



**Breakthrough Cincinnati
Student and Family Handbook
Academic Summer Session**

[Arabic-French-Spanish](#)

**Breakthrough Cincinnati may periodically make minor updates to the handbook to make sure that families have the most up to date schedules and contact information. Find an up to date copy on our website:*
www.breakthroughcincinnati.org/summer-2025

Last updated: April 2025

Breakthrough's Vision, Mission, and Values

Vision of Breakthrough Cincinnati (BTC)

Breakthrough Cincinnati (BTC) energizes academically aspirational students to enter college with confidence. They are taught and nurtured by service-minded young adults and encouraging families. Our safe and inspiring space activates this transformational community to advance education, equity, and economic mobility in the tri-state.

Mission of BTC

As a pioneer in education reform, Breakthrough is more than an organization. We are a nationwide movement, tackling the achievement and opportunity gap with a groundbreaking approach. Through our summer and school-year programs at over 24 national sites, we increase academic opportunity for highly motivated, underserved middle-and high school students, putting them on the path to college.

During our summer programming, Breakthrough provides a teaching fellowship residency that offers relevant, real-world training to a diverse group of high school and college-aged students, inspiring many to develop an interest in education careers. This mutually beneficial relationship creates a generation of inspired students and a pipeline of experienced leaders.

Values of BTC

Breakthrough Cincinnati—We believe in the power of young people.

BTC serves students and families who occupy numerous identities, backgrounds, and statuses. We want Breakthrough to be a safe space for everyone to learn and grow to their fullest potential.

Values of Staff

We believe that the future of Breakthrough Cincinnati is bright. Therefore, we bring positivity, energy, enthusiasm, and joy to our work and regularly celebrate success. We take great pride in our values at Breakthrough Cincinnati and endeavor to incorporate them in all that we say and do. Our core values are:

- Equitable Opportunities: We intentionally create equitable opportunities for all identities while addressing educational inequity through our enrichment programs.
- Excellence: We aim high and stretch ourselves. We are ambitious, always striving for excellence. Therefore, we routinely review and reflect on our work to increase our effectiveness and impact.
- Lifelong Learning: We embrace curiosity and embody lifelong learning, both professionally and personally. We ask and welcome questions, and continually seek knowledge and understanding.
- Student-Centeredness: Students are at the center of all our thinking, decisions, and efforts. We seek to support, nurture, and transform each student, while enhancing their sense of self and agency.
- Collaboration: We work together as a high-functioning team to accomplish our objectives and goals. We are generous with our attention, time, and talents in our service.

Academic Summer Session - Calendar and Daily Schedule

***Subject to change**

2025 PROGRAM LOCATIONS:

CCD: 6905 Given Rd. Cincinnati OH 45243 (Upper School)

UC: 2850 Campus Way Cincinnati, OH 45221 (Baldwin Hall)

Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	6/30 START DATE	7/1	7/2 Early Release*	7/3	7/4 NO PROGRAM
Week 2	7/7	7/8 CCD: Visitors	7/9 Early Release* UC: Visitors	7/10	7/11 CCD: Outdoor Day UC: Student-Staff
Week 3	7/14	7/15 CCD: Visitors	7/16 UC: OPEN HOUSE Early Release*	7/17	7/18 CCD: Student-Staff UC: Career Day
Week 4	7/21	7/22 CCD: OPEN HOUSE	7/23 Early Release* UC: Visitors	7/24	7/25 CCD: Career Day UC: Outdoor Day
Week 5	7/28	7/29	7/30 Early Release*	7/31	8/1 CELEBRATION CCD (AM) UC (PM)

Daily Schedule**

Regular Schedule	Timing
Bus Arrive	8:45
HR: Breakfast	8:50-9:12 (22 min)
Bell 1	9:15-10:00 (45 min)
Bell 2	10:03-10:48 (45 min)
ASM	10:51-11:11 (20 min)
Bell 3	11:14-11:59 (45 min)
Bell 4	12:02-12:47 (45 min)
	10 min to transition
Lunch	12:57-1:37 (40 min)
Recess-Mini Course	1:40-2:05 (25 min)
Ele (Bell 5)	2:10-2:55 (45 min)
Ele (Bell 6)	2:58-3:43 (45 min)
HR: Dismissal	3:46-3:56 (10 min)
Bus Depart	4:00

