

# Marshall Simonds Middle School

## Grades 6 - 8



### *2022-2023*

### *Student / Family Handbook*

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# Burlington Public Schools

## **Mission**

The Mission of the Burlington Public Schools is to help all students acquire organized knowledge, master creative and intellectual skills, and understand ideas in ways that develop a positive self-image and sense of belonging needed for lifelong learning, self-sufficiency, and responsible, equitable citizenship.

## **Vision**

The Vision of the Burlington Public Schools is “striving for excellence” and will be accomplished by

- Helping students achieve their highest potential by providing a rigorous, balanced curriculum
- Employing highly qualified, diverse teachers, administrators, and support staff who are committed to the BPS mission and vision
- Encouraging parents to take an active role in their children’s education through involvement with the schools to enhance student academic success
- Providing opportunities for community members to participate in school activities to reinforce the goals and advantages of providing quality educational programs for every student

## **Core Values**

The Burlington Public School District is committed to

- Developing all students’ potential for excellence
- Providing a program of study that has the same academic objectives for all students
- Cultivating an educational environment that reflects sensitivity to students’ differing styles and intellectual development
- Creating a learning environment that values human differences and cultivates a sense of belonging among all students and staff through a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## **Equity Statement**

In the Burlington Public School District Educational equity means that every child belongs and receives whatever support he/she/they need to develop his/her/their full academic, emotional, and social potential to learn and thrive every day. This begins with kindness and valuing the humanity of every child/individual.

# Welcome to Marshall Simonds Middle School!

Middle school is an exciting and challenging time in a child's development. The middle school years are among the most exciting and sometimes tumultuous times for young learners.

All students are capable of high levels of learning and achievement. Our collective responsibility is to support individual students to reach their full potential. We believe that the middle school years provide us the opportunity to ignite a lifelong love for learning in our students, centered on our core values: Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, and Empathy (PRIDE).

Marshall Simonds Middle School (MSMS) seeks to support each student's academic, social, and emotional growth while providing students with a well-rounded educational experience. While the developmental needs of students vary within each grade level and over the three years of middle school, we seek to support the individual student's independence.

Middle school can be a time of uncertainty for students. MSMS offers the opportunity for tremendous growth and development. In addition to our academic program, we offer many after-school activities that allow students to experience new activities and take on new roles. Whether they participate in a team (e.g. Cross Country, Robotics), a club (e.g. Spectrum, Photography, Yearbook), an academic organization (e.g. National History Day, Math Olympiad), leadership activities (e.g. WEB, Student Council), or in our social activities, our students benefit from their participation in the school community.

We are providing this guide to help the middle school community better understand the policies of Burlington Public Schools and the procedures of MSMS. We ask that parent(s)/guardian(s) and students review and discuss the information in this guide together. We hope families use it as a resource throughout the year. Through a strong partnership, we know it will be a great year!

## Mission and Vision Statement

Marshall Simonds Middle School provides rigorous learning opportunities that encourage all to develop their intellectual and creative potential. All in the MSMS community are inspired by the diversity that enriches both our school community and the world beyond. Everyone is challenged to grow socially, emotionally, and academically while promoting human dignity, acting with compassion and integrity, pursuing passions and interests, and seeking ways to improve our community and beyond.

## Core Values

Marshall Simonds Middle School has identified our core values as Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Diversity, and Empathy. We believe that by modeling, teaching, and celebrating **PRIDE**, we are preparing our students to be positive members of our local community and the greater, global society.

- We **Persevere** through challenges in spite of obstacles
- We have **Respect** for human difference
- We act with **Integrity** by doing the right thing, even when no one is watching
- We welcome and celebrate all members of our **Diverse** community
- We are **Empathetic**, we try to understand how others feel and respond with kindness

# Academic Programs and Guidelines

Marshall Simonds Middle School is committed to ensuring all students achieve at high levels. At all grade levels and content areas, our curriculum addresses the learning standards established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at all grade levels and content areas. The [curriculum frameworks](#) identify grade-level expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level. We are committed to providing students with a rigorous curricular experience that assists them in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the future. Although individual students have different strengths and areas of growth and learn at different rates, we are committed to supporting students to achieve at high levels.

## Teams

At Marshall Simonds Middle School, we use the team model to create a “school within a school” experience for students. Our team model allows students to more easily communicate with other students on their team about their academic learning. It also facilitates more collaboration between team teachers, creating a more flexible learning environment and a support system for individual students.

Students in grades 6-8 are placed on a team with four or more teachers. Each teacher provides instruction in one specific content area: English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. There are approximately 90 students on a team and three teams per grade: Red, White, and Blue. Students are placed on new teams every year. Students attend World Language and Exploratory classes with peers on different teams.

## Course of Study

Students in grades 6-8 participate in four core academic subjects every day:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics (Advanced and Grade Level)
- Science
- Social Studies

There are currently two (2) academic levels of mathematics, Grade Level and Advanced. Each mathematics level addresses the grade-level standards established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Teachers use a variety of criteria to make course recommendations for students. These criteria include the student’s current academic performance, mastery of grade level content, performance on i-Ready, and other characteristics of a learner. Students and families may be thinking ahead to their high school experience. Here is some [additional information](#) about the math trajectory at Burlington High School.



In addition, students participate in various other courses designed to give them an array of learning experiences and meet their academic needs. The meeting patterns for the World Language and Exploratory courses can be found below.

Health/PE (mandated by DESE)	Grade 6	Grades 7-8
Health	2/6 - One Semester	2/6 - One Semester
Physical Education	2/6 - Full Year	3/6 - Full Year

World Language	Grade 6	Grade 7-8
French, Italian, Spanish, or Latin	2/6 - Full Year	3/6 - Full Year

Exploratory Classes	Grade 6	Grades 7-8
Art	2/6 - Full Year	2/6 - One Semester
Computer Science/Technical Education	2/6 - One Semester	2/6 - Two Trimesters
Family and Consumer Sciences		2/6 - One Trimester
Band, Chorus, Orchestra or General Music	2/6 - Full Year	2/6 - Full Year
Reading Strategies	2/6 - Full Year	

## 2021-2022 Bell Schedule

	<b>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (55 minutes)</b>	<b>Wednesday (49 minutes)</b>
<b>Homeroom</b> <i>(Students are expected to be in their homeroom by 7:35 am)</i>	7:15 - 7:37	7:15 - 7:37
<b>Period 1</b>	7:40-8:35	7:40-8:29
<b>Period 2</b>	8:38 - 9:33	8:32 - 9:21
<b>Period 3</b>	9:36 - 10:31	9:24- 10:13
		Advisory (27 minutes) 10:16-10:43
<b>Period 4/Lunch (60 minute period; 25 minute lunch)</b>	10:34 - 11:59 Grade 6 Lunch 10:34 -10:59 Grade 7 Lunch 11:04 - 11:29 Grade 8 Lunch 11:34 - 11:59	10:46 - 12:11 Grade 6 Lunch 10:46 -11:11 Grade 7 Lunch 11:16- 11:41 Grade 8 Lunch 11:46 - 12:11
<b>Period 5</b>	12:02 -12:57	12:14 -1:03
<b>Period 6</b> <i>(Students dismissed from Period 6)</i>	1:00 -1:55	1:06-1:55

### Rotation

\*In the event of an unplanned day off of school (snow day, etc.), the day will be “skipped”, and we will continue the [planned rotation](#).

	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>
<b>Period 1</b>	A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>Period 2</b>	B	C	D	E	F	A
<b>Period 3</b>	C	D	E	F	A	B
<b>Period 4 &amp; Lunch</b>	D	E	F	A	B	C
<b>Period 5</b>	E	F	A	B	C	D
<b>Period 6</b>	F	A	B	C	D	E

## **Agenda Book (Student Planner)**

As the academic demands increase throughout middle school and as students become more responsible for completing their work independently, children need to develop and use organization and time management skills. The regular use of an agenda book can assist students in developing these skills. Each student at Marshall Simonds Middle School is provided an agenda book at the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to bring their agenda book to each class and are responsible for writing their daily homework assignments and long-term projects. Additional agenda books may be available for purchase (\$5.00) in the main office should a student lose it. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to regularly check their child's agenda to ensure that students use it effectively. The student agenda book is the primary source for students to record their assignments. In core classes, teachers will post curricular information online using google classroom or websites. At the beginning of each year, teachers will communicate how they use digital tools and how parents can access them. See the "[Home - School Communication](#)" section of this handbook for information on accessing specific teacher websites.

## **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to do their schoolwork at all times. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

- A student turns in another student's work as their own.
- A student copies the work of another student on an assignment or test.
- A student allows another student to copy their work on an assignment or test.
- A student changes answers and seeks credit on an assignment/test/quiz after the work has been graded and returned (Update Note about intentional correct errors assignments)
- A student uses a book, notes, or electronic device without permission during a test.
- A student plagiarizes (copies directly from a book, the Internet, a digital file belonging to another or other reference sources without crediting that author).
- A student forges a signature on any school-related work or documents.

Appropriate consequences may be issued at a teacher's discretion. In addition, the teacher will notify this student's parents. If warranted, teachers may involve school administration in issuing consequences and conferences with families.

## **Homework**

Homework at Marshall Simonds Middle School is designed to meet the unique needs, interests, and abilities of early adolescents. Homework should be an extension of the problem-solving activities begun in school. It should be a means of reinforcing and supplementing material learned during a lesson. To be effective, homework should be coordinated among teachers and related to the goals of the curriculum. It should require thought, reasonable intellectual effort, the competent demonstration of learned skills, and the acquisition of new knowledge.

Four specific purposes of homework given at Marshall Simonds Middle School are the following:

1. Homework teaches students self-discipline, independence, responsibility, and time-management skills.
2. Homework provides students with opportunities to apply recent learning and to reinforce newly acquired skills.
3. Homework allows students to obtain background information to prepare for the following day's lesson.
4. Homework gives parents insights into a school's curriculum and learning objectives.

While different students work at different paces, the expectation is that all students make a concentrated effort to complete all homework assignments. Assignments vary according to the specific objectives of the instructor. Fact fluency, supplementary reading, study skills, unit projects, test preparation, and a variety of written assignments are some of the vehicles used by teachers to supplement their curriculums. Homework is assigned regularly in grades six, seven, and eight in order to reinforce instruction and to give parents the opportunity to participate directly in the education of their children.

Teachers in all three grades may assign homework daily to supplement classwork. Although each teacher gives a variety of homework assignments, students in grade six can expect an average of one hour of homework each night. In contrast, seventh-grade and eighth-grade assignments usually can be completed in, at most, two hours nightly. Please reach out to your child's teacher or guidance counselor if you feel that it takes an exceptional amount of time for your child to complete nightly homework assignments.

### **Make-up Work**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for school success. There are, however, times that a student may have to miss school due to illness or for medical appointments. When a student misses school for any reason, they are responsible for completing missed assignments. They are encouraged to contact a classmate to get assignments missed, utilize Google Classroom, or contact their teacher. Upon a student's return to school, they should check in with their teachers to ensure that they received the work that was missed. Homework, class work, and tests or quizzes missed due to absence are to be made up within the number of school days the student was absent (e.g., 2 days out -- 2 school days to make up work). Upon returning to school, it may be necessary for the student to stay after with teachers in order to make up certain assignments or to receive clarification on missed instruction. The office will not provide homework assignments until children are absent for three or more consecutive days.

On the morning of the third day of consecutive absence, families may request makeup work by contacting the main office or homeroom teacher. Requests that are received before 8:00 am will be communicated to teachers, and work will be gathered and available in the main office after 2:00 pm.

