

# Bedford Middle School (BMS) FAQs

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**What time does the school day start and end?**

The first morning bell rings at 8:25 am to alert students to get organized and report to homeroom; the second and final morning bell is at 8:30 am. The school day at Bedford Middle begins at 8:30 am with homeroom for all students. In homeroom, teachers will share announcements and record morning attendance, which is logged directly into our student information system. Our student information system will call parents or guardians of students who are marked absent from homeroom or have not checked into school in the main office upon late arrival. Students are not to be dropped-off before 8:00 am unless they have an appointment with a teacher for extra help or are a member of an established extracurricular activity such as Jazz band, Camerata, Wind Ensemble or Chamber Orchestra. The school day ends at 3:15 p.m.

**Where do I find my child’s school bus information?**

Parents and guardians do not have to separately sign up their child or children to access school bus service; all students registered with BMS or any public school in Westport will receive school bus service. The bus schedules can be accessed on the Westport Public Schools district website [www.westportps.org](http://www.westportps.org). Go to the “Parents tab” then click on “Transportation and Safety” to see bus schedules. School bus schedules are published approximately one week before the start of school.

**How do I drop off my child at BMS in the morning (if they did not take the school bus)?**

We encourage all students to ride the school bus whenever possible. North Avenue experiences heavier than usual traffic volume in the morning due to the combined Bedford-Staples campus. When dropping off your child, please pull your vehicle forward past the main entrance before letting your child out of your vehicle. If

your child needs extra time disembarking, please park in the lot or pull into the specified drop off area near the handicap parking spaces. It is imperative that children quickly disembark from their cars and cars exit the campus to keep traffic flowing. Please note that at the North Avenue entrance to Bedford, buses when turning right into the school driveway, need to make a wide right turn. For that reason, upon exiting Bedford in the morning, traffic officers expect drivers to stop at least three car lengths BEFORE the stop sign at the bottom of the driveway, allowing buses the necessary space to turn into the school without getting stuck.

### **What if my child is arriving late to school?**

Any student who arrives at BMS after 8:30 a.m. shall report directly to the main office to (1) deliver a signed note from a parent or guardian that states the reason for arriving late and (2) to receive a late pass from the main office. Although a parent/guardian note is provided, an 'ET' (excused tardy) will appear on the student's transcript.

- Any time you are aware that your child will not be arriving at school by 8:30 am, please call the attendance line, 203-341-1599 to record their absence and expected arrival time.

### **Is there an alternate way to get to BMS other than the main driveway off North Avenue?**

Yes, Wakeman Drive off Cross Highway is open in the early morning and then locked from 8:30-3:15 pm. Wakeman Drive reopens at 2:45 pm for afternoon dismissal. Look for the school security guards that double as parking lot attendants in the afternoon to help you navigate your way out of campus via Wakeman Drive.

**IMPORTANT: The main driveway off North Avenue becomes a one-way into campus to allow school buses to pick up students without waiting in line behind passenger cars.**

### **What time does the school day finish?**

The final bell of the school day is at 3:15pm. At this time, all students are dismissed to the transportation areas. At the middle school level, we do not use Dismissal Manager which is an application used at the elementary level.

### **Does my child need a note to go home with another student?**

Students do not need notes regarding their after school plans. They are allowed to ride on another student's bus as long as there is room.

### **Can I park in the fire lane for a quick errand at BMS?**

No, please do not park in the fire lane in front of BMS ***for any length of time*** you will not be permitted into the school building. The fire lane in front of BMS is an emergency lane for first responders at all times. Please park your car in the designated visitor parking in the lot.

### **How do I pick up my child during the school day?**

If your child needs to leave school during the school day for an appointment that cannot otherwise be scheduled after school hours, please arrange to have your child deliver a parent-signed note with the reason and pickup time directly to the main office as soon as they arrive to school in the morning. The main office will provide your child with a pass to leave their classroom early enough to visit their locker and be waiting in the main office ready to leave at the time included in the early pick up note. All parents and guardians must come into the main office to sign out their child. For students leaving school early due to illness vis-a-vis a visit to the BMS health office, parents and guardians must sign-out their child in the main office and with the nurse in the health office.

### **What if my child forgot something and I need to drop it off during the school day 8:30 am-3:15 pm (an instrument, lunch, clothing, etc.)?**

Place the item for your child on the drop-off cart located directly outside BMS's main entrance. Please clearly label the item with your child's first and last name and grade level. Parents are not permitted to bring things directly to the school or classroom. All lunches will be automatically brought inside the school building by

school personnel before each lunch wave. There are 4 lunch waves every day; please check your student's schedule for the assigned lunch times.

**What is the procedure when parents visit the school during school hours: 8:30 am–3:15 pm?**

All visitors must buzz in at the front door. Press the button on the intercom, school security or main office will ask, "Please state your name and how can I help you?" Please respond accordingly as this procedure is part of our school safety and security protocol. Once buzzed into the school building, school security will help direct you or you will go straight to the main office to sign in and receive a visitor badge.

