

Columbia Middle School

345 Plainfield Avenue
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey 07922
(908) 464-1600
Web Site: www.bhpsnj.org

2021 – 2022

Dear Students,

The information found on the following pages is a good guide to the procedures that will be in effect for the coming school year. Please be sure to read the handbook and share it with your parents.

We've done our best to adapt this book to include how some rules have changed due to the Covid pandemic. It would be almost impossible to include all of the possible concerns and topics so let me just say as this book may evolve over the year, I will alert you (all students) to any new items that we add or if we make any major edits.

What I can say with confidence is that our teachers and middle school team are working extremely hard to make this year as productive as we can. We are so proud of our middle school community and have such high hopes for your success.

Our work and desire is for all of us to be at school this year for the full year, but no matter where you sit when you learn, all I ask is that you work hard, keep communications open between your teachers and school counselor, and always remember that Mrs. Acosta and I are happy to hear from you no matter what the reason.

You can absolutely make the 2021 - 2022 school year your best year ever. Don't forget, you are not alone no matter where you are learning.

Sincerely,

Frank G. Geiger
Principal
Columbia Middle School

COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION

THE MISSION AT COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL INCLUDES HIGH EXPECTATIONS.

THE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AT COLUMBIA MIDDLE SCHOOL WILL PROVIDE FOR THE
SUCCESS OF ALL LEARNERS BY

- Providing opportunities for each student to be inspired
- Allowing students access to the latest in technology so as to contribute to a collaborative and creative environment
- Ensuring equitable opportunities for enrichment
- Promoting individuality and self confidence through self-discipline, tolerance, integrity, positivity, empathy, and service
- Preparing students for college and careers through 21st Century Skills that include critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating, and collaborating

BELIEFS

- We believe that each child is an individual within the school community.
- We believe in high expectations, clearly defined boundaries, and the right of every student to learn in a safe and comfortable environment.
- We believe that school is a place where confidence and self-motivation are fostered.
- We believe in a varied curriculum and related activities that permit students to explore new ideas, interact positively with others, and develop self-esteem.
- We believe that the home, community, and school should work together to produce compassionate and responsible students who are accountable for their actions.
- We believe in having an environment of respect for self, respect for others, and respect for authority.

STATEMENT OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND INFORMATION

- Parents are responsible for monitoring the progress of their children in school. This includes, but is not limited to making sure students are well rested and prepared to learn each day. Parents should be aware of the information contained in this student handbook. Parental support and encouragement have a positive impact on student performance.
- PowerSchool username and passwords are distributed at the start of each school year. We encourage you to make time with your child on a weekly basis to check his/her grades on PowerSchool. Up-to-date information including upcoming

events are available on the Columbia Middle School Website as well as in the daily notice. The daily notice will be emailed to you once you register for news from our website. Go to www.bhpsnj.org and click “register” at the top of the page.

- Curriculum for each course is posted on the district’s website in the “resources for parents” section. The online District Handbook is also available for further information.

Chromebook Breakages

- A broken screen or non-operating device must be reported to the tech center through remote means - [see this link](#). Once you contact the “dojo” a response can be anticipated within a day’s notice. Look for an email.
- Families are responsible for repair costs. Please see the [Responsible Use Document](#) for more information.

Fines

- Fines are incurred for loss and/or damage of school property such as locks, library books, and textbooks. You will be notified by the teacher as to the fine itself, but payments are made to the main office. If you have any questions about the fine, please contact the main office.
- Please note that undersized “book sox” will break a book’s binding that will incur a fine.

Fees for Requests of Transcripts

- If a parent/guardian makes a formal request for transcripts to be prepared for application to an out-of-district school, the cost to fulfill each application is three dollars (\$3.00). Transcripts are sent from our office directly to the proposed school.

ACADEMICS

Academic Integrity

- Academic integrity is founded upon the values of personal honesty and ethical behavior. It involves the honest presentation of one's own work and the responsible, cited use of the work, words, or ideas of others. Any attempt to obtain credit for work done by another constitutes academic dishonesty, is not honorable, and will not be tolerated at Columbia Middle School. Knowingly allowing another student to copy your work compromises academic integrity and is a violation equal to plagiarism.
- **A discussion on plagiarism is held on an annual basis during your child's Language Arts/English class.**
 - **Students absent from this conversation are still obligated to the rules of Academic Integrity.**
 - This includes, but is not limited to, cheating on tests (including midterm or final exams), copying the work of others, falsification of data, and failure to properly cite the works, words, or ideas of others. It is important that all Columbia Middle School students make a conscious effort not only to avoid intentional plagiarism, but also take steps to prevent accidental plagiarism. Any form of plagiarism is considered a violation and will be dealt with very seriously. Students should use extra care when making use of internet sources and are encouraged to consult their teachers whenever they are in doubt.