There are times when a family will make the decision to take a family vacation during regularly scheduled school days. Teachers are not required to furnish assignments in advance for students planning to go on vacation, overstaying a vacation, or leaving prior to dismissal for holidays. As described above, students are responsible for making up the work, and it should be made up in the same number of school days the student is absent. See [Planned Absences and Family Vacations](#) for more information.

### **Grading Practices, Progress Reports, and Report Cards**

Teachers use the Aspen Gradebook to record grades. This online grade book is updated about every two weeks throughout the school year as new assignments and assessments are given. Teachers use these [Aspen Gradebook Special Codes](#) to indicate special circumstances for assignments that have not received a grade. While many teachers use Google Classroom as a content management system, Aspen will more accurately reflect student grades. Families are encouraged to review their child's grades using the Aspen Family Portal and follow up with teachers with any concerns or questions. Families are also encouraged to contact their child's guidance counselor if they see a change in their overall academic performance.

Marshall Simonds Middle School has three marking periods or trimesters. Progress reminder emails will be sent to families around the halfway point of each marking period encouraging them to check Aspen for their child's current progress. An additional email will be sent to students' families if they have a current average below 70 in one or more classes. At the end of each marking period, teachers will post the child's term grade. Report

Cards are made available on the Aspen Family Portal. Hard copies of the reports are available upon request from the Guidance Office.

For full-year classes (English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, Physical Education, World Language, Music, Reading Strategies [Gr 6], Art [Gr 6]), students will receive T1, T2, T3, and a Final Grade.

Term	Progress Reminder / Warning Email	Term Grades Available
T1	mid-October	late-November
T2	late-January	mid-March
T3	mid-April	mid-June

For semester-long classes (Art [Gr 7-8], Computer Science[Gr 6], Health), students will receive an end of semester grade.

Term	Progress Reminder / Warning Email	Term Grades Available
S1	late-November	late-January
S2	mid-April	mid-June

For trimester-long classes (Computer Science [Gr7-8], Family Consumer Science [Gr7-8]), students will receive an end of trimester grade.

Term	Progress Reminder / Warning Email	Term Grades Available
T1	mid-October	late-November
T2	late-January	mid-March
T3	mid-April	mid-June

#### **Letter Grade Ranges:**

90-92% = A-

93-96% = A

97-100% = A+

80-82% = B-	83-86% = B	87-89% = B+
70-72% = C-	73-76% = C	77-79% = C+
60-62% = D-	63-66% = D	67-69% = D+
0-59% = F		


### **Other Grading Procedure Notes**

No more than 10% of a term grade will consist of homework.

End of term grades that are between 0 - 49% will be entered as a 50%.

### **Home – School Communication**

We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is necessary to support student's academic, social, and emotional growth. We encourage families to work closely with the faculty at Marshall Simonds Middle School faculty to support individual students. If a family has concerns about a student's academic progress or social-emotional growth, they are encouraged to contact their child's teacher(s) or guidance counselor. Each faculty member has an assigned voicemail and an email address. Because of their teaching responsibilities, it can sometimes be difficult for teachers to be reached during the school day. They will, however, make every effort to return calls and emails within 1-2 school days.

The school administration regularly posts school news and important information on [MSMS News](#) section of the Burlington Public Schools website. Families receive an email each time news is shared. Previous news can be found at the school website: [MSMS News](#). MSMS events are celebrated through our social media outlets including @msmsbps on  [Instagram](#) and  [Facebook](#).

MSMS teachers also regularly communicate classroom and curriculum news through websites. Team websites are linked on our [school website](#) and can be accessed by going to <https://www.burlingtonpublicschools.org/> clicking Schools->Marshall Simonds Middle School, then clicking the Student's Academics and Schedule button, then clicking on the student's grade level. Teachers update the team websites bi-weekly with announcements and information to support their child in school. Websites for Exploratory or World Language teachers can also be found on the Student's Academics and Schedule page by clicking on the MSMS Departments & Staff page, then clicking on the desired department.

Learning is a complex process. It is expected that students experience difficulty as they develop new skills and learn new content. At different points throughout middle school, your child may show signs of struggling academically beyond what is expected from the learning process at different points throughout middle school. There are many possible reasons as to why a child may show signs of academic struggle. Sometimes students begin to struggle as the academic expectations increase over time. Students may also struggle as they are given more independence with their work. Finally, as students grow and mature, their social and emotional needs can, at times, impact their academic performance. Once a child begins to show signs of significant academic struggles, we must work together to support the student. Below you will find steps that students, families, and teachers can take to work together to support students.

### **Teacher Conferences**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)-teacher conferences are another effective way for teachers to communicate a student's strengths or areas of need. Each year, the school schedules a day and evening in January for these conferences to be held. Additionally, at any time throughout the year, families, teachers, counselors, or administrators can come

together to meet and discuss a student's academic progress. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to call homeroom teachers or their student's guidance counselor to arrange a meeting during the school day.

## **Progress Monitoring and Additional Educational Supports**

We are committed to supporting each student's achievement at high levels. We use a variety of different measures to monitor students' academic growth. These measures include their progress in the curriculum (grades and proficiency levels), a universal screening tool in reading and mathematics, performance on common assessments, state-mandated assessments (MCAS), and other formal and informal assessments. If a student has not shown adequate growth using these measures, additional academic interventions may be implemented to support the child. These interventions are in addition to the general curriculum and are usually short in duration. Interventions may occur during the school day, which may result in a child not participating in an exploratory class for a period of time. We routinely monitor the student's progress. When the student has responded positively to the intervention and has begun to make progress, the intervention will end. The student's progress will be monitored to ensure that the child's academic growth continues.

### i-Ready

i-Ready is an online program for reading, mathematics, or both that will help your child's teacher(s) determine their needs, personalize their learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year. i-Ready consists of two parts: Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction. All students participate in the diagnostic tool.

The i-Ready Diagnostic is an adaptive assessment that adjusts its questions to suit your student's needs. Each item a student sees is individualized based on their answer to the previous question. All students take the diagnostic assessment at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Results from these assessments are mailed home to families.

### Response to Intervention (RTI) and Instructional Support Team (IST)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making general education and special education decisions, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. The Three-Tier Model for academic and/or behavioral interventions is described below.

- Tier 1: High-Quality Classroom Instruction, Screening, and Group Interventions
- Tier 2: Targeted Interventions
- Tier 3: Intensive Interventions and Comprehensive Evaluation

Schools are required to provide pre-referral support for students we identify as at-risk/struggling, and Instructional Support Team is the process for identifying students who require additional support. The Instructional Support Team is a team of teachers, counselors, and administrators who meet regularly to proactively identify and support students who are struggling in classes and ensure that students who need additional support get it.

Some reasons students may be referred to IST include:

- Struggling to meet academic demands/getting failing grades
- Struggling with organization, study skills, and other executive functioning skills
- Social/emotional concerns
- Attendance
- Difficulty with social interactions
- Lack of school engagement

Additional information regarding additional student supports can be found in the [District Curriculum Accommodation Plan \(DCAP\)](#) section of the handbook.

## **B.E.A.M.**

Burlington's Extended Academic Model (BEAM) is designed to stimulate students whose high academic potential and achievement make it possible for them to keep up with regular classwork while spending a portion of each week in an accelerated enrichment program. Critical and creative thinking skills are encouraged through activities ranging from theater trips, brainteasers, and creative writing to videotaping, nature study, inventions, debate, and occasionally even such unpredictable projects as lobbying to create bike trails in Burlington. Selection for B.E.A.M. occurs in 6th grade and is based on standardized testing and recommendations made by grade 5 teachers. Students attend B.E.A.M. during core academic instruction time once every six school days.

## **Student Recognition**

We utilize several methods to give recognition to students at Marshall Simonds. At the end of each marking term, students who achieve a grade average higher than 90% in their core classes receive a letter of commendation from the principal. Periodically, PRIDE Awards are given to students who embody our core values and show "PRIDE at MSMS." Stepping It Up Awards are given to acknowledge students or staff members who have recently stepped it up. Students who receive awards are provided a certificate by their Team Teachers and have their picture taken, which may be posted on our social media platforms. School leaders commend these students and make positive phone calls home to a family member of the student's choosing.

At the Grade 8 Promotion Ceremony, select Grade 8 students are recognized in a variety of ways:

President's Award - Students who achieve a cumulative average of 90% or better in their core classes across all three years at MSMS.

PRIDE Award - Students who receive this award are recognized by their teachers for regularly exceeding our expectations and have been exceptional members of our school community.

Excellence In Mathematics Award - This award is given to two students on each team who consistently demonstrate a desire to push themselves, regardless of their scores. These students exhibit a positive attitude, frequent classroom participation, completing all activities to the best of their ability, good work habits, and excellent classroom behavior. They lead and reflect the importance of education by the way they conduct themselves daily.

Barbara Gorney Writing Award - This award is given to two students on each team who have demonstrated hard work, diligence, independence, and an eagerness to apply the strategies and skills of reading and writing. These students come to class every day wholeheartedly prepared to write.



Jack Rennie Science Award - This award is given to two students from each team who demonstrate a commitment to the subject of science through their independent engagement in science investigations, exemplary experimental design throughout the school year, and commitment to science as exemplified by effort above and beyond the expectations of the teachers. These students have demonstrated passion through diligent work completion and participation.

Louis A. Intoppa Social Studies Award- This award recognizes two students from each team who demonstrate a love for history through class participation and insightful class debates. They exhibit strong academic achievement and outstanding leadership skills with an enthusiasm for knowledge of world history, government, politics, and other national issues. They inspire others with their positive attitudes and excellent work ethic. Their curiosity and thorough examination of the issues has inspired whole class debates and has helped students achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the issues that affect all of us today both on a national and global level. They are aspiring future leaders and have made a lasting impact on our middle school community.

Outstanding Performance - Awards for outstanding performance in each exploratory or world language class are given to students who have earned special recognition for outstanding performance. Awards are given for the following classes: Art, Band, BEAM, Chorus, Family and Consumer Science, General Music, Health, Orchestra, Physical Education, TechEd/Computer Science, French, Italian, Latin, and Spanish.

Madeline Murphy Award - This award recognizes two eighth-graders from each team who excel in all aspects of student life. These students demonstrate the qualities of active participation in civic or community activities, good scholarship, school involvement, and display leadership in and out of the classroom.

Scholar Leaders - Each year, the New England League of Middle Schools sponsors the Scholar Leader Award Program. Two grade 8 students from each middle school across the state are recognized for their academic achievement, service to classmates and school, acting as a positive role model for peers, and demonstrating integrity, honesty, self-discipline, and courage. The recipients of this award are individuals who are consistently demonstrating our core values: perseverance, respect, integrity, diversity, and empathy.

Project 351 Award - Every year, a deserving 8th grader is chosen from every town and city in Massachusetts and is charged with a mission to serve, in some capacity, their community, to develop leadership skills, and to foster a sense of community. Project 351, named after the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts, believes in the unlimited potential of young people to serve their communities.

Thomas Michael Scholarship Award - The Thomas Michael Scholarship Award goes to the student on each team with the highest average across all three years at Marshall Simonds. Mr. Michael was Superintendent of the Burlington Public Schools for 20 years. During a time of dramatic change in the town of Burlington, he was integral in providing a foundation for Burlington Public School's continued success.