***Early Release is 2:00pm **Special Events and Schedule subject to change.**

Breakthrough Lingo

- **ASM (All Student Meeting):** This is essentially an academic pep rally that takes place between second and third bell every day. There is a ton of student participation with a question, word, game, and student of the day, with additional ways for students to be recognized for the good they bring to the community and practice public speaking!
- **Big Ups:** BTC's version of a shout-out or thank you.
- **Breakalicious:** A word to describe someone or something that is enthusiastic, appropriate, kind, determined, and excited to learn!
- **Breakthrough Affirmation:** We are Breakthrough Cincinnati. We believe in the power of young people. Through hard work, determination and discipline, we can achieve our goals. We believe in ourselves. We are Breakthrough Cincinnati.
- **Celebration:** The last day of programming is Celebration! All students, families, and teachers engage with final projects and presentations. This includes a 9th grade graduation ceremony, and many summer memories!
- **PBL (Problem or Project Based Learning):** Infused throughout many classes, this is a time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge.
- **YEA (You're Excellent and Awesome):** Everyone should be caught doing good! BTC's system of positive recognition allows for modeling behaviors to be highlighted in our community such as ASM, CBT, and culminating at our Celebration. More info can be found in the *Student Conduct Policy*.
- **YO (Your Opportunity):** Please see *Student Conduct Policy* for more about BTC's responses to student conduct. Each type of behavior that needs attention has a response that allows for a student an opportunity to seek improvement and an agreed consequence. Each successive YO has more consequences.
- **9th Grade Leadership:** Every afternoon, instead of an Elective, the 9th grade students take 9th Grade Leadership as a whole class. This class focuses on high school and college readiness.

Safety Guidelines

- **ILLNESS DURING THE PROGRAM DAY:** Students becoming ill during the program day may seek comfort with the Social Emotional Health Coach, who will make the appropriate referral. Students with completed permissions papers may request OTC or call home.
- **MEDICATION:** BTC staff are prohibited from dispensing any medication (including over the counter) unless the 'Administration of Medication' form is on file. Students with prescribed medication or medication authorized by a parent should keep it stored for safekeeping. Students may visit at assigned intervals to receive the appropriate dosage. A copy of the Board of Education Policy on dispensing medication is available in the office.
- **OUTSIDE FOOD:** Due to safety concerns we want to minimize outside food due to food allergies and other medical issues. Program staff may provide snacks if needed outside of breakfast and lunch.
- **STUDENT WELLBEING:** Student safety is the responsibility of both students and staff. If a student is aware of any dangerous situation or accident, s/he must notify a staff person immediately.

Family Expectations

Purpose:

To foster an optimum learning environment and support the program's goals.

General Expectations

- Support, uphold, and reinforce student's four-year commitment to BTC.
- Ensure student's consistent attendance at BTC throughout the Academic Summer Session with *no more than 3 unexcused absences*.
 - Schedule vacations around the dates of the program, and schedule appointments after the Breakthrough Cincinnati day ends.
 - Communicate all known/anticipated absences to BTC staff by June 15.
 - Excused absences include illness, family emergency, other important academic/school activities as determined by BTC staff.
 - Communicate any unexpected absences with BTC staff ASAP.
- Establish routines at home that support your child's academic pursuits, i.e. encourage your student to complete homework before watching TV, check to make sure homework is complete, support 8-10 hours of sleep.
- Participate actively in my child's experience, including conferences and special events.
- Support school year participation in three BTC events to maintain a cohort of support and academic, career, and college opportunities.
- Communicate your concerns, questions, suggestions, and changes to contact information to us.
- Maintain regular contact with the Breakthrough Cincinnati office as a source for support, advocacy, and resources relating to your child's education. (*See contact list at end of handbook*)
 - BTC will communicate program updates and needs primarily through Email.
 - BTC uses Talking Points for announcements.
 - BTC will lean on text and phone for immediate responses.
 - **BTC asks for families to place (@breakthroughcincinnati.org) in safe list.**
- Use respectful language and behavior when engaging with BTC community members.