When a teacher determines that a student may have plagiarized material:

- 1. The principal, vice principal, and content supervisor will be contacted**
- 2. The principal, vice principal, and/or the supervisor will conference with the teacher to determine next steps**
- 3. If plagiarism is found, the student will receive a grade of zero for the material**
 - a. (Upon first offense only, 6th graders will be given time by the teacher to redo the work for a maximum grade of 60%)**
4. Parent/Guardian will be notified
5. After a student conference with the classroom teacher, a student may be offered an opportunity to correct the assignment for partial credit
6. The student may be subject to further disciplinary action

SMART WATCHES ARE TO BE REMOVED FOR ALL ASSESSMENTS – NO EXCEPTIONS

Appropriate Use of Technology

- Internet access and the use of computer equipment and networks is a privilege. All files saved to school servers are subject to view by administration and subject to administrative action without prior notice.
- Same is true of items placed in a Google Drive owned and operated by the district. Please refer to the [District Acceptable Use Form](#) for detailed information.

Grading System

A	93 - 100	C	73 - 76
A-	90 - 92	C-	70 - 72
B+	87 - 89	D+	67 - 69
B	83 - 86	D	60 - 66
B-	80 - 82	F	59 and below
C+	77 - 79		

Report Cards

- A report card is issued and mailed only at the end of the year within ten days of the last day of school. Online access to student grades are available throughout the year using your PowerSchool account.
- A digital notice (email or e-blast from our webpage) is sent to alert parents about mid marking periods and end of marking periods.

Study Hall

- Study Hall is a scheduled block of time depending on individual schedules. Not every student is scheduled for Study Hall.
- Students will be given an assigned seat.
- Study hall is a work period. Students are to work individually on school related activities. All students should bring a “free reading” book to study hall.
- A quiet atmosphere must prevail. At teacher discretion, students are allowed to use earbuds if needed.
- As is true with all scheduled time, students are expected to report on time with the materials they need. Students will not be permitted to go to their lockers
- No food or drink in study hall.

Enrichment Period (EP)

EP is similar to a “homeroom” period. For those who do not have a scheduled activity during EP, the following rules apply.

1. You must be in your EP on time.
2. All students moving between classes during EP ***must*** have a pass. Only one student per pass.
3. Any talking between students must be school work related and then only with the classroom teachers approval to work in groups.
4. Projects and long term assignments may be worked on during EP if the content area teacher approves. That work is best done in that teacher’s room who assigned the work.
5. The school is not responsible for any change in the schedule that eliminates or removes a student from his or her EP. For that reason, homework should be completed at home. However students may use EP to study or complete homework if time allows.
6. Students who wish to visit cycle classes during EP must receive a pass from the cycle teacher the day before.
7. Only two passes are issued at a time for the Library from each EP. Visiting the library or any classroom during EP is not guaranteed.
8. When scheduled by the music teacher, attending a performance group during the scheduled EP is NOT A STUDENT OPTION, but is considered a regular part of the student schedule.

ATTENDANCE

Please Contact the School Each Morning That Your Child Will be Absent or Tardy
Contact Your Child’s Counselor if Absence Extends Longer Than 2 Days

Information regarding the district health form or other information specific to Covid concerns will be shared via email and linked to the front page of our [school website](#).

Visitors

- **Until further notice, except for the times when parents are called to school, no visitors will be allowed.**
- **Parents should refrain from bringing items to the school if they are left at home. We ask students to be organized and prepare for the day prior to leaving home.**

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- To report your child's absence from school by contacting the main office prior to the start of the school day at 908-464-1600 x 1 or email amartis@bhpsnj.org.
- To make your child's school attendance your first priority for all 180 days;
- To be sure your child arrives on time. A regular school day begins at 8:10 a.m.
 - For the safety of our students at Columbia Middle School, the Berkeley Heights Police Departments requires that when dropping off and picking up your child that you park and pick up on surrounding streets or . **PLEASE DO NOT** pull into the parking lot area because it puts the other students at risk who are crossing between Plainfield Avenue and the courtyard.
- To provide a note explaining the reason for your child's absence immediately upon his/her return to school;
- To appreciate the correlation between regular attendance and academic achievement;
- To be aware of the dates of your child's absences;
- To know that class cutting will result in a zero for class participation and a zero for any test/quiz missed without the opportunity for make-up;
- To direct your child to meet with teachers about work missed during his/her absence;
- To schedule medical/dental appointments, and other non-school-sponsored matters outside of school hours;

Student Absence

- **State law requires a child to attend school daily for 4 hours, a student will be counted as absent if they do not fulfill this requirement.**
 - **A student can be declared absent even though they were present for a portion of the day.**
- Students who are absent from school with parental permission are considered excused. An excused absence means that the student is not truant. ***Excused***

absences still constitute a day out of school and will be reflected in attendance as absent. Reasons for excused absences include personal illness, death in the family, religious observance, etc. School-sponsored activities or other activities approved by the principal, such as field trips do not count against attendance. The administration reserves the right to determine acceptable causes for excused absences.