# Attendance Policies

Learning is an ongoing process that requires the daily interaction of students with teachers and their peers. Chapter 76 of the Massachusetts General Laws states that all children between six and sixteen must attend school. The Burlington Public Schools School Committee has established an attendance procedure policy (File #JH) that states, “The administration and faculty of Burlington Public Schools believe that attendance by students at school is vitally important to a successful education.” The procedures for reporting and monitoring student absences are included in Chapter 76 of the Massachusetts General Law. If a student is absent from school, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of the absence. Parents/guardians must call (781) 270-1781 ext. 1 before 8:00 a.m. to report a student's absence and reason for the absence. If the school is not contacted by the parent/guardian about a child’s absence, the school will contact the family to confirm the child’s absence.

## Excused Absences

Examples of absences or tardiness that will be excused:

- Documented illness, injury or medical appointment
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Religious observances
- Legal appearance
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the principal)

## Unexcused Absences

Examples of absences or tardiness that are unexcused include, but are not limited to:

- Repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor
- Truancy
- Family vacations
- Undocumented absences
- Non-emergency family situations

In alignment with MA General Laws regarding school attendance, (MGL Chapter 76, Section 7, Section 1A and 1B), Marshall Simonds Middle School notifies the parent or guardian of a student who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days in a school year. The notification indicates that the school administration would like to meet with the parent or guardian of a student who has five(5) or more unexcused absences to develop action steps for student attendance. The action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the school administration, the student, and the student's parent or guardian, with input from other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

## Chronically Absent

Massachusetts defines Chronically Absent as missing at least 10% of days enrolled (e.g., 18 days absent if enrolled for 180) regardless of whether the absences are considered excused, unexcused, or disciplinary reasons. The typical student in Massachusetts misses less than nine (9) days of school (5%) each year. At the same time, 11.3% of middle school-age students in Massachusetts are chronically absent. Being chronically absent can significantly impact a student's ability to read at grade level, perform academically, and graduate on time.

Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks because those absences accrue throughout the school year.

For chronically absent students for non-medical reasons, families may receive proactive written or verbal communication from guidance counselors and administrators to help identify causes of absences and establish routines that will improve student attendance. If attendance does not improve, school officials may file a CRA (Child Requiring Assistance) petition with the Juvenile Court, resulting in a hearing before a Juvenile Court Judge. Before filing a CRA, families and the student will be required to work with school administrators to improve the student's attendance.

### **Late Arrival**

Students are expected to be in homerooms by 7:35 am. Students who are not in homerooms by 7:35 am are considered tardy and must sign in at the main office to receive a pass to class. Late arrivals shall be explained following the same guidelines as for absences. In the case a student is habitually late for school, the school may work with families to improve attendance, which includes enforcing school consequences.

A student must be at school, at a school-related activity (e.g., field trip), or receiving academic instruction for at least half the school day to be counted as present. Therefore if a student arrives at school after 10:45 a.m., the student is considered absent for that day.

### **Early Dismissal**

Students who are to be dismissed from school should bring a note signed by a parent or guardian to the office before the start of school and will receive a dismissal slip. Students must be picked up from the main office by a parent, guardian, or another adult who has been given permission, in writing, to pick up the child. Dismissals shall be explained following the same guidelines as documentation for absences.

A student must be at school, at a school-related activity (e.g., field trip), or receiving academic instruction for at least half the school day to be counted as present. Therefore if a student leaves school before 10:45 a.m., the student is considered absent for that day.

### **Student Participation in School-Sponsored Activities and Events**

Students absent or not present for at least half of a school day will not be allowed to participate in after-school events, including all after-school and evening activities (e.g. club meetings, team practices or games, dances, etc.).

### **Planned Absences and Family Vacations**

Marshall Simonds Middle School discourages families from planning student absences on school days, including vacation or extracurricular activities. Teachers are not required to provide advanced classwork or homework when students and their families plan a vacation when school is in session. It is the student's responsibility to make up the missed work, and the student will have the number of missed school days to make-up work. For more information on make-up work, please refer to the [Academic Programs and Guidelines](#) section of this handbook.

Note: The full text of the [School Attendance Procedures](#) can be found on the BPS website.

# Guidance and Health Services

## Guidance Services

Middle school can be a challenging time for students as they experience many developmental changes. We know that the way each child handles the challenges is unique. At different times during middle school, your child may need additional support to deal with social, emotional, or academic challenges. The fundamental role of the guidance program is to work with students, parents/guardians, and faculty members to enable each student to adjust and work to their potential in middle school. Individual counseling is available to aid the students in understanding and recognizing their academic, personal, or social challenges and to help them develop strategies to persevere through these challenges.

The Marshall Simonds Middle School guidance department is committed to supporting students through transitions. The guidance department begins by supporting students as they enter middle school in 6th grade. The structure of the guidance department is such that guidance counselors follow students throughout their middle school experience, providing a connection between each academic year. Finally, our guidance department provides students with information and support as they get ready for their transition to Burlington High School or other high school options. Middle school guidance services also include orientation of new students and providing placement assistance and information to parent(s)/guardian(s) and helping in the transition and adjustment to the new school setting.

To help students achieve greater academic success as well as maximize their social and emotional adjustments, the middle school guidance counselors meet regularly with each team of teachers, and on a more frequent basis with the administrators and school specialists, to maintain open lines of communication between the school and parent(s)/guardian(s). The counselor's role in consultation includes: interpreting test results, acquainting parent(s)/guardian(s) with school policy and procedures, making parent(s)/guardian(s) aware of in-school and out-of-school referral agencies, and assisting parent(s)/guardian(s) in understanding adolescent growth and development.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the guidance department to address any concerns. Students are always urged to see their counselor to discuss any problems or unfamiliar situations.

## Advisory

All students at MSMS participate in Advisory, which is a continuation of the Responsive Classroom model that is used in the elementary schools. During advisory, students foster a sense of community with each other and a teacher while engaging in social and emotional learning (SEL). Advisory happens once a week for about 25 minutes, on Wednesdays, and we have a modified schedule on Wednesdays that allows advisory to happen.

The primary objectives of advisory are to:

- Support students in building positive, meaningful relationships with one or more caring adults at school
- Help students develop positive relationships with their peers
- Provide a safe space for students to strengthen their academic and social-emotional competencies, explore their interests more deeply, and nurture the development of new skills and talents

Here are some additional benefits of advisory:

- Promotes a sense of community
- Meets students' needs for belonging, significance, and fun
- Improves students' academic performance

- Encourages communication
- Builds essential social-emotional learning (SEL) skills

### **Where Everyone Belongs (WEB)**

WEB is our middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes 6th graders and makes them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their middle school experience. Built on the belief that students can help students succeed, the program trains mentors from the 8th-grade class to be WEB Leaders as positive role models. WEB Leaders are mentors and student leaders who guide the 6th graders to discover what it takes to be successful during the transition to middle school and help facilitate 6th grade success.

The WEB Program consists of an activity based orientation day that welcomes incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to the middle school, while providing them with important information about the school. Incoming sixth grade students are assigned an 8<sup>th</sup> grade WEB Leader who will support them throughout the year. WEB allows 8th grade students to develop their leadership skills. Students are encouraged to apply to be a WEB leader in the Spring of their 7th grade year.

### **Private School Application Process**

If your child is applying to a private school or vocational school, please drop off the recommendation forms and the completed form titled “Permission to Release School Records and Recommendations” to your child’s respective guidance counselor in the main office.

1. Drop off all recommendation forms and the completed and signed records release form directly to your child’s guidance counselor. Please do not send recommendation forms directly to teachers (unless the school requires recommendations to be sent electronically). A signed release is still required for electronic forms.
2. Include a large (8” x 11” or 10” x 13”) mailing envelope for EACH school your child is applying to. Write the private school’s address on the envelope and include the postage (three first-class stamps on each envelope).
3. PLEASE ALLOW AT LEAST TWO WEEKS TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS. Applications with a February 1st deadline must be received by January 15th. Occasionally, we receive requests right before or after the private school deadline. Due to the volume of requests, teachers will still have a two-week window to complete the recommendations.
4. The earlier a form is received, the more time teachers will have to work on recommendations. It can be challenging for the guidance counselors to collect all necessary materials and difficult for teachers to complete recommendations when we receive many requests late in the process.
5. Many teachers appreciate it when students ask them if they would consider completing the recommendations. Please encourage your child to speak with their teacher/s directly about the private school recommendations.

If you have any questions, please call the guidance department at 781-270-1784.

## Health Services

Students who feel sick should go to the nurse. Please do not call or text home without first seeing the nurse.

### School Nurse

The school nurse supports student success by providing health care through assessment, intervention, and follow-up for all children within the school setting. The school nurse addresses the physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of students and supports their achievement in the learning process. The school nurse provides for the safety and care of students and addresses the need for integrating health solutions into the education setting. A full-time nurse is on duty during the entire school day. The school nurse will notify a parent/guardian when she determines the need for student dismissal due to illness/injury. We ask that families arrange for their child to be picked up within half-hour to benefit their child and other students coming into the health office. The school nurse can be reached by telephone or email if you have any questions about guidelines for school attendance or if you need any health-related information. The school nurse should be notified by the parent/guardian of any:

- Serious injury, illness, or hospitalization
- Planned surgery
- Communicable diseases
- New diagnosis or change in your child's health status
- Fracture, sprain, stitches, cast, or crutches (A Physician note is required for a splint, brace, wrap, sling, crutches and/or a wheelchair to be used on the school premises.)
- New medication and/or dosing change.
- Need to be excused from Physical Education.
- Head Lice

In order to minimize the spread of infectious disease and to provide for a safe environment, the [BPS Illness Guidelines](#) has been created to assist you. Please review this document as the nurses are required to adhere to these guidelines to help support the health of the entire school community. Some key points of the illness guidelines about when to keep your child at home include the following:

- Child has had a fever greater than 99.9 within the last 24 hours (fever should be under 100 for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school)
- Child has experienced vomiting/diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Child has a communicable disease
- Child has an upper respiratory illness with significant coughing and/or nasal discharge
- Child has pain that requires the use of narcotic medications

\*\* This is a partial list highlighting the most common reasons children should be kept home - please refer to [this document](#) for further illnesses or reasons your child may be required to stay home \*\*

### Health Requirements

The Burlington Public Schools in accordance with the regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires the following information before a student enters school:

- An immunization record must be submitted to and reviewed by the school nurse prior to school entry. If there is a medical reason why immunizations are not done, the [Immunization Exemption Form](#) must be

completed annually by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and a certificate/letter from your physician must be forwarded to the school nurse. For a religious exemption, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must fill out an [Immunization Exemption Form](#) annually and write a note to the school nurse.

Parstudents'(s)/Guardian(s) should be aware that students who are due to an exemption or those who are under-immunized will be excluded from school in the event of a disease outbreak.

- A physical exam is required for all new students dated within the 12 months prior to the entrance to school or 30 days after school entry, and every 3-4 years after school entrance. Per these regulations documentation of a current physical examination is required for students entering grade 7. A student transferring from another school system shall be examined as an entering student. Health records transferred from the student's previous school may be used to determine compliance with this requirement.
- All students entering 7th grade are required to have a physical examination on file in the Health Office before the beginning of the school year. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are encouraged to send their child's physical examination form and current immunization record to the Health Office of the Middle School during the summer months to avoid any delay in beginning the new school year.
- All students entering grade 7 MUST have a Tdap booster and a Meningococcal 2nd dose of Varicella vaccine. NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER GRADE 7 WITHOUT DOCUMENTATION OF THESE IMMUNIZATIONS.