**What is the policy for student use of smartphones during the school day?**

Students may not use their personal mobile devices during school hours 8:30 am-3:15 pm. Upon arrival at school, students are expected to lock their device in their assigned locker before homeroom. Bedford's student lockers are inspected annually. The combinations are changed every summer to make certain lockers are both secure and in working order. Students are not to share their locker combinations with other students. If a student has a concern about their locker security, they are to report the issue to their homeroom teacher or school administrator to rectify the issue. The expectation is that students are not to use their cell phone during the school day; personal cell phones are to be kept secure in student lockers.

BMS expects parents to refrain from texting with their children during school hours (8:30 am-3:15 pm); all communications are to flow through the main office, health office or guidance office. Incoming text messages may lead to unexpected disruptions to students, teachers and the learning environment.

**Are student's hallway lockers secure?**

Bedford's student lockers are inspected annually. Locker combinations are changed every summer to make certain they are both secure and in excellent working order. **Students are not to share their locker combinations with other students.** If a student has a concern about the security of their locker, they are to report the issue to their homeroom teacher or school administrator to rectify the issue. Locker combinations are received the first day of school or during orientation.

**Can my student decorate their own locker or a friend's locker for their birthday?**

Students are not permitted to decorate lockers for birthdays.

**When will my child find out his/her schedule?**

On the first day of school, students will report directly to their homerooms. In homeroom, students will receive their schedules and locker numbers and combinations. Students new to Westport School District may have received locker information at the New Family Orientation and 6th Grade Students may have received locker information at the 6th Grade orientation.

**When does my child have music lessons?**

Students will be provided a lesson schedule at the beginning of the year; the music lesson times vary so students do not miss the same subject each week. It is the student's responsibility to let the teacher know they have a lesson and hand in any homework prior to going to their lesson. They need to obtain the homework for that evening and are responsible for completing it by the next day.

**What does my child wear for Gym?**

Students are required to change into shorts or sweatpants and a predominantly white shirt for gym class. Sneakers are required for all students. If students have long hair, it must be pulled back. Gym clothes are not needed on the first day of school. During the first Gym class of the year, the Gym teachers will give the students their gym lockers and combinations; and explain what are appropriate gym clothes.

**Where do I find a list of school supplies and what does my child need for the first day of school?**

A list of suggested school supplies can be found on the Bedford Middle School home page. Please note this is a suggested list and teachers will clarify during the first week of school, therefore do not feel obligated to fill the list prior to the first day of school. For the first day of school students should have paper on which to write, a folder for papers received, something to write with, and a backpack to put everything into at the end of the day. Plan to bring either a bagged lunch or less than \$5 cash for lunch or your child can use their MySchoolBucks account if they have one (know your student ID). Students should also remember to bring their homeroom number, and remember their bus number.

**How can I find out my child's ID number?**

Students already in the Westport Public School system will use the same ID number they had last year at the elementary level. All new families will receive a Connect Ed message with instructions on how to log in and including their user ID and password.

**How does lunch work?**

Students have the option of bringing lunch or purchasing lunch. In order to purchase lunch, a student should know his/her student ID. Parents may deposit money into their child's lunch account by using the *mySchoolBucks* online meal account, or by bringing cash or check directly to the cafeteria (parents may visit BMS during the school day to deliver cash or check directly to the cafeteria; school security will assist). To create an account with mySchoolBucks, visit [www.mySchoolBucks.com](http://www.mySchoolBucks.com) and follow the instructions. Please note that some students recommend bringing lunch to school during the first few days of the school year, as the lines can be longer as students familiarize themselves with the system and their school IDs.

**Who do I contact for technical assistance with the MySchoolBucks online payment program?**

Dining Services Director, 203-341-2431.

**When is Back to School Night? How can I meet my child's teachers? What are Open Pod Meetings?**

'Back to School Night' is the first opportunity for parents to meet their child's teachers. You will receive a separate email with all the details of the evening. Throughout the year there will be grade-level team virtual meetings known as Open Team Meetings where core teachers discuss the curriculum, upcoming trips, events and special projects.

**What is a 'Pod'?**

A pod is the physical space for each of the three grade level teams. Students attend core classes within their grade level team's pod. Encore subjects including gym, art, music and foreign language instruction will take place out of the physical pod and may include students from other grade level teams.

**What is Schoology? Is my child's homework on Schoology?**

Teachers will post the evening's homework on Schoology. It is best to sign in under your child's login as parent access does not always display all the information. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with Schoology early in the year.

**How do I view my child's current class grades using the online gradebook?**

All homework, quizzes, tests and special projects and their corresponding grades can be found on the PowerSchool Parent Portal. You can also find a link to PowerSchool directly on the [BMS homepage](#): On the left hand side of the screen you will see 'Tools and Resources:', Power School is in that drop-down menu. After you log in and select your student, click on the "Classwork" tab on the left and you will see all your child's assignment by class along with their current grade. This is an ideal way to make sure that all homework has been completed and teachers will add comments on an as needed basis. In addition, because grade books are online in real-time, you will no longer receive Interim Progress Reports. Quarterly report cards can be found on

PowerSchool; they are not mailed home but parents will receive an email notification once the report cards are posted.