- Excused absences **do not** excuse a student from any class work missed during their days out.

ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT
WHEN A CONCERN IS BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION,
WE WILL CONTACT HOME TO CHECK ON THINGS.

**Upon a child's fourth day out of school without notifying school,
parents will be contacted.**

- If it is determined that excessive absences are due to truancy, this will result in a mandatory parent conference with the building principal or his/her designee.

Make -Up Work for Absences

- Parents should not request make-up work until a student is out for the second consecutive day and should check the teacher's webpage prior to making any request. On the second day out, **please email your child's teacher** to find out about work missed. Teachers will respond to those requests prior to the end of the school day so long as the request is made prior to noon. Teachers are not required to provide work for students out a single day.

*Students are expected to meet with teachers
upon their return in order to find out
about missed assignments and work.*

- A student who is absent from class for any reason is required to make arrangements with his/her teachers on the day he/she returns to school for any work or assessments missed in order to receive credit for that work. The minimal period of time for makeup will be equal to the number of days absent plus one, i.e. two days out – three days to make up their work.
- A teacher may extend this deadline at his or her discretion keeping in mind the needs of the student, the particular impact of the rotate and drop schedule, and the amount of work to be made up.
- **Students should assume that an assessment missed while out might be made up on the day of their return so long as no new information about the test was shared while the student was out.**

- **As well, if students are given notice on Tuesday that a test will be given on Thursday, but are out on Wednesday, the returning student should assume that the test will go on as scheduled.**

Tardiness

Students who arrive late to school miss valuable class time and can disrupt the learning of other students.

- **If a student arrives late to school, they must come to the main entrance. Late students will be admitted to the vestibule one at a time and be given a pass to their classroom. If a student notices another student in the vestibule, they will need to wait their turn and ring the bell as the vestibule empties.**
- **A student who is tardy to school is required to make arrangements to make up work missed or lose credit for that work. Excessive tardiness will result in disciplinary action that may include a phone call home.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

- **When a student reports an incident that may be a violation of the Code of Conduct, the students involved may be asked to complete an incident report form.**
- **The purpose of this form is to obtain accurate information in a timely manner.**
- **Any faculty member may ask a student to complete an incident report.**
- **The incident report starts any possible investigation and is not used alone in determining the outcome of the investigation.**

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) – See other information on page sixteen of this booklet

Throughout the year, as students may be involved in possible incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying, our Anti-Bullying Specialists will conduct investigations: talking to students, observing classrooms and working with school staff to determine the nature of such incidents.

If your child will be involved in an investigation, you will receive notice prior to, as well as a follow-up letter notifying you of the results of the investigation once it has been completed. Specific timelines exist to guide staff and administration in these endeavors.

We look forward to working together with students, parents and community members to make our schools safe, productive learning environments for all.

**District Anti-Bullying Coordinator – Ms. Chrissy Zaun czaun@bhpsnj.org
CMS Anti-Bullying Specialist - Dr. Peter Sempepos psempepos@bhpsnj.org**

Expected Behaviors

- **Students moving from class to class are to do so in an orderly manner and should pay attention to directional signs (one way signs) posted in the halls and in the staircases.**
- Students are to show respect for themselves, and all other members of the school community.
- Students should demonstrate a consideration for the property of others, including school property.
- Students are expected to be in their assigned classes on time.
- Students may not leave school property during school hours.
- **Students are not permitted to open locked outside doors during the school day.**
- Students must have a hall pass if they are in the hallways during class time.
- Fighting or the use of obscene language will not be tolerated.
- Dangerous substances or inappropriate objects are not permitted on school property, during events, or on any bus.
- Gum chewing is not permitted in the middle school.

Behavior that requires consequences may result in that child losing extra curricular privileges such as access to clubs or involvement with Peer Leadership Groups.

General Guidelines

- **Guidelines include that students will enter using three doors. We will begin a staggered entrance to the building beginning at 8:10.**
 - **Grade 8 will enter near room B13 (Lower Columbia Parking Lot)**
 - **Grade 7 will enter near room C5 (Door located across the courtyard from our main entrance)**
 - **Grade 6 will enter using our regular main entrance**
- **ALL late students will enter using the main entrance (Beginning at 8:15 a.m.)**
- **Students are to arrive at school (socially distance themselves) and remain near their entrance until 8:10 a.m.**

- Students meeting with a teacher before school must have received a pass from that teacher prior to that day.
- **Cell phones and other electronic devices not approved for use are not to be used and should be turned off and kept out of sight to avoid distractions.**
- Any student subject to teacher or administrative disciplinary action may not be permitted to participate in co-curricular activities and/or interscholastic sports for that day.
- Any non-school sponsored fund-raising is not allowed on the school grounds during school hours.
 - This includes direct sales of any nature to staff or students.

Field Trips

- Field trips are considered a privilege. The administration reserves the right to withhold a student's participation in trips throughout the year.