Sign In/Sign Out Procedures

- Buses and cars will text BTC staff upon arrival (see contact info for #).
- Assigned BTC staff will escort students to their dismissal curbside location (assigned bus/seat; parent vehicle).
- Please call and let us know in advance,
 - If your student misses the bus or is late.
 - If you must pick your student up early.
 - If your student usually rides the bus and will be a car rider on a certain day.
 - ABSENCE NOTIFICATION ON WEBPAGE

Visiting and Contacting BTC

Parents are always welcome to contact the Breakthrough office for information about upcoming events, to discuss student progress, or other concerns. Additionally, families are more than welcome to attend our community special events.

Student Expectations

Purpose:

To foster an optimum learning environment and prepare students for a lifetime of success.

General Expectations:

As a Breakthrough Cincinnati student, I will:

- take responsibility for my involvement in the program.
- establish high academic standards for and actively pursue my goals.
- seek help from, and communicate openly with, BTC teachers and staff.
- respect the students, teachers, and staff in the program.
- listen to what others have to say and respect others' work and ideas.
- respect the facilities, resources, and space.
- take academic and intellectual risks and commit to participating in new experiences.
- work hard to prepare for high schools with the goal of attending a four-year college or university.

Attendance Policy/Three-Day Absence Policy

- Students may not have more than three "unexcused" absences during the Summer Session. If students miss more than three days of Breakthrough, they will have a conversation with their guardians and BTC's Social Emotional Health Coach (SEHC) about their future at Breakthrough and may be asked to leave the program. See *Family Expectations* for more info.
- Students should stay engaged with their positive peer group by attending ***at least three*** school year program sessions. Students can select different ways to engage to support their needs: academic, social, leadership, or college/career exploration.

Technology and Social Media Policy

- Students' cell phones and other devices must not be a distraction from the learning and community building at BTC. We want to maximize and enjoy our shared time together at BTC.
 - **STUDENTS WILL PUT DEVICES IN A SET NEUTRAL ZONE DURING THE PROGRAM.**
 - Students may be asked by BTC staff to use devices for online research, class activity.
 - No use of devices in the restroom.
- No airpods / earphones.
- If a cell phone is used outside acceptable use, the student will be given a YO.
- If students need to contact their parents or family outside the set phone use time, they need to ask a SEHC if they may use the phone. Additionally, if parents or families need to contact their student during the school day they can call the SEHC for support.
- Breakthrough students and teachers are prohibited from connecting on social media during their participation in the program.

Dress Code

We want all BTC community members to be comfortable while dressing for success.

- All BTC students should wear clothes and shoes that are appropriate for learning.
- If the weather is cool, students should wear and/or bring appropriate layers.
- Hats, hoods, and bandanas are not permitted.
- Students may wear hooded sweatshirts but are not allowed to put their hoods up during program hours.

- Spaghetti straps, crop-tops, halter-tops, low-cut shirts, and shirts with wide armholes that expose the body or undergarments are not permitted.
- The hem of shorts must fall at least halfway between the student's knee and upper thigh.
- Pants must fully cover the rearend.
- Advertisements worn on clothing must uphold the values and expectations of BTC, and verbal or visual references to profanity, alcohol, tobacco, and drug use are prohibited.

Consequences of Violating Dress Code: Parents/guardians will be notified and asked to bring the student appropriate clothing. If a student is out of dress code on the day of a field trip, he/she will not be allowed to participate in the off-campus activity.

BTC Expectations

Behaviors

We want Breakthrough to be a safe space for everyone to learn and grow to their fullest potential. We do not condone physical harm to persons, verbal harm in the form of bullying, nor destroying of person's or institutional property. **Any acts of harm towards a BTC community member will result in dismissal from the program.**

Be Breakalicious: Be honest, considerate, kind, determined, and excited to learn!

In Class: "It's Cool to be SMART"

Sit Up. Maximize learning. Ask and answer questions. Respond and nod. Time on task.

