:

1. Return to the Powerschool Parent Portal
2. Click on the next child's name (This resets the program and pulls this child's information.)
3. Click on the **"2020-21 Returning Student Registration"** icon in the left menu
4. Enter the child's birthdate for verification
5. Click **Next**
6. If you receive an error message between children, we suggest

- Trying an incognito window in Chrome, or
- Clearing the browser history/cache, or
- Trying a different browser for the next child.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely, Natalie Carrignan, Director of Technology and Suzanne Levasseur, Supervisor of Health Services

Special Note on Student Pickup

1. For early pickup from school, please send your child into school with a signed note indicating the time of the early pickup and reason.
2. Students are to bring this note to the main office when they arrive in the morning; the main office will provide the student with a pass for early dismissal.
3. When you arrive at BMS to pick up your child, please use the main entrance intercom to alert the main office that you have arrived to pick up your child.
4. The main office staff will escort the student to the door; students should never exit the building without first notifying the main office.

VISIT THE BMS LIBRARY MEDIA CENTER SITE

So many amazing titles! Please visit the [BMS LMC website](#) for more details. We have the ebooks and audiobooks available in Sora.

VISIT THE BMS NEWSPAPER URSUS.NEWS (LINKED)

Comments on articles are encouraged, and if you have a letter to the editor or an op-ed, we'd be glad to consider publishing your thoughts.

PARENT TECH HELP

Please contact the parenthelpdesk@westportps.org or 203-341-1214 for technical issues with accessing district resources or district supplied Chromebooks.

Here are helpful directions for student Chromebooks: [Connecting at Home](#) and [Printing at Home](#)

- [PARENT & STUDENTS: DISTANCE LEARNING AND HYBRID TECH HELP](#)
- [VIDEO: STUDENT ACCESS TO LIVE STREAM INSTRUCTION](#)
- [How to Access Your Live stream Class from Home During Hybrid or Long Distance Learning](#)
- [CMS/BMS DAILY SCHEDULE ROTATION CALENDAR 2020-2021](#)
- [Westport: Reopening Our Schools Information and Resources for Families](#)
- [BMS Students Online Learning Resources Organized by Subject Area](#)
- [Parent Tutorial \(video\): Basics on Using Schoology and PowerSchool \(for parents\)](#)
- [BMS Library Media Center Presents: READING FROM HOME \(for students and parents\)](#)
- [Schoology: Calendar Tips \(for students\)](#)
- [Schoology: How to View All of Your Courses \(for students\)](#)

- [BMS Homepage](#)
- [Schoolology](#)
- [PowerSchool](#)
- [CMS/BMS HYBRID & DISTANCE LEARNING MODELS FOR 2020-2021: ORIENTATIONS, GUIDANCE, INSTRUCTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND MEETINGS](#)
- [CMS/BMS HYBRID & DISTANCE LEARNING MODELS FOR 2020-2021: ORIENTATIONS, GUIDANCE, INSTRUCTION, HEALTH AND SAFETY, AND MEETINGS](#)

Safe School Climate Policy

The Safe School Climate Policy states that each and every school community member should be treated with dignity, should have the opportunity to learn, work, interact, and socialize in physically, emotionally and intellectually safe respectful and positive school environments as well as the opportunity to experience high quality relationships. We work together with staff, students and community members to promote conditions designed to create, maintain, and nurture a positive school climate. The Bullying Intervention and Prevention Policy states that we are responsible for creating and maintaining an educational environment that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe and thus free from bullying, teen dating violence, harassment and discrimination. In accordance with state law and the Board's Safe School Climate Plan, the Board expressly prohibits any form of bullying behavior on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program, whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by a local or regional board of education, or through the use of an electronic device or an electronic mobile device owned, leased or used by the Board of Education.

We will be reviewing all of this information in school with all students attending CMS/BMS. Please review these policies and discuss them with your children.

LINKS:

- [Bullying Intervention and Prevention Policy](#)
- [Safe School Climate Plan](#)
- [Westport Guiding Principles](#)
- [Safe School Climate \(slides with voiceover\)](#)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SUPPORT

Many of our Bedford families have been seeking ways to reach out and help members of our community who experience food insecurity. Here are three ways you can help support our community and Homes with Hope Westport:

1. Drop off non-perishable food and/or toiletry donations as usual at the center, but with no contact. Families can leave the food/toiletries at the door. Link to needed items: [Food/Toiletry List](#)
2. Send food/toiletries via Amazon and have it delivered to the center. [Food/Toiletry List](#)
3. Donate funds via the "donate" link on their website. <https://www.hwhct.org/>

Acts of compassion and kindness may help reduce stress, boost immune systems, and help reduce negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, and depression. Furthermore, reaching out and helping others may also increase one's sense of self esteem and emotional wellbeing. Thank you for supporting our community!

Prior Newsletters

[CMS/BMS Newsletter #1 Week of Sept 8th-11th](#)

[CMS/BMS Newsletter #2 Week of Sept 14th-18th](#)