Lunch Time Conduct

- Students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times.
- Students should speak in conversational tones in the lunchroom.
- Students should clean up after themselves and place all garbage and recyclables in their proper containers.
- Soliciting funds from other students is not permitted, nor is lending money to a fellow student.
- Students are prohibited from buying lunch for friends or others or from selling food/snacks to other students.
- Students considered disruptive or insubordinate during lunch will be subject to disciplinary action which can include lunch detention wherein a student will eat lunch away from the cafeteria. A lunch detention may be a spontaneous event which *may or may not* include a phone call home.

Audio or Video Devices (includes digital watches and air pods)

- If a student chooses to bring an audio and/or video device to school; which would include cell phones with similar capabilities, CMS is not responsible for the item if it is lost or stolen.
- Students are allowed to use said devices during the school day only with teacher's permission.
- Use of these devices at inappropriate times will result in confiscation of the device.

Audio or Video Devices (includes digital watches and air pods)

- Digital watches are not restricted *except will be collected during testing*
- The use of wireless listening devices (including air pods) is prohibited and should remain at home.

Digital Books or Devices

- We encourage reading no matter the form. Use of said devices does fall under the purview of the supervising teacher.

Cell Phones, Tablets, and digital Watches

- If a student chooses to bring a cell phone to school CMS is not responsible for the loss or theft of the item.
- Teachers have the right to collect phones as students enter class. Students can collect them once class has concluded.
- **Student use of cell phones is strictly prohibited.**
- Cell phones (and other communicative devices) can create class disruptions and potential issues concerning academic integrity.
- Any unauthorized use of a cell phone or digital watch/gear may result in confiscation and/or search of the device as such action is a direct violation of school rules.
- The extent of the confiscation and/or search of the device is dependent upon the circumstances present at that time and within the discretion of school authorities. Repeated offenses may result in asking parents to the building to recover the cell phone from the administration.
- Remember: Digital devices, like all other personal items brought by a student into a school zone, may be subject to search. The outcome of that search may result in school sanction and/or a criminal investigation by police.
- **During school hours, if a student needs to call home for:**
 - **Illness - that child MUST report to the nurse.**
 - **Other Reason - that child MUST report to a school guidance office or the main office.**
 - **even though the office has a phone for student use, students will be asked to use their own phone and may sit in the vestibule during the conversation**
 - **Only when a student is supervised by an adult may they use their personal phone in school during school hours.**
- The use of any digital device is under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher.

If it is found that a camera is being used in an inappropriate way, the building principal reserves the right to confiscate and/or disable said device.

Recording Devices

- Photography, videography and audio recording is strictly prohibited during school hours or at school sanctioned events unless approved by the Administration. Furthermore, unauthorized electronic recording of students or staff may be deemed an act of HIB and subject to disciplinary consequences, confiscation and/or search.

- At times, students will be loaned equipment in the classroom capable of recording voice or images. All unauthorized use of this type of equipment may result in disciplinary consequences.

Lockers

- **The sharing of lockers or locker combinations is not permitted.**
- **Any loss of a school provided lock will incur a fine of \$6.00.**
- State law provides that student lockers or other storage areas provided for student use may be searched as long as students are informed in writing at the beginning of each school year and regular inspections occur. N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19.2
 - Students should be aware that the postings of this handbook qualifies as notice that the Berkeley Heights Board of Education will exercise the right, through its designees, to search student lockers. School lockers remain the property of the district even when used by the pupils.
- A locker (or lockers) is assigned to each student. Students must keep locker combinations confidential in order to safeguard their personal property.
- Only school approved locks are permitted for use in the school.
- Students should occupy only the locker assigned to them by the administration and physical education teachers. Tasteful, removable interior decorations are allowed.
- Disturbing another student’s locker will be subject to disciplinary action.

Decorating Lockers to Celebrate Birthdays

In order to provide appropriate social distancing during the 2021 - 2022 school year, until further notice, we are not allowing lockers to be decorated.

Lost and Found – Thank you for assisting when finding an item ☺

- All found books (including agenda planners and notebooks) should be taken to the library where they will be placed in a “lost books” shelf.
- All found jewelry and electronic devices should be taken to the main office.
- Found clothing should be deposited in the lost and found area located near the stage in the cafeteria.
- There is no insurance coverage for loss of personal items. At mid-year and year-end, items remaining in the lost and found will be donated to a local charity. Notice will be sent home prior to that event.

Backpacks

- **Students are being asked to use a tote, string sack, or very small backpack that will fit in lockers. Carrying backpacks during the day will be discouraged.**

Dress and Grooming :

DRESS MUST BE APPROPRIATE TO THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- Students are expected to dress in a neat, clean and appropriate manner as defined on the school website.
- If student dress is in question, the student may be asked to change which may result in a phone call home.
- Repeated offenses will require disciplinary action.

The wearing of hats inside the school building during school hours is prohibited.