### Medications

All prescription and over the counter medications require a physician's order and completed parental or guardian permission form. Medication will NOT be given without this. Prescribed medications must be in original containers bearing a pharmacy label that shows: child's name, prescription number, date filled, physician's name, medication name, and directions for use. Non-prescription medications must be in their original containers and directions for use. All medications must be up-to-date (NOT EXPIRED). Medication must be delivered to school by the parent, guardian, or responsible adult. Children are not allowed to transport medication unless medically indicated and after consultation with the school nurse.

The complete guidelines for administration of medication in the BPS can be found on the district website [here](#). BPS Health plans are attached [here](#) for your convenience.

### Health Screenings

The Burlington Public School nurses follow the Mass Department of Public Health Regulations 105 CMR 200.000, for vision, hearing, scoliosis, and growth screenings. The nurse will perform these screenings during the regular school day. When a student fails any of these screenings, the parent/guardian will be notified and asked to follow up with a medical evaluation. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may make a written request that their child not participate in a health screening

- Hearing and vision screening schedule and regulations is [here](#).
- Heights and weights are required in grades 1, 4, 7 and 10. Results are anonymously submitted to the state. Results are not sent home but are available upon written request from parent/guardian.
- Postural screening will take place in grades 5-9. The screenings will be conducted during a health or PE class effort made to protect privacy. The purpose of this screen is for detection of early signs of spinal problems in children grades 5-9. It is not a diagnostic service but a program to identify young people who should have a further medical evaluation. If your child has unusual findings, you will be notified and asked to take your child to their physician for evaluation. The majority of students exhibit no findings. If nothing unusual is found, you will not be notified. Female students are asked to bring a two (2) piece bathing suit top, sports bra, or halter top, and shorts to school on the day of the screening. This type of clothing permits more accurate observation of the back.



- SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) screening will occur in the 7th and 10th grades. The screening uses the CRAFFT tool as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Substance Abuse. Student screening sessions will be brief (approximately 5-10 minutes) and conducted confidentially in a private, one-on-one session. Students who are not using substances will have their healthy choices reinforced, while those who report using substances or are at risk for future substance use will be referred to our counseling staff for follow-up. As with any school screening, parents have the right to opt their child out of this screening. A letter detailing the time frame for screening, and opt-out directions, will be sent to parents in advance of the screening. More Information about SBIRT legislation, the SBIRT tool, Referral Resources, Treatment Resources and Material Resources may be found [here](#).

### Allergy Policy

The Burlington Public Schools recognize the increasing prevalence of student allergies and the life-threatening nature of the allergy for many students. The Burlington Public Schools cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment for all students with life-threatening allergies, nor prevent any harm to students in emergencies. The goal is to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to those students, educate the community, and maintain and regularly update a system-wide protocol for responding to their needs.

The Burlington Public Schools will maintain a system-wide procedure for addressing life-threatening allergic reactions by incorporating measures to reduce the exposure to allergens and procedures to treat allergic reactions. For any student whose physician (primary care or board-certified allergist) has informed the school in writing that the student has a life-threatening allergy, the school nurse will oversee the development of an Allergy Action Plan or Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP), which will include an Allergy Action Plan (AAP) that addresses the management of anaphylaxis. Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the school district when a child's medical condition might affect the child's welfare or safety. Effective communication is vital among all parties.

Note: The full text of the [Allergy Policy](#), along with the accompanying [Allergy Procedure & Guidelines](#), may be found on the BPS website.

### Concussions

The middle school seeks to prevent concussions and provide a safe return to academic and athletic activity after a head injury. The management of students who have sustained a concussion requires education, supervision, and close collaboration between students, parents/guardians, and the school nurse. Parents/Guardians must contact the school nurse before returning to school following a head injury. This will allow us to work collaboratively to support the student during their recovery. Student-athletes (grades 6-8) must obtain medical clearance from their physician before returning to play. See the [BPS Post Concussion Return to School Care Plan](#) for more information.

### Wellness Policy

Burlington Public Schools is committed to helping our students develop healthy habits. The School District Wellness Policy was revised in 2006 to reflect our goal of promoting and protecting children's health, well-being, and ability to learn. The partnership between the school, families, and the community is important to help our students develop lifelong, healthy habits. As part of this policy, school staff members will no longer use food to reward academic performance or good behavior. Classroom celebrations should not include food unless there is a direct curricular connection. We ask families not to send in food to be shared by the entire class or to be distributed in the cafeteria. This is important to keep all students safe and healthy, especially those with food allergies.



## Participation in Physical Education

All students are expected to participate in physical education classes. A parent or guardian note is required to excuse a student from participating in a physical education class for one class. For longer exclusions, a physician's note is necessary. A student will automatically be excluded from physical education class after surgery or having an injury resulting in a cast, splint, ace wrap, sling, or sutures (even if applied by parent or guardian). Participation in physical education can resume with a note from the physician.

For safety reasons, students must wear sneakers during physical education classes and may be excluded from class if they are not wearing appropriate footwear.

# **Code of Conduct**

Marshall Simonds Middle School is a community of many individuals. It is important that each community member feels safe to create a positive and supportive environment that allows each individual to learn and grow academically, socially, and emotionally. To establish a positive school climate, the Marshall Simonds Middle School community has identified five core values that we expect all community members to demonstrate.

Marshall Simonds Middle School's core values are PRIDE. These values are important for success in middle school and life. We are committed to teaching students what PRIDE looks like in all settings within our community. In addition to clearly identifying and communicating the expected behaviors to students, we explicitly teach the expected behaviors. These approaches ensure that all students understand what is expected, enabling them to meet or exceed our expectations.

The middle school years are often considered an exciting and challenging for students. As children grow older and gradually become more independent, they have more opportunities to make their own choices. With increased independence comes increased responsibility. It is always important to remember that choices have consequences and may be either positive or negative. Before making a choice, a student needs to think about the possible outcomes and how they and others will be affected by their choice.

Individual teachers establish classroom expectations and rules that reflect our core values to maintain a safe environment conducive to learning. Classroom/team rules are at the teacher's discretion, provided that these limits do not violate any portion of this Handbook nor violate the student's constitutional rights. Classroom teachers handle routine classroom discipline. A twenty-four-hour notice will be given when a student receives detention from a teacher. Violations of classroom/team rules, whether due to the severity of the offense or the frequency of the offense, may result in a referral to the administration.

## **Student Discipline**

Note: The full text of the [Discipline Policy](#) can be found on the BPS website.

There will be times when a student's behavior will not meet the expectations that are set forth by the school, and disciplinary action will be taken. The goal of discipline is to hold the student accountable for their behavior while increasing their self-awareness. The discipline process is viewed as a learning experience which gives students the opportunity to reflect on their behavior and make better choices in the future.

Our system of discipline is progressive. In the case of a classroom issue, parents and teachers should work directly together to solve the issue. If the occasion arises, the building administrators will use their discretion to increase the consequence levied depending on the severity, the offense's frequency, and the student's prior disciplinary record. Administrators will assign a consequence aligned with the infraction's seriousness.

For the Marshall Simonds Middle School discipline code, the school adopts the definitions approved under 603 CMR 53.00, which stipulates the purposes and definitions of specific types of offenses and consequences.

- Disciplinary offense means any alleged or determined disciplinary infraction by a student, except for:
  - a) possession of a dangerous weapon;
  - b) possession of a controlled substance;
  - c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or
  - d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony,

if a principal determines that a student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c71, §§37H or 37H ½.

- A disciplinary offense under M.G.L. c71, §§37H or 37H ½ means one or more of the following alleged or determined disciplinary infractions: a) possession of a dangerous weapon; b) possession of a controlled substance; c) assault on a member of the educational staff; or d) a felony charge or felony delinquency complaint or conviction, or adjudication or admission of guilt with respect to such felony if a principal determines that student's continued presence in school would have a substantially detrimental effect on the general welfare of the school, as provided in M.G.L. c71, §§37H or 37H ½.
- Expulsion means the removal of a student from the school premises, regular classroom activities, and school activities for more than ninety (90) school days, indefinitely, or permanently, as permitted under M.G.L. c71, §§37H, 37H ½ or 37H3/4.
- In-School Suspension means removing a student from regular classroom activities, but not from the school premises, for no more than (10) consecutive school days, or no more than ten (10) school days cumulatively for multiple infractions during the school year. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. In-school suspension for ten (10) days or less, consecutively or cumulatively during a school year, shall not be considered a short-term suspension. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for more than ten (10) days, consecutively or cumulatively, during a school year, the suspension shall be deemed a long-term suspension for due process, appeal, and reporting purposes.
- Long-term suspension means removing a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or more than ten (10) days for multiple offenses during a single school year. The principal may allow a student to serve a long-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days. No long-term suspension shall extend beyond the end of the school year in which such suspension is imposed.
- Short-term suspension means removing a student from the school premises and regular classroom activities for ten (10) consecutive school days or less. The principal may allow a student to serve a short-term suspension in school. Removal solely from participation in extracurricular activities or school-sponsored events, or both, shall not count as removal in calculating school days.
- Suspension means short-term and long-term suspension unless otherwise stated.
- Office Detention is an assigned 60-minute period to be served after school. Students will be given 24 hours' notice to make arrangements to serve the detention. After school jobs and student co-curricular activities are not considered valid reasons for not attending detention.
- Lunch Detention is an assigned 25-minute period to be served during student lunchtime.

The following Infraction/Consequence Chart categorizes offenses as Mild Infractions, Moderate Infractions, and Serious Infractions. The chart also includes a range/progression of possible consequences that may be levied. Since all behaviors that violate our expectations cannot be included, the chart provides examples of behaviors

and possible consequences. This chart is not intended to provide an exhaustive list. Administrators will assign a consequence aligned with the infraction's seriousness.

## Infractions/Consequences

Mild Infractions: Actions/behaviors that are inappropriate and cause a slight interference to the learning and school environment.

Infraction	Possible Consequences
Minor Disruptive Behavior Non-Compliance/Disrespect Inappropriate Language Property Misuse Use of Cell Phone/Electronic Devices Inappropriate attire Peer Conflict Resulting in Minor Disruption	Conference with Student/Verbal Warning Parent/Guardian Contact or Conference Loss of Privilege Confiscation Required to Change Attire Teacher/Team Specific Consequences (ex: Teacher Detention)

Moderate Infractions: Actions/behaviors that are inappropriate and cause an interference to the learning and school environment.

Infraction	Possible Consequences
Excessive Mild Infractions Moderate Disruption Non-Compliance/Disrespect Skipped Detention Cheating/Lying/Violating Academic Integrity/Dishonest Behavior Teasing/Hurtful Behavior	Conference with Student/Verbal Warning Parent/Guardian Contact or Conference Teacher Detention Loss of Privilege Required to Complete an Alternate Assignment or Assessment Reduction in Grade Lunch Detention Office Detention

Severe Infractions: Actions/behaviors that are inappropriate and cause a major interference to the learning and school environment.

Infraction	Possible Consequences
Excessive Moderate Infractions Major Disruption/Dangerous Behavior Instigating/Conspiring a Dangerous Behavior Defiance/Disrespect Harassing, Bullying, and/or Discriminatory Behaviors (verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual) Out of Assigned Area/Leaving School Grounds Fighting Physical Aggression Violation of Acceptable Use Policy Property Damage/Vandalism Illegal Behavior	Parent/Guardian Contact or Conference Loss of Privilege Office Detention In-School Suspension Out of School Suspension

### Disciplinary Offense/Student Removal

A student will be removed from a class and/or the school premises when (1) that student poses a continuing danger to other students or school property; (2) when a student disrupts the educational process within a classroom or elsewhere on school premises; (3) when a student has demonstrated that he/she is unwilling to cooperate with the rules of the Burlington Public School System. The following are the rights of a student who is removed from class and/or the school premises.