On the Move: "Get to class, it's time to learn!"

Mind your business. On time arrival. Volume check. Exercise caution.

At ASM: "Brain break, anyone?"

Allow yourself to have fun. Stand up and participate. Make connections with BTC community.

At LUNCH: "Lunch is on us!"

Let's eat! Use time wisely. Navigate new peer groups. Chat with friends. Help clean up.

DRESS for success: "Be your best at BTC"

Dress for the day. Remove hats and hoodies. Exercise modesty. School appropriate choices. Stay focused, minimize accessories.

Student Conduct Policy: Your Opportunity (YO) and Your Excellent & Awesome (YEA) System

Breakthrough Cincinnati strives to create the optimal environment for your child to succeed. Expectations are shared to ensure all are aware of BTC norms. Teaching Fellows are trained in methods of instruction for the classroom and are equipped with strategies to support healthy interactions. We have developed a strength-based system for providing students with the opportunity to be successful. Please review this document with your student(s). If you have questions or concerns about our student conduct / consequence policy at any point during the summer, please contact our staff.

YO Tiers	Student conduct	BTC Response
Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disruption of learning environment inappropriate use of technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff will redirect student on the spot Staff will remind student of the opportunity to meet expectations.
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> repeated disruption of learning environment defiant behaviors (disrespect of non-compliance: "refusing, arguing, interrupting") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO RECESS Student, staff and Social Emotional Health Coach will meet to discuss the incident, and review expectations Staff and student will have the opportunity to determine a consequence and seek solutions
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two "Tier 1" disruptions -or- verbal or written disrespect of others -or- defiant behaviors (disrespect of others: "antagonizing, pushing") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO RECESS // consider NO SPECIAL EVENT Staff will follow Tier 1 and If needed, staff will safely remove the student from the situation. Staff will invite a parent/guardian to discuss the incident and agree on consequences and next steps.
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three "Tier 1"; Two "Tier 2" or combination of 4 disruptions imminent harm to student or others; bullying vandalism, destroying property extreme defiance of program expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO MORE SUMMER PROGRAM Staff will safely remove the student from the situation. Staff will make notes of the incident. Staff, student, and parent/guardian will discuss the exit strategy of the student from BTC program.

NOTE: In the case of extreme incidents or any act that threatens the health and safety of students or staff, as determined by Breakthrough Cincinnati's Program Director and/or Executive Director, a student will be dismissed from the program immediately.

YEA Tiers	Student conduct	BTC Response
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who showcase BTC values through their actions and behaviors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st YEA, students receives redeemable Swag ticket. Additional YEAs, add up for other recognitions Other YEA recognitions: -Student of the Day, Week, Summer
Grade Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <3 YOs in a grade level throughout the week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Themed Celebration
Site-Wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant amount of 2nd and 3rd Tier YOs for the the whole site throughout the duration of the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat at Celebration

Supplies, Food, Emergency Procedures, and Transportation

- **Supplies:** Students will be provided with learning materials on the first day of the program. Students may bring cell phones, however they must be turned off and put away during program hours (see *Student Expectations*). Please be advised that Breakthrough Cincinnati does not take responsibility for students' lost, stolen, broken, or damaged property and will not be able to replace such belongings.
- **Food:** Breakthrough Cincinnati provides breakfast and lunch each day during the summer. Students are permitted to bring a bagged lunch from home. If you have a food allergy, please be sure to note it on the emergency information form.
- **Emergency Procedures:** In the case of emergency during program hours, Breakthrough will follow host site's emergency procedures to maintain safety. When appropriate, Breakthrough staff will (1) call families' primary contact, then (2) send out e-correspondence.
- **Transportation:** We do our best to provide transportation to all students who need it. Bus pick-up/drop-off locations will be communicated to you before the program starts. Please visit the location to ensure that you are content with the safety of this location, and communicate any request for changes to Breakthrough Cincinnati.
Breakthrough will be doing an orientation with bus drivers to share our values and expectations as well as do a run through of all routes prior to the first day. Please note that rules and expectations of Breakthrough Cincinnati and First Student Bus Rules apply while students are on the bus, and consequences will be upheld.
 - If you have feedback about transportation, please first communicate with BTC's Staff at your site.
 - If the bus is running late in the morning or afternoon and you are concerned, please check the FirstView App.
 - **Download the First View 1.0 App:** BTC will support the use of an app where you can locate the bus and monitor your student's safe pick up, travel, and drop off.
 - **Create a new account** at myfirstview.com or search for "**FirstView 1.0**" and look for the app with the red icon.
 - **First View District #:** **D2Q5P**
 - Please call our BTC team to support communication with First Student Dispatch:
 - Please share your student's name and bus #/location.