Exceptions will be made for religious purposes. *Board of Education Policy – 5511 Dress and Grooming*

The Board of Education prohibits pupils from wearing; while on school property, any type of clothing, apparel or accessory which indicates that the pupil has membership in, or affiliation with, any gang associated with criminal activities. The building principal shall determine whether the dress or grooming of pupils comes within these prohibitions. *Board of Education Policy – 5511 Dress and Grooming*

STUDENT CONDUCT

Consequences of poor behavior may include:

- **Removal from the classroom**
- **Phone call home**
- **Student sent home for the day**
- **Scheduled to an “in-school” suspension away from the scheduled classroom**
- **Suspension from school**
- It is the goal of the Code of Conduct that students are responsible for their own behavior. However, situations do arise which require action on the part of the school to modify student behavior in order to meet the expectations of the student code of conduct. Infractions brought to the attention of the administration will be given the appropriate time and consideration.
- Each disciplinary matter or incident will be treated individually.
- **Lack of knowledge of school rules will not be taken as an excuse for breaking school rules.**

The following consequences are associated with breaking the rules of the Code of Conduct:

- Parent/Guardian notification
- Loss of Co-curricular activities
- Teacher Detention
- Office Detention
- Out of School Suspension

Teacher Detention:

- **Infractions of classroom rules may result in a conference with an administrator.**

- **In lieu of detention, a student may be required to work from a remote room away from their regular classroom.**
- **Students may be assigned to a remote room without prior parent notification.**

Detention:

- For infractions of the Code of Conduct and repeated violations of class rules. Detentions are assigned by the Assistant Principal. Depending on the circumstances, Detentions run on Tuesday or Thursday morning.
- The Assistant Principal will determine the number of detentions given for each disciplinary matter. Detentions that require a student to arrive early will include parent notification for each occurrence.

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Out of School Suspension:

New Jersey Statute 18A; 3702: ... “Any pupil who is guilty of continued willful disobedience, or of open defiance of authority of any teacher or person having authority over him (or her), or of habitual use of profanity or obscene language, or who shall cut, deface or otherwise injure any school property, shall be liable to punishment and suspension from school.”

Pupils under suspension are prohibited from participating in or attending any school-regulated activity during the period of their suspension. They may not enter the school buildings or grounds of this district without the permission of the principal. Any pupil under suspension who enters the school buildings or grounds without the permission of the principal may have the period of his/her suspension extended. The right to continue the suspension or to expel is reserved to the Berkeley Heights Board of Education, acting upon the recommendation of the administration.

Serious violations of school regulations, which creates a dangerous or unsafe condition for other pupils, shall cause a pupil to be suspended upon the first offense.

Pupils who are under suspension will be required to make up all in-school assignments missed during the period of their suspension and will be given adequate opportunity to make up this work; incomplete assignments will result in a grade of zero. Students will not be readmitted without a parent/guardian conference.

Please note that gross violations of the student code of conduct can result in police notification and possibly filing of charges. Suspensions generally are assigned for a period of 1-10 days.

New Jersey Statute 18A:

“Conduct which shall constitute good cause for suspension or expulsion of a pupil guilty of such conduct shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- a. Continued and willful disobedience;
- b. Open defiance of authority of any teacher or person having authority over him;

- c. Conduct of such character as to constitute a continuing danger to the physical well-being of other pupils;
- d. Physical assault upon another pupil;
- e. Taking, or attempting to take, personal property or money from another pupil, or from his presence, by means of force or fear;
- f. Willfully causing, or attempting to cause, substantial damage to school property;
- g. Participation in an unauthorized occupancy by any group of pupils or others of any part of any school or other building owned by the school district, and failure to leave such a school or other facility promptly after having been directed to do so by the principal or other person in charge of such building or facility;
- h. Incitement which is intended to and does result in unauthorized occupation by any group of pupils or others of any part of a school or other facility owned by any school district;
- i. Incitement which is intended to and does result in truancy by other pupils; and
- j. Knowing possession or knowing consumption without legal authority of alcoholic beverages or controlled dangerous substance on school premises, or being under the influence of intoxicating liquor or controlled dangerous substances while on school premises.”

Expulsion: Expulsion refers to discontinuing the educational services of a student. (N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2 to 18A:37-5).

Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (See board policy located in parent handbook) “Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c.122 (C.18A:37-15.3), that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- b. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- c. creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Expected Behavior

The Board expects pupils to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other pupils and school staff, the educational purpose underlying all school activities, and the care of school facilities and equipment. A student who believes that he/she is subject to harassment, intimidation, or bullying **should report it immediately** to an adult in authority and not respond in any way that will make the situation worse, either verbally or physically.

The Board believes that standards for pupil behavior must be set cooperatively through interaction among the pupils, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), staff and community members, producing an atmosphere that encourages pupils to grow in self-discipline. The development of this atmosphere requires respect for self and others, as well as for school district and community property on the part of pupils, staff and community members.

