

BIGELOW MIDDLE SCHOOL

GENERAL SCHOOL POLICIES AND INFORMATION

SCHOOL HOURS AND ATTENDANCE

School hours for students are from **8:15 A.M.** until **2:45 P.M.** except on Tuesdays when school dismisses at **2:00 P.M.** It is advisable to arrive a few minutes earlier so as not to be late. *In order to provide adequate teacher supervision, students may not enter the hallways before 8:00 a.m. unless they have a pass or an administrator's permission. Early arrivals should wait in the Cafeteria until the hallways are open at 8:00 a.m.*

In order to report an absence, please be sure to call our attendance number at: **617-559-6835** and include in your message your child's name, homebase room number, team and date of absence. (Do not use Bigelow's main number for this purpose.) You may call that number 24 hours a day. Bigelow's voice mail is also operating twenty-four hours a day.

When students return from an absence, they must bring a note from home, signed by a parent or guardian, giving the reason for the absence.

Please call to report absences to the main office when:

- It is due to a religious holiday;
- An absence will extend beyond a school holiday;
- The absence will be long-term.

TARDY

Tardy to School: The school day begins at 8:15 a.m. Students arriving after 8:15 a.m. should report directly to the office for a Pass. They will be marked tardy and given appropriate consequences. A written note from a parent or guardian must accompany a request for an excused tardiness. Repeated tardiness will result in detention, and parents will be notified.

Early Dismissal: Students with early dismissal requests (dental or medical appointments) must bring a note to the main office before the first class, signed by a parent or guardian that includes the dismissal time. The student will then receive a dismissal Pass. At the designated dismissal time, the student should show his/her teacher the Pass and then report to the Main Office. A parent or guardian must come into the office to pickup the student. No student will be released without a parent/guardian's accompaniment.

Personal Messages/Dropping off Items for Student:

In an effort to eliminate inconvenient classroom interruptions, Bigelow uses a "message board system" for informing students of personal messages or items received from parents during the school day. When a parent calls with a message or drops off an item, a note with the child's name will be posted on the "message board" outside the office. The child should bring this note to a secretary in the office to receive his/her message or item. It is the student's responsibility to check this message board on their way to lunch or between classes, especially if they anticipate receiving a message or item. At the end of the day, if a student has not retrieved his/her note on the message board, only then will the office call into the classroom to inform the student of the message or item.

Tardy to Class: A student who is late to class must present a pass from the staff member who detained him or her. If the student is late for class and does not have a pass, he or she is admitted to class and must report to that classroom teacher after school or make appropriate arrangements with the teacher for resolving the problem of Tardy.

Breakfast and Lunch: Breakfast is served in the Cafeteria each morning beginning at 7:45 a.m. There are three lunch shifts each day during fourth period. Selections of hot and cold lunches are served in the Cafeteria or students may bring their own lunch. The cost of lunch is \$3.25. Snacks are also available for an additional fee. All students have lunch accounts - they may pay with cash or by charging their account. Parents may deposit funds in their child's lunch account online at www.newton.k12.ma.us/foodservices/. Applications for free and reduced rates are distributed on the first day of school. No food is to be eaten outside the cafeteria without permission.

ADULT VISITORS AND STUDENT GUESTS

Adult visitors to the school should report to the main office staff upon entering the building. There is a visitor sign in/out log in the main office. Please sign in and obtain your visitor pass.

Students may bring another student to visit our school on special occasions. Students can get a visitor form from their guidance counselor which should be signed by teachers several days before the visit. Once signed by teachers, the form must be submitted to the Assistant Principal for final approval. Visitors from schools that are in session on the day of the visit must also have written permission from the sending school. Please note that the school reserves the right to limit these visits.

DANCES AT BIGELOW

Occasional all-school dances with a disk jockey are held at Bigelow. The eighth grade has its own farewell event in June. Tickets are sold in advance ONLY and only Bigelow students are allowed to attend. Dances begin at 6:30 P.M. and end at 9:30 P.M. Students must stay until the end of the dance unless they are picked up by a parent. Students are not allowed to walk home from the school dance. Any student who leaves a dance early will not be allowed re-entry. All school rules and policies apply to students during dances. Students who are absent or suspended on the day of a dance cannot attend the dance. The dances are for Bigelow students only.

NO SCHOOL DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER

School will be closed in cases of extreme weather conditions when the safety of our students is jeopardized. On stormy days the school asks that parents use their own judgment as to conditions on the way to school. No school announcements will be broadcast over the following radio and television stations: WBZ (1030 AM), WRKO (680 AM), Newton Cable TV, Channels 4, 5, 7, and 56. You may also call 617-559-9699 to

hear if school is cancelled or has a delayed opening or check the Newton Public School website: www.newton.k12.ma.us.