### **Who do I contact for technical assistance with Power School or Schoology?**

The parent help desk at [parenthelpdesk@westportps.org](mailto:parenthelpdesk@westportps.org) can help you with Power School or Schoology. Please include your first and last name, your child's grade, and your child's first and last name in the email. Alternatively, you can reach the parent help desk by phone Mon-Fri, 7 am-2 pm at 203-341-1214

### **What if I have a unique or general problem or question?**

If you have a question, concern or issue that relates to a specific class or teacher, please first contact that teacher directly to address the issue, question or concern. If it is more general in nature, the team leader is the best person to contact. The Assistant Principals can be also be contacted regarding issues, however, in general, please contact the school administrators only after discussing the issue with the classroom teacher. Email communication is the preferred method of communication; teachers' email addresses can be found on BMS's homepage, as well as on Schoology ("My Students" tab). Teacher email addresses are formatted as follows: first initial of first name plus full last name followed by [@westportps.org](mailto:@westportps.org)

### **How does my child get extra help?**

Each teacher has different days and times that they are available for extra help. They will let your child know what these are at the beginning of the year and parents will be informed at Back to School Night.

### **Who do I contact to update address information, name spelling, and/or emergency contact information?**

Please contact the main office of your youngest child's school. Parents can update their own phone numbers, email addresses, and passwords for Power School and from within PowerSchool.

### **Where do I return my child's completed forms at the beginning of the school year?**

Completed Connecticut Health forms, Student Medical Emergency Forms, Acceptable Use Forms, and E-mail Guideline forms should be returned to the labeled wire bins in the Bedford main office.

### **Does BMS have Intramurals?**

The intramural program gives students an opportunity to participate in a variety of sports after school. The activities are held after school from approximately 2:45-4:00pm. The program is on a drop-in basis and there is no cost associated with the program. A schedule of activities will be announced during the morning announcements, and in the weekly PTA emails. Students must arrange for a ride home after intramurals, as late bus service is not available.

### **What is Positive Youth Development (PYD)?**

PYD is a partnership of Westport's PTA's, United Way, Westport Schools, Department of Human Services and Positive Directions. Its mission is to promote the positive development of children and youth in their families, in their schools, among their peers, and in their communities. PYD sponsors various meetings and opportunities, free of charge. Please visit the [PYD website](#) for details on programs.

### **Where do I order BMS Spirit Wear/LogoWear?**

BMS Spirit Wear/LogoWear purchases can be made during the school year at various events. Additional information will be sent to all families by the BMS PTA throughout the school year.

### **How do I find out about volunteer opportunities at BMS?**

Volunteering for activities, events and initiatives at BMS is done through the PTA (Parent Teacher Association). Volunteering at BMS is a wonderful way to meet new friends, become involved in the Bedford community, and support the school and our students. PTA Volunteers must be members of the BMS PTA. You can join the PTA

by signing up online in early September. Read the weekly emails to find out when sign ups begin. To find out more about the PTA, go to the [PTA portion of the BMS website](#).

### **How do I get a student directory?**

The Bedford student directory will be available online to members of the BMS PTA. In early September you will receive more information on how to sign up and use the online directory. In the directory, you can search by student name, family members, or class.

### **How do I find out what is going on at school?**

The PTA sends out a weekly email blast. The emails are sent out each week with all of the news of upcoming happenings and events. PTA meetings are held 3 times during the year. All parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. Additional opportunities to meet parents and find out what is going on at school include: New Family Parent Coffee held the first week of school (for families new to Bedford or Westport Public Schools only); other “Coffees” and New Family Events held throughout the year. There are also grade-level meetings with the School Psychologists (PYD meetings) discussing what parents may expect to see developmentally from their pre-teens and teens. To access the most up to date PTA information, go to the BMS website <http://bms.westportps.org> and click on the PTA tab.

### **How to I get the events from the BMS calendar onto my calendar?**

Some parents find it helpful to have the BMS school calendar information automatically feed directly into their personal calendar on their electronic device. To do this, go to the BMS website main page and click on the RSS icon next to the bell above the calendar feed. Or, to find this same icon, click on the “general” tab and then “calendar”. To the top right of the calendar there are 2 icons, the RSS icon and a bell. Click on the RSS icon and follow the instructions to copy the correct link for your calendar. Go to your calendar and search for “new calendar subscription” and follow the prompts. Here is what the icons look like:



### **Community Sports:**

<http://westporty.org/>

<http://westportpal.org>

<http://www.westportsoccer.org>

<http://westportlittleleaguebaseball.com>

<http://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx?page=256>

### **Community Resources:**

<http://toquethall.org/> (teen center)

<http://www.westportct.gov/index.aspx>

### **Westport Continuing Education:**

<https://www.westportcontinuinged.com>