1. Any student who is serving an in-school suspension, short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion shall have the opportunity to earn credits, as applicable, make up assignments, tests, papers, and other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of their removal from the classroom or school. The principal shall inform the student and parent of this opportunity in writing when such suspension or expulsion is imposed.
2. Any student who is expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days, whether in school or out of school, shall have an opportunity to receive education services and make academic progress toward meeting state and local requirements, through the school-wide education service plan.
3. The principal shall develop a school-wide education service plan describing the school district's education services available to students who are expelled or suspended from school for more than ten (10) consecutive days. The plan shall include the process for notifying such students and their parents of the services and arranging such services. Education services shall be based on, and be provided in a manner consistent with, the academic standards and curriculum frameworks established for all students.
4. The principal shall notify the parent and student of the opportunity to receive education services at the time the student is expelled or placed on long-term suspension. Notice shall be provided in English and in the primary language spoken in the student's home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate. The notice shall include a list of the specific education services that are available to the student and contact information for a school district staff member who can provide more detailed information.

### Notice of Suspension and Hearing Under §37H <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>

Suspension will only be imposed as a consequence for a disciplinary offense (other than those covered by M.G.L. c71, §§37H or 37H <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>) after the student and parent/guardian has been provided oral and written notice. The student has been provided an opportunity for a hearing on the charge and the parent the opportunity to participate in such hearing. For any disciplinary offense that could result in a suspension, the student shall be provided oral and written notice to the student in plain language:

1. The disciplinary offense;
2. The basis for the charge;
3. The potential consequences, including the potential length of the student's suspension;
4. The opportunity for the student to have a hearing with the principal concerning the proposed suspension, including the opportunity to dispute the charges and to present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, and for the parent to attend the hearing;
5. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
6. The right of the student and student's parent/guardian to interpreter services at the hearing if needed to participate;
7. If the student may be placed on long-term suspension following the hearing with the principal:
  - a. The rights set forth in 603 CMR 53.08 (3)(b), and
  - b. The right to appeal the principal's decision with the superintendent.

### Emergency Removal From School Under §37H ¾

The principal shall not be prevented from removing a student from school temporarily when a student is charged with a disciplinary offense and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the school and, in the principal's judgment, there is no alternative to alleviate the danger or disruption. The temporary removal shall not exceed two (2) school days, following the day of the emergency removal, during which time the school shall:

1. Make immediate and reasonable efforts to notify the student orally and the student's parent/guardian of the emergency removal, the reason for the need of said removal, and the other matters set forth above;
2. Provide written notice to the student and parent, as noted above;
3. Provide the student with an opportunity for a hearing with the principal and the parent/guardian the opportunity to attend the hearing before the expiration of the two (2) school days, unless an extension of time for the hearing is otherwise agreed to by the principal, student, and parent.
4. Render a decision orally the same day as the hearing and in writing no later than the following school day.

### Hearing with the Principal

In the case of Potential Short-Term Suspensions:

1. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged disciplinary offense for which the student may be suspended, provide the student with an opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the offense, and if so, the consequences for the infraction.
2. Based on the available information, including mitigating circumstances, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense and, if so, what remedy or consequence will be imposed.
3. The principal shall notify both the student and parent/guardian of the determination and the reasons for it, and, if the student is issued a short-term suspension as a consequence, the duration of the suspension and the opportunity to make up assignments and such other school work as needed to make academic progress during the period of removal. The determination shall be in writing.

### In the case of Potential Long-Term Suspension

1. The purpose of the hearing with the principal is to hear and consider information regarding the alleged disciplinary offense for which the student may be suspended, provide the student with an opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged incident, determine if the student committed the offense, and, if so, the consequences for the infraction.
2. In addition to the rights outlined for the short-term suspension hearing, the student shall have the following rights:
  - a. In advance of the hearing, the opportunity to review the student's record and the documents upon which the principal may rely in determining to suspend the student or not;
  - b. The right to be represented by counsel or a layperson in the student's choice at the student's/parent's expense;
  - c. The right to produce witnesses on their behalf and present the student's explanation of the alleged incident, but the student may not be compelled to do so; and
  - d. The right to cross-examine witnesses presented by the school district;
3. The right to request that the principal record the hearing and a copy of the audio recording be provided to the student or parent upon request. If said request is made, the principal shall inform all participants

before the hearing that an audio record will be made and a copy provided to the parent and student upon request.

4. The principal shall provide the parent/guardian, if present, an opportunity to discuss the student's conduct and offer information, including mitigating circumstances, that the principal should consider in determining consequences for the student.
5. Based on the evidence, the principal shall determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense, and, if so, after considering mitigating circumstances and alternatives to suspension as outlined in 603 CMR 53.05, what remedy or consequence will be imposed, in place of or in addition to a long-term suspension. The principal shall send the written determination to the student and parent by hand-delivery, certified mail, first-class mail, email to an address provided by the parent for school communications, or any other method of delivery agreed to by the principal and the parent. If the principal decides to suspend the student, the written determination shall:
  - a. Identify the disciplinary offense, the date on which the hearing took place, and the participants at the hearing;
  - b. Set out the key facts and conclusions reached by the principal;
  - c. Identify the length and effective date of the suspension and a date of return to school;
  - d. Include notice of the student's opportunity to receive education services to make academic progress during the period of removal from school;
  - e. Inform the student of the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent or designee, only if the principal has imposed a long-term suspension. Notice of the right of appeal shall be in English and the primary language of the home if other than English, or other means of communication where appropriate, and shall include the following information stated in plain language:
    - i. the process for appealing the decision, including that the student or parent must file a written notice of appeal with the superintendent within five (5) calendar days of the effective date of the long-term suspension; provided that within the five (5) calendar days, the student or parent may request and receive from the superintendent an extension of time for filing the written notice for up to seven (7) additional calendar days;
    - ii. and that the long-term suspension will remain in effect unless and until the superintendent decides to reverse the principal's determination on appeal.

#### Appeal Procedure for Discipline

1. A student who is placed on long-term suspension following a hearing with the principal shall have the right to appeal the principal's decision to the superintendent.
2. The student or parent shall file a notice of appeal with the superintendent within the time period set forth 603 CMR 53.08 (3) (d) 5.a. If the appeal is not timely filed, the superintendent may deny the appeal or may allow the appeal in his or her discretion, for good cause.
3. The superintendent shall hold the hearing within three school days of the student's request, unless the student or parent requests an extension of up to seven additional calendar days. The superintendent shall grant the extension.
4. The superintendent shall make a good faith effort to include the parent in the hearing. The superintendent shall be presumed to have made a good faith effort if they have made efforts to find a day and time for the hearing that would allow the parent and superintendent to participate. The superintendent shall send written notice to the parent of the hearing's date, time, and location.
5. The superintendent shall conduct a hearing to determine whether the student committed the disciplinary offense of which the student is accused, and, if so, what the consequence shall be. The superintendent shall arrange for an audio recording of the hearing, a copy of which shall be provided to the student or

- parent upon request. The superintendent shall inform all participants before the hearing that an audio record will be made of the hearing and a copy will be provided to the student and parent upon request.
6. The student shall have all the student's rights at the principal's hearing for long-term suspension under 603 CMR 53.08(3)(b).
  7. The superintendent shall issue a written decision within five calendar days of the hearing which meets the requirements of 603 CMR 53.08(3)(d)1. through 4. If the superintendent determines that the student committed the disciplinary offense, the superintendent may impose the same or a lesser consequence than the principal, but shall not impose a suspension greater than that imposed by the principal's decision.
  8. The decision of the superintendent shall be the final decision of the school district, charter school, or virtual school concerning the suspension.

### Search and Seizure

Searches by school officials will be conducted when a teacher, school employee, or another student reports that a student was observed with contraband on school premises or when school officials receive a reliable report, even from an anonymous source.

Contraband is defined as prohibited by school regulations and/or illegal material that would interfere with school discipline and order or materials that are dangerous to the health and safety of the school. All illegal, prohibited, or contraband materials discovered due to such a search will be confiscated. Students who possess such items or materials will be subject to discipline and/or criminal prosecution. There should be no expectations of privacy of desks and/or lockers.

Any search conducted will be free of embarrassment to the student. The school is not required to call in the police before searching a student or their locker, nor does the school official have to obtain a search warrant.

An attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian to notify them that a search is to be conducted. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the search will be conducted, and the parent will be notified of this as soon as possible.

The basis of the above is the principle "loco parentis," school officials may act in place of parents/guardians to protect students' safety, health, and security and provide a disciplined educational environment.

### **Discipline of Students with Disabilities**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides eligible students with certain procedural rights and protections in student discipline. A brief overview of these rights is provided below.

Students may be excluded from their programs, just as any other student can be, for up to ten school days per year. However, when a student is excluded from their program for more than ten school days in the school year, school staff may be required to provide alternative education services for the student. In many instances, the student's Team must convene to determine whether the student's behavior directly resulted from their disability (a "manifestation determination").

If the Team determines the behavior was not a direct result of the student's disability, the school may discipline the student according to the school's code of student conduct, except that the district must continue to provide the student with educational services during the period of suspension or expulsion. However, suppose the Team determines that the behavior directly resulted from the disability. In that case, the student may not be excluded from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury) until the



Team develops and the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent(s) to a new IEP. The Team must also conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop or revise a behavioral plan for the student.

If a student possesses, uses, sells, or solicits a controlled substance or possesses a weapon, or seriously injures an individual at school or a school function, a school may place a student in an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 days. Hearing officers may also order the placement of a student in an appropriate interim setting for up to 45 days upon the determination that the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others.

When a parent(s)/guardian(s) disagrees with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with a placement decision, the parent(s)/guardian(s) has the right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

Similar procedures apply to students with plans under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **Discipline of Students Not Yet Determined Eligible for Special Education**

The IDEA protections summarized above also apply to students who have not yet been found eligible for IEPs if the school district is deemed to know that the students were eligible for IEPs before the conduct that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

If prior to the disciplinary action, a district had knowledge that the student may be a student with a disability, then the district makes all protections available to the student until and unless the student is subsequently determined not to be eligible. The district may be considered to have prior knowledge if:

- The parent had expressed concern in writing, or
- The parent had requested an evaluation, or
- District staff had expressed directly to the special education director or other supervisory personnel specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student. The district may not be considered to have had prior knowledge if the parent has not consented to an evaluation of the student or has refused special education services or if an evaluation of the student has resulted in a determination of ineligibility.

If the district has no reason to consider the student disabled, and the parent requests an evaluation subsequent to the disciplinary action, the district must have procedures consistent with federal requirements to conduct an expedited evaluation to determine eligibility.

If the student is found eligible, they receive all procedural protections after finding eligibility.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

The full text of the Burlington Public Schools [Bullying Policy](#) and the accompanying [Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan](#) may be found on the BPS website. The Bullying Prevention and Intervention Incident Reporting form can be found on pages 13-14 of the Bullying Prevention & Intervention Plan.

A safe learning environment is one in which every student develops emotionally, academically, and physically in a caring and supportive atmosphere free of intimidation and abuse. Bullying of any type has no place in a school setting. The Burlington Public Schools will endeavor to maintain a learning and working environment free of bullying. The Burlington School Committee and all Burlington Public Schools shall not tolerate bullying.