VACATIONS

In recent years an increasing number of parents have taken their children out of school to go on family vacations. Although we understand the constraints and pressures placed on families regarding this issue, we must stress that taking children out of school is disruptive to a child's education. It is especially important that students are present during MCAS testing periods. We urge parents to make every effort to plan their vacation in such a manner as to avoid this problem. Teachers are not required to provide advance assignments or study aids for a student absent due to an extended trip. Students missing school due to such trips are expected to attend the BAC after school in the library until all work is caught up promptly. Parents must notify the main office if they plan to take their child out of school for any reason.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE

Each grade is divided into teams of students and teachers. Teams are the heart of the middle school structure. They allow teachers to get to know their students well and to be responsive to their developmental needs. Staff can readily confer on curriculum projects, as well as educational plans for individual students. Sixth graders will be on two-person or a four person team. Seventh and eighth graders will be on a four person team. Team teachers include a math, science, social studies, language arts, and special education teacher. A guidance counselor and an administrator are members of the team as well.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All Bigelow Middle School extracurricular activities operate under the umbrella of the Triple E Program: Excellence, Enrichment, and Exploration.

Clubs and Intramural Sports - Club activities appeal to a wide range of student interests. They vary with each semester. Clubs and intramural sports are open to students. Examples of programs that have been offered in the past include: *Yearbook, Math Team, Computers, Jazz Band, Chess, Tennis, CAD Cam, Community Service Club, Senior Citizen Partnership, Peer Tutoring, A.M. Basketball, Drama Club, Video Club, Student Council* and *Mock Trial*. In addition, the Triple E program includes musical and theatrical productions. Special Grade 6 activities are also provided. Please contact the Triple E Director at 617-559-6800 with any questions. The list of EEE offerings is in the Bigelow website.

Interscholastic Sports - The athletic program is open to 7th and 8th graders, except for track and cross-country, which are open to all students. School teams include: baseball, boys and girls basketball, cross-country, football, lacrosse, boys and girls soccer, softball, and track. Each season is eight weeks long and consists of up to 12 games or meets, depending on the sport.

NEWTON COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Newton Community Education offers after school courses for a nominal fee. Please contact Newton Community Education at 617-559-6999 with any questions.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Bigelow has high academic expectations for all students. Students are expected to earn As, Bs, or Cs. Should a student not achieve to these expectations, then support is provided during extension periods and/or after school. Students are expected to do well or may be required to go to our after-school homework program. If a student is experiencing difficulty, his/her team teachers and guidance counselor will contact the student and his/her parents/guardian to discuss a plan to help the student succeed.

METCO

The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) is a state-funded educational program involving the enrollment of children from Boston and Springfield to public school systems in surrounding suburban metropolitan communities. The initiative for the Program can be traced to the concern for quality education in the African-American community, as demonstrated in the Boston Chapter of the NAACP. In 1963, the NAACP's Education Committee challenged the Boston School Committee on educational policies, including the racial imbalance of the schools. Subsequently, legislation was filed making imbalance illegal and penalizing school systems by withdrawing state appropriations until suitable plans to alleviate racial imbalance were approved by the State Department of Education. The Boston Public Schools were among the entities penalized. Furthermore, suburban residents realized that their children were inadequately educated as well because of racial isolation. This combination of concerns resulted in the establishment of the METCO Program.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Students who are English Language Learners receive sheltered English instruction in the ELL classroom with native language support as needed. Gradually, they are integrated into the regular education classroom with the support of native language and/or ELL aides. The goal of the **ELL** program is the acquisition of English language competency to promote both social and academic progress. This includes the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English to a level, which will allow for successful mainstreaming in subject area classrooms, as well as the acquisition of basic concepts in math, science, and social studies. Furthermore, the **ELL** program seeks to promote multi-cultural sensitivity through the school community and successful adjustment of **ELL** students to U.S. culture in the classroom, the school, and the community. Students are taught English through a content-based approach. The curriculum follows that of the mainstream English and social studies classes as closely as possible in order to facilitate students' integration into mainstream classes. In addition, academic support in the native language is provided as needed.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

Title IX and Section 504 - Federal law prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or disability in educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources (617-559-6005) and the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Services (617-559-6025) have been designated as the employees responsible for coordinating the school system's efforts to

implement these non-discriminatory policies. Inquiries or grievances having to do with sex discrimination or discrimination because of a disability (Section 504) may be referred to the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Services. Inquiries may also be made to the Director, Office for Civil Rights, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington D.C., 20201.