Contact Information

Site Administration Team

513-204-9139

Elana Elmore, CCD Program Director (elana@breakthroughcincinnati.org)

513-815-6862

Dr. Tiffany Dolder-Holland, UC Program Director (tiffany@breakthroughcincinnati.org)

Team Contacts

APD: 513-214-1462 (apd@breakthroughcincinnati.org)

CCD: 513-202-3811 (ccds@breakthroughcincinnati.org)

UC: 513-214-1368 (uc@breakthroughcincinnati.org)

Please maintain regular contact with the Breakthrough Cincinnati staff as a source for support, advocacy, and resources relating to your child's education.

- BTC will communicate program updates and needs primarily through **Email**.
 - *BTC asks for families to place (@breakthroughcincinnati.org) in safe list.*
- BTC uses **Talking Points** to send program messages.
- BTC will also lean on **text** and phone for immediate responses.
 - *Please become familiar with our phone #s.*



FIRST STUDENT RIDER RULES

PREVIOUS TO LOADING – AT STOP OR SCHOOL

1. STUDENTS should be at designated bus stop approximately 5 minutes before pick up time.
2. Stay off the roadway at all times while waiting for the bus.
3. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and the brakes are set before attempting to board.
4. Wait for driver's signal before crossing the road if necessary. Cross the road approximately 10 feet in front of the bus so the driver can see you at all times.
5. No pushing, shoving or other behavior that endangers other.

WHILE ON THE BUS

1. The driver is in charge. Students should obey the driver's instructions promptly and respectfully.
2. Standing, changing seats or moving about places the student in an unsafe situation and will not be allowed.
3. Head and arms are to be kept inside the bus. Throwing objects out the window is dangerous to pedestrians and other vehicles and is not allowed.
4. Large objects, band instruments or class projects need to be held in the students lap to prevent problems for the other passengers. If these items are too large to be held you should make other arrangements for transportation.
5. GLASS and heavy metal objects can cause serious injury and should not be brought on the bus. This includes class projects.
6. ANIMALS, WEAPONS or replicas of weapons are not permitted.
7. Laser pointers are not to be used while on the bus as they can cause serious problems to both the driver and students.
8. The use of any form of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, matches, explosives or any fire causing material is absolutely forbidden on all school buses.
9. Eating or drinking on the bus is not allowed. Choking may occur.
10. Vandalism to the bus will be repaired and the cost of the repairs billed to the parties involved.
11. Profane language or gestures have no place on a school bus and will not be tolerated.
12. Yelling or loud talking is very disruptive. Students need to be quiet while the bus is stopped at or crossing railroad tracks.
13. Students shall sit in their seats facing forward with the aisle and emergency exit kept clear at all times.
14. The driver may assign students a designated seat.
15. Radios, stereos and similar devices are not to be played unless head phones are used.
16. Any activity or behavior not listed but which endangers the bus or its passengers may result in a misconduct notice or suspension.
17. Failure by a student to follow these rules may result in the suspension of bus riding privileges.

AFTER LEAVING THE BUS

1. Cross the road (when necessary) at least 10 feet in front of the bus after receiving a signal from the driver that it is safe to proceed.
2. Be alert for a danger signal from the driver. This signal will be the bus horn honking. If you hear this signal immediately stop and return to the area you left.

Drivers will report any infractions on the BUS DRIVERS CONDUCT REPORT to BTC for review. Failure to observe any of the above rules can result in denial of riding privileges.