Students experiencing unkind behavior, in person or through social media, are encouraged to report the behavior to any trusted adult. The school administration will investigate and address all allegations of bullying and will follow the established procedures outlined in the School Committee's [Bullying Policy](#).

Bullying is defined as a verbal, physical, written, or electronic action, incident, or other direct or indirect repetitive behavior. Bullying is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of school staff, including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target that has the effect of

- causing physical or emotional harm, or of damage to their property,
- placing a target in reasonable fear of harm or of damage to their property,
- creating an unwelcoming or hostile environment at school for another person,
- infringing on the rights of another person at school, or
- materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Bullying may include but is not limited to unwanted teasing, threatening or intimidating behavior, physical violence, threat or destruction of property, sexual, religious, or racial harassment, public humiliation, cyberbullying, social exclusion, or rumor spreading. Cyberbullying is the repeated use by one or more students of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include and not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:

- wire
- radio
- cell phone
- electromagnetic system
- photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds, the property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, functions, or programs whether on or off school grounds, at school bus stops, on school buses, or other vehicles owned, leased, or used by the district, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district.

Bullying and cyberbullying are also prohibited at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the district, if the act or acts in question create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringe on the rights of the victim at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### Reporting Bullying and Harassment

Marshall Simonds Middle School will respond and investigate all suspected reports of bullying to prevent future incidents.

Students, families, and faculty/staff members may report suspected bullying incidents by:

- Completing a Harassment or [Bullying Reporting Form](#) and providing it to a Guidance Counselor, Psychologist, Assistant Principal, or School Resource Officer.
- Report verbally in person to one of the people listed above. A form will be completed at that time.
- Harassment or Bullying Reporting Forms will be given to the Assistant Principal or Principal

- Forms may be found [here](#), on the Burlington Public Schools website under the District Tab -> District Policies Menu -> Bullying Policy, in the main office or guidance office.
- Reports may be made anonymously; however, this may limit the ability to contact reporters when necessary. No disciplinary actions can be taken against a student solely based on an anonymous report.

### Report Response Procedure

1. The person receiving the report (Guidance, Psychologist, Assistant Principal, or School Resource Officer) will assess the victim's safety.
2. The Assistant Principal will review the incident and conduct an investigation, including but not limited to; interviews of reporters or targets, note witnesses and/or adults who may have been present, determine online involvement, and query about behaviors that may be threatening in the context of the bullying, but are not explicitly forbidden in the school discipline code (e.g. a perpetrator who stares at a victim), and interview the alleged aggressor(s).
3. Disciplinary actions shall balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior as stated in the legislation.
4. Depending on the seriousness of the incident and the repetition of bullying behaviors, school response may include;
  - a. Notification of parents/guardians
  - b. Notification of the School Resource Officer for referral to the criminal justice system.
  - c. Detention, after school, and/or suspension and expulsion.
  - d. Other interventions may include mediation and/or individual interventions for the target and the aggressor, such as counseling parent/student meeting.
5. Consequences will also consider progressive discipline recognizing the seriousness and frequency of a student's behaviors requiring disciplinary action.
6. A plan to restore a sense of safety for the target and the aggressor will be developed if necessary. Factors to be taken into consideration may include;
  - a. Where the incident has taken place
  - b. Unstructured areas and adults, who have contact with the student reporter.
7. Parents of the target and the aggressor will be notified verbally and in writing. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Massachusetts State Law, 606 CMR 23.07 (4), school officials cannot share the specific disciplinary procedures against any child except your own, and actions being taken that affect another child or the content of communication with another child's parent or guardians or any contract with a child who is not your own.
8. Reporting form and action plan will be kept on file. Further incidents involving the student(s) involved, this documentation will be considered.

Following the bullying legislation, Marshall Simonds Middle School will continue to develop a plan for educating students and staff with the goal of prevention while working to address and intervene when behaviors compromise a student's well-being and safety.

# General Information

## Arrival and Dismissal

### Buses

The driveway in front of the building is only for bus use from 7:15 am - 7:35 am, from 1:45 pm - 2:00 pm, and from 3:00 pm - 3:20 pm. No car traffic is permitted in the front driveway during these times.

Bus transportation is provided to all students. Students should be at their bus stop at least five minutes before their scheduled pick-up time and be prepared to wait at least five minutes after the scheduled time. Students are to take their assigned bus. Students are expected to practice integrity by following the drivers' directions and adhering to the same conduct they would within the school building. Inappropriate behavior on the bus may result in school consequences, including a bus suspension.

If a student is taking a bus home other than their regularly scheduled bus, they must have a note from home. That note should be brought to the main office before the start of the school day to be stamped and approved by a main office staff member.

### Walkers and Bike Riders

Students who walk to or from school should enter and exit the building through the main entrance or through the auditorium lobby doors on Lusas Loop off of Peach Orchard Road.

Bicycle racks are provided in the front of the school. Bicycles are to be left in the racks throughout the entire day. The school recommends that any bicycles brought to school have a lock. It is the student's responsibility to see that their bicycle is locked. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen bicycles.

### Parent/Guardian Drop Off and Pick up

Students driven to school by a family member should be dropped off in the Lusas Loop on Peach Orchard Road. Students may be dropped off between 7:15 am - 7:35 am. The school opens at 7:15 am. Students should not arrive at school before 7:15 am, as there is no guarantee that adequate supervision will be in place. Students who arrive after 7:35 am will be marked tardy and should be dropped off at the main entrance.

In the afternoon, drivers should form a single lane around the perimeter of the back parking lot. The bus loop in the front of the school is closed to families in the morning and the afternoon for buses. Please always exercise caution, patience, and model respectful behavior for our students.

For more specifics regarding drop-off and pick-up traffic patterns, please review the [MSMS Pickup and Dropoff Procedures](#).

### Late Buses

Burlington Public Schools provides late buses for middle school students three times a week on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. These buses are intended to serve students who have remained after school for extra help and for students who are participating in afterschool activities. The buses will leave from the school at approximately 3:10 p.m.

A list of late bus stops can change from year to year and will be posted in the school office and on the school website. Late buses start in mid to late September and continue through Memorial Day.

## **Hallways**

Students are expected to transition from one class to another quickly and while acting appropriately. For example, our core value of respect looks like walking on the right side of the hallway, keeping hands and bodies to ourselves, and getting to class on time.

For the safety of all our students and staff, students must be accounted for in case of an emergency. For this reason, students should have a pass indicating their destination whenever classes are in session. This pass indicates that an adult is aware of the student's whereabouts while not in class. Students in the halls, without a pass, during class time may be assigned school consequences.

## **Lockers**

Each student will be assigned a locker upon entering the school in September. This locker is the responsibility of the individual to whom it is assigned and must be used for clothing, books, papers, etc. All students are strongly encouraged to keep their lockers locked whenever they are not used.

## **Backpacks**

Students are not permitted to carry backpacks or large bags from classroom to classroom during the school day. This facilitates hallways and classrooms that are open and easy to move around. Students may carry backpacks and large bags to and from school only. Backpacks should remain in a student locker during the school day. Students may carry a small bag such as a pencil case or clutch for their personal belongings.

## **Elevators**

All educational spaces of Marshall Simonds Middle School are fully accessible. Students may not ride the school elevators without permission from the school nurse or the school administration. School personnel is required to know when a student cannot use the stairs in case there is an emergency evacuation.

## **Library**

The Richard Connors Library & Learning Commons (LLC) is a collaborative space combined with library and makerspace materials flowing with innovation, collaboration, curiosity, adaptability, critical inquiry, and transliteracy. The library collection includes but is not limited to print and digital materials that will enrich, enhance, support the curriculum to meet the needs of the middle school population served. The Connors LLC strives to offer forward-thinking instruction, space, and programming that develops innovative leaders who create content that reaches a local and global audience.

Students will visit the Connors LLC with classroom teachers. Students may also visit the library on their own before homeroom and during the school day. During the school day, students must have a pass from their teacher to access the library without the presence of a teacher. Students may borrow materials from Connors LLC. There are no fines or costs attached to material usage for students unless materials are lost or damaged. All borrowed materials must be returned by the end of the school year unless approved by MSMS Administration. The student may be held responsible for the replacement cost of any materials lost or damaged. See [Distributed Educational Materials](#) for more information.

Students who fail to return books on time will receive a notice from the library staff. Student placement announcements, distributed over the summer, may be withheld from students who have not returned borrowed library materials or have not paid appropriate replacement fees.

## **Student Dress Code**

Students in the middle school should wear clothing that corresponds with the prevailing academic climate at Marshall Simonds Middle School. Safety and appropriateness are two characteristics that highlight the standard of dress encouraged at MSMS.

- Students must wear clothing including both a shirt with pants or skirt, or the equivalent (for example dresses, leggings, or shorts) and shoes.
- Shirts and dresses must have fabric in the front and on the sides (under the arms).
- Clothing must cover undergarments (waistbands and straps excluded). Underwear is not outerwear.
- Hats and other headwear must allow the face to be visible to staff, and not interfere with the line of sight of any student or staff. Hoodies must allow the face and ears to be visible to school staff.
- Clothing must be suitable for all scheduled classroom activities including physical education, science labs, wood shop, and other activities where unique hazards exist.
- Specialized courses may require specialized attire, such as sports uniforms or safety gear.

Students are reminded that inappropriate attire such as items that promote drugs, alcohol, violence, intolerance, or are sexually explicit will not be permitted.

## **Extracurricular Activities / In-school Activities/Field Trips**

Field trips, in-school activities, and extracurricular activities are important for our students' middle school experience. Participation in extracurricular activities and in-school activities is a privilege. To be able to participate in a non-educational field trip (e.g. Canobie Lake Park), in-school activity (e.g. Class Competition Assembly, Volleyball), after-school activity (e.g. school dance), or other extracurricular activities (including after school clubs, groups, or sports), students must be in good academic standing (failing no more than one class) and consistently meet our behavioral expectations.

Eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities, in-school activities, or non-educational field trips is at the administration's discretion. Any student who is subject to disciplinary action in school may be deemed ineligible to participate in any extracurricular, in-school activities, and non-educational field trip. This decision will be made by the principal or the assistant principal. In addition to academic and behavioral eligibility, students are required to be present in school on the day of the event. Students who arrive after 10:30 am or are dismissed before 10:30 am will not be allowed to participate in or attend extracurricular activities.

Students attending extracurricular activities (e.g. dances, after-school activities, clubs) are expected to abide by the same rules that are in effect during a normal school day. A full catalog of MSMS after school activities can be found [here](#) on our school website.

Students attending a dance or other after-school activity must remain at the event upon arrival and will not be dismissed unless parental confirmation is made.

## **Cafeteria**

Students must report to the cafeteria during their assigned lunch period. No food or drink, other than water, is allowed outside of the cafeteria, nor is it to be consumed outside of the cafeteria unless the administration has granted prior approval. Students are expected to remain in their seats during the lunch period, except when

purchasing their lunch, cleaning up after lunch, purchasing a snack, or when permitted to go outside. Students are expected to be respectful towards each other and to the adults in the cafeteria/outside and abide by their decisions regarding seating arrangements and other concerns. We ask that students share the responsibility of keeping the cafeteria clean by cleaning up their area before leaving the lunchroom. We encourage and expect students to use the bottle recycling program that is in place.

At least one table in the lunchroom will be marked as an allergy-sensitive table. Any student may sit at this table as long as all of their food items are peanut/nut-free. All students are prohibited from sharing food or utensils.