TESTING AT BIGELOW

Students in our school experience formal testing in four settings: quizzes, tests and exams in their classes; citywide tests; and state-mandated assessment tests.

Students take the MCAS test (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System), which is administered annually in March and May. MCAS aims to measure a broad range of skills, knowledge, and processes in reading, math, science, and writing. Results are reported by the state.

Information that we gain as a result of testing gives us an opportunity to assess student progress, enables us to develop curriculum which most fully supports student needs, and permits us most effectively to tailor individual education plans.

CHAPTER 766

The Massachusetts Special Education Law, Chapter 766, requires schools to provide a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment to students who, because of a disability, are unable to progress effectively. The disability may be autism, a developmental delay, or an intellectual, sensory, neurological, emotional, communication, physical, specific learning, or health impairment or combination thereof that requires specially designed instruction or related services to enable the student to make effective progress and have access to the curriculum.

A student can be referred for evaluation for special education by a parent or a member of the school staff. The purpose of an evaluation is to gather comprehensive information to explain why the student is not progressing effectively. Based on the results of the evaluation, an interdisciplinary collaborative TEAM, consisting of the student's parents and school staff, determine eligibility for services and, if appropriate, develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP identifies a student's special education needs and describes the services the school should provide to meet these needs. The responsibility of the evaluation TEAM is to ensure that each student receives an appropriate educational program. Evaluation, program, and placement decisions require the written consent of the student's parent or guardian. The Newton Public Schools supports the implementation of positive behavioral interventions. Schools should provide supports and interventions to assist students to acquire pro-social, adaptive behaviors and extinguish maladaptive behaviors. Teams should teach functional skills as replacements for problem behaviors.

School teams should develop behavior intervention plans for providing positive behavioral supports for students through the process of conducting a functional behavioral assessment.

In rare cases, schools may need to administer physical restraint of children. Physical restraint should only be used in emergency situations with extreme caution after other less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate. School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

- a. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from imminent serious, physical harm; and
- b. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint.

TUTORING, HOME OR HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION

Parents of students who, in the judgment of the child's physician, will have to be absent from school or in the hospital for health or safety reasons for a period of not less than ten school days may request home or hospital instruction. These services may also be provided for students who are chronically ill for recurrent periods of less than fourteen days each with written documentation from the child's physician. To obtain home or hospital instruction, parents must contact their child's counselor and provide the requested written documentation from the physician. Home and hospital instructions are provided under Chapter 766. (See Chapter 766 regulation, Section 502.7 Mass. Department of Education, September 1991.)

Only in cases of home or hospital instruction are Bigelow staff allowed to provide outside of school tutoring for Bigelow students.

Newton's policy on tutoring and testing prohibits Newton Public School employees from accepting payment for private tutoring or testing of students in the school in which the employee works, unless it is for home/hospital instruction as described above.

PARENTS ADVISORY COUNCIL (PAC)

The PAC is an organization of parents of children with special educational needs, parents of typical children, special education staff, and interested members of the community. Chapter 766 requires that every school district establish a PAC, "to advise the school committee on matters that pertain to the education, health and safety of children with special needs." The role of the PAC is to ensure that the local school department is responsive to the needs of children receiving special education services. PAC members also offer parent-to-parent support, advice and information about obtaining quality special education and related services. Parents can call the school for the name and number of Bigelow's PAC resource parent. They can also contact the Pupil Services Offices, 617-559-6025, to obtain names of PAC officers, and to put their name on the PAC mailing list to receive notices about meetings and other events.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Out-of-District placements for students who wish to attend a school in Newton other than his/her district school are limited. Such placements are made on a space available basis only. Please call the Assistant Superintendent's Office at 617-559-6115 for information. Students who receive acceptance for Out-of-District placement must remain in the school selected or file for out-of-district placement at the appropriate time.

STATE PUPIL RECORDS POLICY

The pupil records policy mandated by the state is in effect at Bigelow Middle School. Regulations have been published by the Massachusetts Department of Education and are available to parents and students through the school. Regulations call for the securing of records and protection of student privacy.

POLICY ON RESEARCH

The office of Curriculum and Instruction regularly conducts studies in areas such as reading, math, early childhood education and high school follow-up. From time to time we have requests from people outside the schools to conduct research in the schools. Our criteria in such cases are: (1) Is it worthwhile from an educational and professional point of view? (2) Will the project take a reasonable amount of class time or teacher time? (3) Is the privacy of the student protected? Parental permission is sought in special cases involving testing or interviewing of children. The office of Curriculum and Instruction screens all requests for research in the schools.