The Board believes the best discipline is self-imposed, and it is the responsibility of school district staff to use disciplinary situations as opportunities to help pupils learn to assume and accept responsibility for their behavior and the consequences of their behavior. Staff members who interact with pupils shall apply the best practices designed to prevent discipline problems and encourage pupils' abilities to grow in self-discipline.

General guidelines for pupil conduct will be developed by the Superintendent, in conjunction with school staff, and approved by the Board. These guidelines will be developed based on accepted core ethical values from representatives, school employees, volunteers, pupils, and administrators. These guidelines for pupil conduct will be suited to the age level of the pupils and the mission and physical facilities of the individual school(s) in the district. This Policy requires all pupils in the district to adhere to these rules and guidelines and to submit to such disciplinary measures as are appropriately assigned for infraction of these rules and guidelines.

The district prohibits active and passive support for harassment, intimidation or bullying. Pupils are encouraged to support other pupils who walk away from these acts when they see them, constructively attempt to stop them, and report these acts to the Building Principal or his/her designee.

Pupils are required to conform to reasonable standards of socially acceptable behavior, respect the person, property, and the rights of others; obey constituted authority; and respond to school district teaching, support and administrative staff. Each school

Principal will develop and provide a school-based program for appropriate recognition for positive reinforcement for good conduct, self-discipline, good citizenship, and academic success.

ATHLETIC AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

ATHLETIC AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Academic Performance Standards for Participating in Athletic and Other Co-curricular Activities

It is the responsibility of local school districts to ensure that students participating in athletics and other co-curricular activities maintain a standard of academic performance that is consistent with the primary mission of the schools. This mission is to provide an effective and appropriate education for all pupils and to establish acceptable standards of pupil performance.

No student will be eligible to participate in an activity for one marking period if he/she has failed a subject or has received two D's or more on the report card for that marking period.

Students who are absent from school may not participate in any extra-curricular activities that day without the approval of the principal.

Spectator Conduct

- Cheer for your team in a positive manner
- Display good sportsmanship
- Smoking on school grounds is prohibited
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited
- Liquid refreshments (other than water) in the gym are prohibited
- Mechanical noise makers are prohibited
- Whistling is prohibited
- Inappropriate signs or banners are prohibited

Co-Curricular Activities

Columbia Middle School invites and encourages active student participation in its co-curricular program. We seek to provide the kind of environment, which fosters existing activities and makes the initiation and development of new clubs and activities unrestricted.

Clubs and Activities

A complete list of activities and the fees associated with participation can be found online at www.bhpsnj.org.

A variety of clubs and sports activities are available at the middle school. Students can participate in interscholastic sports along with other clubs and activities offered during the same season. If a student misses an activity due to a conflict with another school-based activity, any coach or advisor may limit a student's play time or participation.

Except where specific auditions may be required, all students are allowed to participate in clubs, activities and intramurals. Seventh and eighth grade students are permitted to engage in interscholastic sports. Making the interscholastic sports team is solely based on ability level. The coach or club advisor has the discretion to suspend and/or dismiss a student for inappropriate conduct in school or during the activity.

Physical Education

- **For the start of the 2021-2022 School Year students should arrive at school (on the days scheduled for PE) ready for class in appropriate clothing wearing sneakers.**
- **Changing clothes will not be allowed.**
- **Student will NOT have access to the gym locker rooms.**
- Physical Education is required of all students for each year they are in attendance. Appropriate attire for Physical Education includes sneakers, pants (no jeans) or shorts, and tee shirt.
- Any student who is excused from participating must dress unless he/she has a note from the parent stating otherwise or is excused from P.E. by the nurse. Students excused from gym for two days or less must have a written note from a parent. Those excused for more than two days must have a written note from a doctor. Students with chronic medical problems must have a doctor's note renewed each year.
- Grades will be based on student participation and preparation in physical education. Points will be deducted from a 100 point scale for lack of participation, preparation, sportsmanship and inappropriate behavior.
- **During the 2020-2021 School Year, students can make up points for lack of preparation during a time arranged between the student and the teacher.**

- Notes will not be accepted to excuse students from physical education to prepare for non-related school competitions.

Related Arts Elective Classes

All information regarding our elective offerings are available online at <https://www.bhpsnj.org>

Library Media Center

- The Library Media Center is open when school is in session. The media specialist is available to help all students with their research assignments as well as a readers' advisory.
- Food and beverages are not allowed in the Library. If you have any questions while using the Library, please ask for help. Students are reminded that they are responsible for proper maintenance and timely return of all materials checked out of the Library.

Textbooks

- Books are assigned to a student for his/her personal use and must be covered.
Note: Book sox that are not sized appropriately have been known to damage books beyond normal wear.
- Each student is responsible for the care and protection of books and will be required to reimburse the school for loss or damage beyond normal wear. Beyond normal wear includes doodling which is subject to fine. Report cards and transcripts will be held until fines are paid.