### **Meal Charge Policy**

The School Committee is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on schoolwork, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any impact on students with meal charges. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the school district, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program and provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The provisions of this policy pertain to regular-priced school meals only. The School Committee will provide a regular meal to students who forget or lose their lunch money.

Note: The full text of the [Meal Charge Policy](#) can be found on the BPS website.

### **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Cell phones, headphones, and other electronic devices (iPods, Smart Watches, MP3 players, cameras, laser pointers, hand-held games, etc.) are useful when used responsibly and easily become a disruption to the learning environment and may compromise academic integrity. Upon entering homeroom, students' cell phones are expected to be powered off and put away or out of sight. Cell phones, headphones, smartwatches, and other types of electronic devices will only be permitted in the classroom during the school day with express permission from a teacher for academic purposes. If a student is seen with their cell phone or electronic device out and on at an unauthorized time, the device may be confiscated by the teacher, may be taken to the main office, consequences may be assigned and parents/guardians may be asked to come to the school to pick up the device. The school will not be responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or other electronic devices.

### **School Issued iPad**

At MSMS, every student is issued an iPad to use as an educational tool. The school issued iPad should only be used for school related activities. Students in grades 6 through 8 are responsible to bring their fully charged iPad to school each day. We ask that parent(s)/guardian(s) and students review and discuss the [RUP and Statement of Responsibility posted on the BPS Website](#) together. Students should treat their iPad and iPad case with respect. If the iPad or case is damaged or lost, the students will be held responsible for the cost of replacing the iPad or case. Families are encouraged to purchase third party insurance. Information about the optional insurance program will be sent home at the beginning of the year.



## **Dropping Off Items in the Office/Messages for Students**

It is expected that students come to school with the materials and assignments they need to be successful. All after-school plans should be made before arriving at school. We encourage families to develop routines with their children that help them come to school prepared. This may include sending your child with extra materials to keep in their locker or keeping money in your child's lunch account in case they forget their lunch. We understand that at times a book, assignment, or lunch may be forgotten at home or that after-school plans may change due to an unforeseen event. Calling into classes with messages, including picking up items dropped off, can be incredibly disruptive to the learning environment. To minimize disruptions to the learning environment, we will not call into classes for these reasons. If a student calls home for a forgotten item and a family member is able to bring it to school, it is the student's responsibility to pick up the item in the main office. If a lunch box is dropped off in the main office, students will be able to pick it up in the cafeteria during lunchtime.

## **Lost and Found**

The Lost and Found locations are inside the cafeteria and the gymnasium. A few times a year, all Lost and Found items are displayed in the main entrance lobby for a final pick up, then donated to a local charity.

## **Surveillance**

Parents and students should be advised that video surveillance cameras are operational in the hallways and will be used for security purposes.

## **Media Policy**

Burlington Public Schools attempts to provide students with the best educational practices and resources. Burlington schools will also attempt to recognize student achievement and success by publishing student names and/or pictures in the newspaper, school-based web pages or blogs, school newsletters, video/cable access television, or social media. The information, which may be released for publication, includes only the student's name, class, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, degrees, honors, and awards. Photographs and video recordings may also be taken during school activities for use on Burlington Public Schools web pages, blogs, newsletters, yearbooks, newspaper articles, and social media. Burlington Public Schools owns the photographs and video recordings and all their rights. More information can be found at the [Burlington Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy](#).

## **Visitors**

All visitors are to report to the main office, sign in and take a Visitor Pass to wear while in the building. When visitors are finished with their business, they should sign out in the main office and return their Visitor Passes.

Please see the [Visitor Admission and Protocols](#) section in the District Policies for more information.

## **Distributed Educational Materials**

Students at Marshall Simonds Middle School are provided with various educational materials. Lost or damaged educational materials, including but not limited to textbooks, iPads, iPads cases, and library resources, must be repaired or replaced.

A charge will be made according to the following scale:



Book charged out new	Full price
Charged out in good condition	75% of cost
Charged out in fair condition	50% of cost
Charged out in poor condition	\$1.00
Book needs rebinding	\$4.00

The full cost to replace a broken or lost iPad that cannot be repaired and does not have insurance is \$294.00. The annual insurance premium is \$60.50. Keyboard cases (if equipped) may need to be replaced as well. Keyboard cases are not covered by insurance. Replacement cost is \$50. Lightning charger cords are \$20 and bricks are \$10.

For more information, see the [Burlington Public Schools Protocols for Damaged or Lost Student iPads](#).

### **No School, Delayed Opening, Early Dismissal Announcements**

No school, delayed opening, and early dismissal announcements will be made utilizing the automated call system. At the beginning of each school year, contact verification forms are sent home with students so that families can verify or adjust their emergency contact information. Throughout the school year, changes to phone numbers should be reported to the school, so all systems, including the emergency calling system, may be updated. No school, delayed opening, and early dismissal announcements will also be posted through the district's social media accounts. Links to the district social media accounts can be found at the bottom on the [BPS Website](#).

### **Emergency Protocols**

The Burlington School Department has adopted an all-hazards emergency plan called the "Standard Response Protocol" (SRP) that covers any type of emergency. The plan is straightforward and people only need to remember four responses, "Lockdown, Lockout, Evacuate, and Shelter." See below for a copy of the poster posted in every classroom of the building. The SRP addresses any hazard, including active shooters, tornadoes, earthquakes, chemical spills, bomb threats, and fires. It also covers the most common events that we have seen repeatedly in Burlington, which are hazards outside the school that does not call for a complete lockdown response. These incidents have included a moose in a student parking lot, bank robberies, fleeing felons, and suspicious people nearby.

At the beginning of the school year, teachers will discuss the school's emergency response protocols. An integral component to school safety is the classroom response to an incident at school. Teachers, staff, and administration plan for threats to student safety scenarios. Students will be trained, and the school will drill these actions during the school year.

Instructions for the procedure in case of an evacuation are posted in every building classroom. The instructions are to be followed exactly. When evacuating the building, students should walk silently to the designated area to join their homeroom at the designated spot and remain silent throughout the drill or evacuation. If an evacuation alarm sounds during a passing time, students should immediately exit the building at the closest egress and proceed to the designated area behind the school.

Please see the [School Safety](#) section in the District Policies for more information.

# IN AN EMERGENCY TAKE ACTION



## **HOLD! In your room or area. Clear the halls.**

### **STUDENTS**

Clear the hallways and remain in room or area until the "All Clear" is announced  
Do business as usual

### **ADULTS**

Close and lock the door  
Account for students and adults  
Do business as usual



## **SECURE!**

### **Get inside. Lock outside doors.**

### **STUDENTS**

Return to inside of building  
Do business as usual

### **ADULTS**

Bring everyone indoors  
Lock outside doors  
Increase situational awareness  
Account for students and adults  
Do business as usual



## **LOCKDOWN! Locks, lights, out of sight.**

### **STUDENTS**

Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door

### **ADULTS**

Recover students from hallway if possible  
Lock the classroom door  
Turn out the lights  
Move away from sight  
Maintain silence  
Do not open the door  
Prepare to evade or defend



## **EVACUATE! (A location may be specified)**

### **STUDENTS**

Leave stuff behind if required to  
If possible, bring your phone  
Follow instructions

### **ADULTS**

Lead students to Evacuation location  
Account for students and adults  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults



## **SHELTER! Hazard and safety strategy.**

### **STUDENTS**

Use appropriate safety strategy for the hazard

#### **Hazard**

Tornado  
Hazmat  
Earthquake  
Tsunami

#### **Safety Strategy**

Evacuate to shelter area  
Seal the room  
Drop, cover and hold  
Get to high ground

### **ADULTS**

Lead safety strategy  
Account for students and adults  
Notify if missing, extra or injured students or adults

# District Policies and State/Federal Mandates

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), is a federal law requiring that Burlington Public Schools, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child’s education records. However, Burlington Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated “directory information” without written consent, unless you have advised the District to the contrary in accordance with District procedures (see below). The primary purpose of directory information is to allow Burlington Public Schools to include this type of information from your child’s education records in certain school publications such as a playbill, the annual yearbook, graduation programs, and sports activity sheets.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent’s prior written consent such as companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local districts receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories: names, addresses and telephone listings; unless parents have advised the district that they do not want their student’s information disclosed without their prior written consent.

If you do not want Burlington Public Schools to disclose directory information from your child’s education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the District in writing by October 15. Your written request not to disclose directory information should be addressed to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 123 Cambridge St, Burlington, MA 01803 (No faxes please). Burlington Public Schools has designated the following information as directory information:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| -Student’s name                       | -Dates of attendance                    |
| -Address                              | -Grade level                            |
| -Telephone listing                    | -Participation in officially recognized |
| -Date and place of birth              | activities and sports                   |
| -Electronic mail address              | -Photograph                             |
| -Weight and height of members         | -Major Field of study                   |
| of athletic teams                     | -Recent educational agency or           |
| -Degrees, honors, and awards received | institution attended                    |

## Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as “Section 504”, is a nondiscrimination statute enacted by the United States Congress. The purpose of the Act is to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students.

Section 504 describes an individual with a disability as a person who: (i) has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; (ii) has a record of such an impairment; or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment” [34 C.F.R. §104.3(j)(1)].

Evaluation to determine eligibility for a 504 Accommodation Plan must be of sufficient depth to determine eligibility and appropriate, reasonable accommodations to support access. The district may ask families to provide medical information from private medical providers for the purpose of more effective planning and decision making. No accommodations will be held contingent upon receiving such documentation. The provided Assessment Report will be completed annually and the provided Education History Report will be completed, at least at the initial assessment stage and thereafter if deemed necessary by the Team. If it is determined that standardized assessments, beyond those given as part of standard school or district wide assessment (e.g. DIBELS, DRA, MCAS etc.), are necessary, they will be identified on a Consent for Evaluation Form. For impairments that are medical in nature, the school nurse must be involved in the assessment, and collaboration with family practitioners will be a part of the eligibility/accommodations decision-making process.

A Section 504 Accommodation plan will outline all accommodations necessary to provide students with an opportunity to access education in a manner commensurate with non-disabled peers. If a parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff to the school district, he/she has a right to follow the grievance procedures of the District. These procedures are outlined in the’ Notice of Parent and Student Rights under Section 504.

### **District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)**

The Burlington Public Schools is dedicated to working collaboratively with educators, parents, support professionals and the community to ensure that all students receive their appropriate services and supports in the least restrictive environment/setting, conducive to facilitating their maximum emotional, social and academic growth. The focus of this collaborative approach is to prepare students for productive lives as full members of our society. The Burlington Public Schools DCAP was developed and refined through several meetings with district administrators and was shared with each School Leadership Team. Additionally, the DCAP was disseminated and explained to all staff at the elementary, middle and high school grade levels. The Burlington Public Schools DCAP addresses various strategies that will help to achieve this objective, including:

Systems of Tiered Instruction (RTI) - A system used to screen, assess, identify, plan for, and provide interventions to any student at- risk of school failure due to academic or behavior needs. This approach referred to as Response to Intervention (RTI), is a process that provides immediate intervention to struggling students at the first indication of a failure to learn.

Special Education Services - These would include services that are available to students through the regular education program, including services to address the needs of students whose behavior may interfere with learning. A description of the District’s Special Education programs and services is appended to this DCAP.

Title I - Memorial, Francis Wyman, Pine Glen

Reading Services - This means the direct and systematic instruction in reading for all students.

Mentoring and Collaboration - This set of strategies includes those that encourage teacher mentoring and collaboration.

Parental Involvement - This effort includes workshops/presentations and strategies that encourage parental involvement in their children's education.