TRAFFIC AT BIGELOW MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bigelow Middle School is located on a busy corner. Please use extra caution when dropping-off and picking-up children by car at the school. Drive slowly and yield to pedestrians. The safety of our children is paramount!

We encourage students who live near the school to safely walk or ride a bike to school.

When transporting children to and from the school by automobile, it is important to obey all traffic signs and parking regulations in the area. In particular:

- Please drop-off and pick-up students in the live parking zone on the **right hand** side of Park Street **only**. Please pull over to the curb and pull as far forward as possible along Park Street. Drivers should not leave their vehicles.
- Please **do NOT** park on the left hand side of Park Street to pick-up or drop-off. It is marked "No Parking."
- Please **do NOT** stop in the middle of the street to drop-off or pick-up students. This blocks the flow of traffic and is unsafe.
- Please **do NOT** block the entrance to driveways or parking lots. Be respectful of our neighbors' property and access.
- Please **do NOT** park in the designated bus pick-up zone on Vernon St.
- Please respect the speed limits posted in the school zone.
- Please park in the handicapped parking spots in front of the school **only** if you have handicapped tags.
- Please inform all family members and caregivers who pick-up or drop-off children at Bigelow of these procedures.

MESSAGES FROM THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND SCHOOL NURSE

Physicals - All entering sixth grade students (as well as any new students) are required to have a routine health examination.

Parents are asked to have their child examined by their private physician and to bring a copy of the examination printout to the health office. Parents who are unable to meet this requirement should discuss the matter with the school nurse as soon as possible.

Sports Physicals - According to Massachusetts State Law, any student who plans to participate on his/her school sport team must have a physical exam performed within the year prior to the start of the sport season.

The physical exam for athletic participation should be done by your private physician. A copy of this exam must be submitted to the school nurse prior to the start of the sport. The sports physical is part of the comprehensive health care received by a student from his/her health care provider. Your health care provider's familiarity with your family history and child's past medical history is important in an assessment for sports participation.

If meeting the requirement for a sport's physical creates a financial hardship please call the Health Department for assistance during the summer.

Medication Policy - The safe, appropriate and effective use of medication by students requires good communication between parents and the school. Every attempt should be made to give medications before or after school hours. However, if medication needs to be given in the school, the school nurse is responsible for their administration. Medication can not be given without the completion of all required paperwork. The full medication policy is provided in the back of this handbook.

Immunization - According to state regulations: **NO student will be allowed entry into the school unless he or she is fully immunized according to the requirements set by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.**

This includes a second dose of measles vaccine at entry to seventh grade. Laboratory evidence of immunity will be acceptable in lieu of the booster dose.

Please refer to the immunization memo in this handbook and to the Newton Public Schools' Citywide *Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* booklet for further information about school policies in general.

TELEPHONE CALLS

If you want to speak with teachers on the telephone, simply call the school (617-559-6800) and leave a message with your home/work numbers. Our teachers will return your calls as promptly as possible. Teachers also often initiate calls to you to inform, to commend, or to discuss a problem.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

1. **Verbal Reminder**

Teachers should talk to the student privately and warn him/her that inappropriate behavior will lead to a detention.

2. Teacher Detention

- a. Detention with teacher that day or the next day if parents cannot be notified or if there is a valid scheduling conflict.
- b. A note or call home from the teacher should follow all detentions.

3. Detention Hall

For infractions of specific rules in the halls or common spaces in the school, teachers should inform the student and submit a "green sheet" to the office. These rules are:

- Excessive Tardiness.
- No running or horseplay
- No use of cell phones, iPods, or other electronic devices. (Cell phones may be used after school.)
- Being out of class without a pass.

Students who receive a "green sheet" will be assigned to a detention at the weekly detention hall.

4. Student Sent to the Office

- a. If the problematic behavior persists, the teacher may send the student to the office. The Assistant Principal or Principal will investigate the situation and determine an appropriate consequence, such as an office detention or conference with the teacher and/or parent. Information about this consequence will be made available to the teacher in the office.

The Assistant Principal or Principal will call home to speak to the parent. If the teacher has not already spoken to the parent about the problematic behavior, he or she should call home as well.

- b. For serious offenses or repeated problematic behavior, suspension from school may be a consequence. For violations of a few specific rules, expulsion may be a consequence. (See *Students Rights and Responsibilities Handbook*.)

5. Serving the Detention

Students are expected to serve the detention on the day it is assigned unless they cannot reach a parent or if there is a valid scheduling conflict.

In this case, the student is expected to serve the detention on the following academic day, except for Tuesdays. It is the student's responsibility to inform parent(s) about a detention.