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM/SPECIAL SERVICES

Guidance

The Board of Education provides guidance facilities and staff to offer services to all students. At the middle school, guidance counselors are assigned by grade level. Counselors help students with educational planning, personal/social concerns, and character education. The counseling staff maintains close contact with faculty, students and welcomes open parental communications to better assist and meet the students' needs. Your school counselor can be very helpful to you in many ways.

Home Instruction Services

When a student is absent from school for ten consecutive days or more for health reasons, the student will receive home instruction. Home instruction is scheduled through the school counselor. If you believe that a recent event or illness will require home instruction, please contact your child's guidance counselor.

Intervention and Referral Services

Each school has an Intervention and Referral Services Committee (I&RS) designed to support general education students who may be experiencing academic, behavioral and/or social emotional difficulties that are impacting on the student's educational progress. The responsibilities of the I&RS Committee are as follows:

- Identifies students in need and plans to provide appropriate interventions and/or services to address the student's needs;
- Identifies the school personnel who will participate in provided interventions and services;
- Provides support and guidance to the school staff working with the student;
- Involves parents and/or guardians in the development and implementation of the plan;
- Coordinates with outside service providers when appropriate;
- Reviews and assesses the effectiveness of the plan and modifies or terminates the plan as needed; and
- Refers the student to the Child Study Team (CST) for evaluation, when appropriate.

A written I&RS plan is developed by the committee which lists the suggestions that can be implemented in school and/or at home to support the student. The parents and all of the student's teachers receive a copy of the plan.

Referral to Child Study Team

A parent may request a Child Study Team (CST) or speech evaluation for their son/daughter by putting their request in writing to the Director of Special Services. This written request is considered a referral. Requests must be in writing. Email and/or other facsimiles are not considered a valid means for referral. A CST member will contact the parent to schedule an Identification and Referral Meeting within 20 days of the receipt of the referral. The purpose of the Identification and Referral Meeting is to discuss whether or not the district will proceed with a speech or a CST evaluation. Except in certain circumstances, pre-referral interventions through the I&RS should be considered and implemented prior to a referral to the CST.

Student Information Requests

If a parent/guardian requests for information to be completed by staff/faculty, there are several guidelines to facilitate this process. Information requests can consist of, but are not limited to, teacher reports of progress for private tutors and educational services/ agencies as well as checklists/ surveys for private doctors and/or counselors. When there is a request for such information to be completed, the parent should be directed to the appropriate grade-level school counselor. The school counselor, or faculty designee, will request written consent to release of records, circulate feedback forms to the appropriate staff, collect the completed forms and mail the information directly to the professional, specialist and/or doctor requesting such information. These procedures should be followed for all requests.

CORE Team

The CORE team works in conjunction with the district Substance Awareness Coordinator (SAC). The purpose of the Core Team is to identify students who are at risk for substance abuse or who are having difficulty with peer/staff relationships. Referrals are made by staff members. Parents will be notified if the CORE team feels that the student may be at risk. Strategies to assist the child and parents will be recommended by the team.

HEALTH OFFICE

All Information related to the Health Office and Health Services at Columbia Middle School can be found on the school website under the Health Office tab.

- Health Related Policies
- Health Services
- Immunization Requirements and Form
- Medication Policy and Forms
- New Student Requirements and Forms
- Sports Registration and Instructions

Affirmative Action/Section 504 Officer/A.D.A. Compliance

The Assistant Superintendent is designated as the compliance officer who coordinates and oversees all Affirmative Action policies dealing with equality in education. In addition, the Assistant Superintendent is in charge of activities related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the district's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and Federal and State Statutes concerning equality in educational programs. *Students*, parents, residents of the district, or staff members who have concerns about Affirmative Action or any other matter dealing with equality in education should contact Mr. Scott McKinney, Assistant Superintendent. A copy of the district's Affirmative Action plans and self-evaluation of Affirmative Action achievement is available for review in Mr. McKinney's office. The CMS, principal or his/her designee oversees all procedures dealing with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If there are any questions or concerns, contact the principal's office.

No Child Left Behind Act (2415)

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (a federal law) requires school districts, if asked, to disclose the name, address and telephone listing of every Governor Livingston High School student to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning for the purpose of military recruitment. If families do not want this information revealed, parents of minors and students 18 years and older must request in writing that Governor

Livingston High School not disclose this information.

Pupil Records (8330)

The Board of Education believes that information about individual pupils must be compiled and maintained in the interest of the pupil's educational welfare and advancement. The Board will strive to balance the pupil's right to privacy against the district's need to collect, retain, and use information about individual pupils and groups of pupils. The Board authorizes the establishment and maintenance of pupil files that include only those records mandated by law, rules of the State Board of Education, and authorized administrative directive and those records permitted by this Board. No liability shall be attached to any member, officer, or employee of this Board of Education for the furnishing of pupil records in accordance with law and rules.