While not required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), this DCAP seeks to identify strategies in several other areas including:

School Organization - Included here are such things as changes to the school schedule (such as additional instructional time or block scheduling), review of school policies and discipline codes, RtI and pre-referral activities before students are evaluated to determine eligibility for special education, after-school options (such as homework assistance and peer coaching.) and behavioral interventions including Bullying Programs/Bullying Curriculum.

Curriculum Alignment- These strategies provide for a review of local curriculum in relation to state learning standards.

Additional Support Services - Services that provide additional staffing or consultation on behavioral issues and on literacy development are included in this category.

Psychologists: School Psychologists perform evaluations and screenings, provide consultation to classrooms, and provide direct services to children both in the classroom and individually to address academic, social/emotional, and/or behavioral needs.

Guidance Counselor: The guidance counselors at the secondary level support the academic, career and personal/social-emotional development of all students. They participate in disciplinary meetings as well as Special Education and 504 Team meetings. They assist students and parents with the college application process or other post secondary goals. At the elementary level, the guidance counselors support the social/emotional development of all students. They provide social skills instruction within the classroom and within small groups. The elementary guidance counselors coordinate and oversee students' 504 Accommodation Plans. The guidance counselors also provide support to teachers and parents.

Reading and Math Curriculum Coaches: Coaches facilitate curriculum work and alignment through Curriculum

Councils and are the liaisons between the councils and the district leadership teams; they provide professional development to all staff in the district and also support teachers through modeling lessons and providing resources; coaches also manage student data and progress monitoring through the RtI model

Speech and Language Pathologist: SLP's perform evaluations and screenings, provide consultation to classrooms, and provide direct services to children both in the classroom and in the therapy room to address communication skills including the following: receptive and expressive language, social communication, articulation, fluency, voice, and hearing.

Occupational Therapist: OT's perform evaluations and screenings, provide consultation to classrooms and provide direct services to children both in the classroom and in the therapy room to address fine motor and perceptual motor skills as well as address sensory integration skills.

Physical Therapist: PT's perform evaluations and screenings, provide consultation to classrooms and provide direct services to children both in the general education setting and in the therapy room to address gross motor skills

Behaviorist: The behaviorist provides consultation and support to classroom throughout the district as well as direct services to students in district programs. The behaviorist conducts systematic behavioral assessments, provides interpretations of the results, and develops and supervises behavior intervention plans.

Vision Specialist: The vision specialist conducts assessments and provides consultative services to classroom teachers as well as direct instruction to students with visual impairments.

Assistive Technology: Products, devices, or equipment (whether acquired commercially, modified or customized) that are used to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Note: The full text of the [DCAP](#) can be found on the BPS website.

## **Equal Educational Opportunities**

In recognition of the diversified characteristics and needs of our students and with the keen desire to be responsive to them, the School Committee will make every effort to protect the dignity of the students as individuals. It also will offer careful consideration and sympathetic understanding of their personal feelings, particularly with reference to their race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or physical and intellectual differences.

To accomplish this, the Committee and its staff will make every effort to comply with the letter and the spirit of the Massachusetts equal educational opportunities law which prohibits discrimination in public school admissions and programs. The law reads as follows:

No child shall be excluded from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining the advantages, privileges and course of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation.

This will mean that every student will be given equal opportunity in school admission, admissions to courses, course content, guidance, and extracurricular and athletic activities.

All implementing provisions issued by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in compliance with this law will be followed.

Note: The full text of the [Equal Educational Opportunities](#) policy can be found on the BPS website.

### **Non-Discrimination Notice**

The Burlington Public Schools provide Equal Education Opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, marital status, physical or mental disability, age, sexual orientation, ancestry, veteran status or any other legally protected status.

The School District complies with all applicable Federal and State Laws, including but not limited to, Title VI and VII (race, color, national origin discrimination), Title IX (gender discrimination), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (disability discrimination), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability discrimination), and Massachusetts General Laws, c.151 B and c.151 C (race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex discrimination), c.76, §5 (race, color, sex, national orientation, religion, and sexual orientation discrimination), and c.71B (disability discrimination).

The School District has duly appointed individuals responsible for the overall monitoring, auditing, and ensuring compliance with this policy. For compliance issues regarding your school, students should contact their school principal. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in any of the District's educational activities can file a written grievance with the appropriate officer. You may also contact the Superintendent of the Burlington Public Schools at (781) 270-1821.

Note: The full text of the [Non-Discrimination Notice](#), [Non-Discrimination Policy](#), [Non-Discrimination On The Basis of Sex](#) policy, [Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap](#) policy, and [Pregnant Students Policy](#) can be found on the BPS website.



## **Student Records**

### Summary of Regulations Pertaining to Student Records

In January 1975, the State Board of Education adopted Regulations Pertaining to Student Records. State laws enacted in 1972 and 1974 mandated the development of these regulations, which have the force of law. The regulations apply to all public elementary and secondary schools. They are designed to insure parents' and students' rights of confidentiality, inspection, amendment, and destruction of student records, and to assist school authorities in their responsibilities for the maintenance of student records.

The regulations apply to all information kept by a school committee on a student in a manner such that he or she may be individually identified. The regulations divide the record into two sections, the transcript and the temporary record. The transcript includes only the minimum information necessary to reflect the student's educational progress. This information includes name, address, course titles, grades, and grade level completed. The transcript is kept by the school system for at least sixty years after the student leaves the system. The temporary record contains the majority of information maintained by the school about the student. This may include such things as standardized test results; student GPA; school sponsored extracurricular activities; and evaluations and comments by teachers, counselors, and other persons; as well as other similar information. The temporary record of each student enrolled on or after June 2002 will be destroyed no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates or withdraws from the school system.

### Inspection of Record

A parent or a student who has entered the ninth grade or is at least fourteen years old has the right to inspect all portions of the student record upon request. The record must be made available to the parent or student no later than two school days after the request, unless the parent or student consents to a delay. The parent and student have the right to receive copies of any part of the record, although a reasonable fee will be charged for the cost of duplicating the materials. Finally, the parent and student may request to have parts of the record interpreted by a qualified professional of the school or may invite anyone else of their choosing to inspect or interpret the record with them.

### Confidentiality of Record

With a few exceptions, no individual or organizations but the parent, student, and school personnel working directly with the student are allowed to have access to information in the student record without specific informed written consent of the parent or student.

### Amendment of Record

The parent and student have the right to add relevant comments, information, or other written materials to the student record. In addition, the parent and student have the right to request that information in the record be amended or deleted. The parent and student have a right to a conference with the school principal to make their objections known. Within a week after the conference, the principal must render a decision in writing. If the parent/guardian and student are not satisfied with the decision, the regulations contain provisions through which the decision may be appealed to higher authorities in the school system.

### Destruction of Records

The regulations require that certain parts of the student record, such as the temporary record, be destroyed a certain period of time after the student leaves the school system. School authorities are also allowed to destroy misleading, outdated, or irrelevant information in the record from time to time while the student is enrolled in

the school system. Before any such information may be destroyed, the parent/guardian and student must be notified and have an opportunity to receive a copy of any of the information before its destruction. The above is only a summary of some of the more important provisions of the Regulations Pertaining to Student Records that relate to student and parent/guardian rights. If more detailed information is desired, a copy of the regulations may be reviewed at your school office.

### **School Security**

The Burlington School Committee recognizes the need to maintain safe and secure school buildings where students and staff are exposed to an inviting environment that stimulates learning and development. In order to accomplish the goal of safe and secure school buildings in Burlington, the following guidelines and procedures will assist professional and support staff in carrying out their responsibilities consistent with the recommendations of the Massachusetts Department of Education and the Burlington School Committee.

It shall be the policy of the Burlington School Committee that:

School security cameras may be placed at various locations at each school, including the front entrance and common areas, e.g. corridors, auditorium, etc. All security cameras will be connected to a recording device that will maintain a log of activity.

- A. For everyday school is in session, all school doors will be locked fifteen ( 15 ) minutes after the official start time of the school day for that building.
- B. School Security cameras may be placed at various locations at each school, including the front entrance and common areas, e.g. corridors, auditorium, etc. All Security cameras will be connected to a recording device that will maintain a log of activity.
- C. Review of security recording will be limited to the building principal/assistant principal, the superintendent or other authorized school personnel or the Burlington Police and will be used only when investigating reported illegal activity, violations of the student conduct code, or to investigate persons who attempt to gain unauthorized access to the school.
- D. Security monitors, connected to the security cameras, will be placed in the school main office in two locations and will be monitored by school personnel during the day.
- E. A doorbell, door access pad, and door chime, will be installed at the front door of each building. The doorbell or door access pad will be utilized by all visitors who wish to gain access to the school.
- F. A speaker system will be installed at the front door to allow school personnel to communicate with the visitor prior to granting access to the building.
- G. The school principal or other authorized person shall grant access to visitors through a release button located in or near the main office after visual identification is made or the visitor's purpose for requesting access to the school is accepted.
- H. All visitors are required to sign a visitor log and obtain a visitor pass from the school office before proceeding to any other part of the school. Visitors will be reminded to sign-out at the main office prior to leaving the building.
- I. The school principal, or other authorized person, shall investigate all unknown persons who attempt to gain access to the school building. The Burlington Police will be notified whenever an unknown person attempts to gain access to the school without good cause.
- J. Signage will be prominently displayed at all schools informing visitors that security devices are in use at the school and procedures for gaining access to the school.
- K. At the close of school each day, the principal, or other authorized person will deactivate the door locking mechanism for the front door to accommodate after school activities.

- L. During school vacation periods, including the summer recess period, the front door at each school will be unlocked unless ordered locked by the Burlington Police, school principal, or other authorized person.
- M. The Burlington School Committee will review the security guidelines annually with the school administration to consider recommended adjustments to the policy.

#### Visitor Admission and Protocols

- 1. All visitors will enter the school building through the front door.
- 2. All front doors at each school will remain unlocked for a period of fifteen (15) minutes after the official start of the school day to accommodate students arriving late to school.
- 3. All school doors shall remain locked during the regular school day unless deactivated by the school principal or other authorized person.
- 4. All visitors will be granted access to the school via the front door after utilizing the door access bell.
- 5. All visitors will notify school personnel about their visitation purpose before being granted access.
- 6. Access will be granted by school office personnel, the building principal or other authorized person after visual identification is made or the visitor's purpose for requesting access to the school is accepted.
- 7. All visitors will be directed to the school main office where they will sign a visitor log and obtain a School Department Visitor Badge.
- 8. Visitors who fail to report to the main office to sign-in or obtain a visitor badge will be reported to the building principal or other authorized person for investigation.
- 9. School front doors will be unlocked five (5) minutes prior to the official end of the school day and shall remain unlocked for after school activities unless changed by the school principal or other authorized school personnel.

Note: The full text of the [School Security](#) can be found on the BPS website.

#### **Receipts**

Since the receipts process is the area most susceptible to abuse, the Burlington Public Schools have implemented strict procedures for the control of receipts:

- 1. Only Burlington Public School employees should collect funds for deposit. Volunteers and other non-school personnel may not collect or handle school funds.
- 2. All monies received by student organizations (from fund-raisers, donations, etc.) should be turned over to the School Principal's designee by the end of the business day.

Note: The full text of the [Receipts & Cash Policy](#) can be found on the BPS website.

## Signed Review of Handbook

I HAVE REVIEWED THE Marshall Simonds Middle School STUDENT HANDBOOK with my child.

Student Name (print First, Last): \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_