Frequently asked questions

"HOW WILL I LEARN ABOUT MY CHILD'S ACADEMIC PROGRESS FROM SCHOOL?"

Report Cards: Report cards are issued three times a year, at the end of each term. Achievement grades are reported using the standard letter grades: Excellent (A, A-), Above Average (B+, B, B-), Average (C+, C, C-), Below Average (D+, D, D-), and Failure (F).

Progress Reports: Progress reports are issued three times a year in the middle of each term. They are sent home with all students for all team subjects in the first and second terms. In the third term, they are sent home only with selected students who have dropped one full grade or are in danger of receiving

less than a C- for the term, or have made significant improvement.

Conferences: Parent conferences are held in the early winter. These conference days are scheduled for Tuesday afternoons. Conferences at other times may be requested through the guidance department. Individual teachers should be contacted directly.

Newsletters: The PTO Newsletter is an important vehicle for communication between school and home. Newsletters will be emailed every 2 weeks, on Fridays. We urge you to keep this publication.

"WHO DO I CONTACT IF MY CHILD OR I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT AN ACADEMIC ISSUE?"

Students are encouraged to speak directly to their teachers about homework assignments, test, behavioral and academic expectations. It is the student's responsibility to seek extra help. If a student needs help from a teacher, he/she should get a pass from the teacher to meet with the teacher at an arranged time.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's academic progress, you should contact the teacher by email or voice mail. If you would like a meeting with your child's team, please contact your guidance counselor to arrange this time.

"TO WHOM CAN I SPEAK ABOUT MY CHILD'S LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ISSUES?"

Guidance counselors are assigned to each team. They are frequently the link between parents and teams. They are available to help with scheduling issues, individual education plans, social and emotional issues, and learning difficulties. The eighth grade counselor also reviews the high school course plan for each student. The guidance counselors attend all team meetings and have a familiarity with the students and curriculum on their assigned team. You should call your child's counselor if you have concerns in one of the above-listed areas.

"WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A STUDENT VIOLATES A BEHAVIORAL RULE?"

In general, teachers deal with minor discipline issues within the classroom. Physical aggression, inappropriate language, disrespectful behavior, harassment, and hallway or cafeteria discipline issues are referred to the assistant principal with a written incident report. Consequences may include detention or suspension with a parent conference scheduled, if necessary. Parents are always contacted about a suspension. Teachers and guidance counselors are informed about suspensions/detentions. For infractions of some basic rules, students may be assigned to a weekly detention hall. Students will be notified of its time and place.

"WHO DO I CONTACT ABOUT PROBLEMS REGARDING THE BUS?"

Problems involving scheduling, routes, or overcrowding should be addressed in writing or by calling the Transportation Office at the Education Center (617-559-9051). The school reinforces appropriate bus behavior. If inappropriate behavior occurs, please report the incident to the Assistant Principal (617-559-

6800). We will follow up to resolve the issue. Disciplinary actions may include warnings, detentions, and suspension of bus privileges. Because of the difficulty in monitoring bus behavior, parental reinforcement of appropriate bus behavior is particularly important. If problems involve behavioral issues, please call the assistant principal.

"TO WHOM DO I SPEAK IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT CURRICULUM?"

If you have a question or concern about the curriculum in a subject area, you should first speak to the teacher to ensure that the information you have about the curriculum is accurate. Further questions or concerns should be addressed to the city-wide curriculum coordinators. Below is a list of the area coordinators who can be contacted at the Education Center on Walnut Street at: 617-559-6000:

English:	Ann Mikulski
Bilingual/ESL:	Jody Klein
Fine Arts:	Richard King
Math:	Mary Eich
METCO:	Lisa Reed
Physical Ed/Health:	Gwen Smith
Science:	Jenny Craddock
Social Studies:	Lucia Sullivan
World Language:	Alison Mulligan

"TO WHOM DO I SPEAK IF I HAVE A PROBLEM WITH AN INDIVIDUAL STAFF PERSON?"

If a problem arises with an individual staff person, you should attempt to speak to the individual directly. If there are further concerns, you should set up a meeting with the assistant principal or principal.

"WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO DEAL WITH COMMUNITY-WIDE SCHOOL ISSUES?"

Bigelow School Council: This advisory group to the principal is made up of parents, teachers, one community member and the principal. It has worked on the school's core values, educational goals, school improvement plan and budget. Eight meetings are held and noted on our school calendar; the first ten minutes are open to public comment.

Bigelow Parent - Teacher - Organization: The Bigelow PTO helps Bigelow Middle School and supports many school projects and activities. It has provided funds for scholarships, creative arts programs, technology, and more. We highly value the PTO's suggestions and advice, and urge parents to be involved and active in this organization.