Drugs and Alcohol (5133)

The Board of Education recognizes that the misuse of drugs by any pupil seriously impedes that pupil's education and threatens the welfare of the entire school community. The Board is committed to the prevention of drug abuse and the rehabilitation of drug users by educational means, but will take necessary and appropriate steps to protect the school community from harm and from exposure to drugs.

"Drugs" means alcoholic beverages, controlled dangerous substances as defined at N.J.S.A. 24:21-2, anabolic steroids, or any chemical or chemical compound that releases vapors or fumes causing a condition of intoxication, inebriation, excitement, stupefaction, or dulling of the brain or nervous system, including, but not limited to, glue containing a solvent having the property of releasing toxic vapors or fumes as defined at N.J.S.A. 2A:170-25.9.

"Drug Abuse" means the consumption or use of any drug for purposes other than for the treatment of sickness or injury as prescribed or administered by a person duly authorized by law to treat sick and injured human beings.

The Board prohibits the use, possession, and/or distribution of any drug on school premises, at any event away from the school premises that is sponsored by this Board, and on any transportation vehicle provided by the Board. Pupils suspected of being under the influence of drugs will be identified, evaluated, and reported in accordance with law. A pupil who uses, possesses, distributes or is under the influence of a drug, on or off school premises, will be subject to discipline, which will be graded to the severity of the offense and shall include suspension, expulsion and/or exclusion from school activities. The pupil will be reported to appropriate law enforcement personnel and the

CORE Team. Incidents of drug involvement will also be reported to the Commissioner on the state-approved form.

Any student suspected of involvement with drugs and/or alcohol may be required to undergo a medical examination. The medical examination shall include the following:

- examination by a physician
- monitored urine screening and chain of custody
- any additional medical test deemed necessary by the physician
- a note indicating the student is/is not physically and mentally able to return to school.

Results of a urine screen are considered positive when:

- a positive diagnosis is obtained;
- a negative diagnosis indicating an atypical specimen resulting from water dilution or other tampering is received from the laboratory;
- student refuses to give a urine sample;
- student does not give a urine sample within the two-hour time allotment following the report of possible substance use.

The consequences for positive results/ or possession of drug/alcohol use are outlined below:

Any student for whom there is a positive diagnosis from the medical examination indicating that the student was under the influence of, or in possession of drugs and/or alcohol in school or at a school function will be subject to the following:

- 1st offense - parent/guardian meeting with administration
 - a five (5) day out-of-school suspension
 - followed by 5 school days exclusion from extra-curricular activities
- 2nd offense - parent/guardian meeting with administration
 - a ten (10) day out-of-school suspension followed by 20 school days exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities
- 3rd offense - parent/guardian meeting with administration
 - a ten (10) day out-of school suspension and recommendation by the principal to the superintendent for a hearing for expulsion
 - followed by 35 school days exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities

NOTE: Exclusion from extra-curricular activities will carry over, if necessary, to the following school year. A pupil's exclusion from participation in extracurricular

activities include all sports, student clubs or organizations, musical groups, dances, class activities, proms, trips and graduation.

Identification and Remediation of Pupils Who Distribute Drugs

A pupil found to have distributed drugs in violation of law and Board policy will be reported to the principal or his/her designee, the CORE team/Child Study Team, student assistance counselor, and appropriate law enforcement officers, and is subject to discipline in accordance with this policy.

The determination whether a student who possesses small amounts of a drug has intentions of distributing it will be made following the guidelines used by law enforcement officials.

Penalties for distribution of drugs

- 1st offense
 - parent/guardian meeting with administration
 - a ten (10) day out-of school suspension
 - followed by 35 school days exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities

- 2nd offense
 - parent/guardian meeting with administration
 - out-of-school suspension and a hearing for expulsion consideration

NOTE: Exclusion from extra-curricular activities will carry over, if necessary, to the following school year. A pupil's exclusion from participation in extracurricular activities include all sports, student clubs or organizations, musical groups, dances, class activities, proms, trips and graduation.

Voluntary Student Request for Assistance

Whenever a student voluntarily seeks help for a drug or alcohol use pattern through a staff member, the staff member shall:

1. Reinforce the student's actions by expressing approval of a decision to seek help and indicate concern for the student.
2. Indicate at the beginning of the conference that what is told to the student assistance counselor which relates to the request for assistance shall be kept confidential consistent with the law (42 C.F.R.2; N.J.A.C. 6:3-6.6; N.J.A.C. 6:29-9.3 (b) 2).
3. Offer immediate help to the student through the office of the Student Assistance Counselor.
4. If the student is reluctant to go to the student assistance counselor alone, the staff member shall offer to go with the student to the student assistance counselor's office and attend the initial conference with the individual and the

student assistance counselor, if possible and appropriate. All students are eligible for services through the student assistance program.

Legal Liability of School and Medical Personnel

School personnel are held safe-harmless when reporting drug abuse incidents under the following: N.J.S.A 2A:62a-4, 18A:40A-13, 18A:40A-14.