

Student Handbook 2007 - 2008

Black River Middle School Home of the Bulldogs

**Route 513
Chester, NJ 07930
(908) 879-6363**

This Student Planner belongs to:

Name: _____

Advisory Teacher: _____

Grade: _____

WELCOME TO BLACK RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Black River Middle School community welcomes all students to an exciting year of learning and working together. This handbook includes guidelines for school expectations and answers basic questions about our school.

As Principal of the Black River Middle School, I am committed to helping students advance as life-long learners. The school community of professional leaders, parents, and students will accomplish school goals through the pursuit of academic achievement, intellectual competence, social skills, independent effort, personal responsibility, and respect for the individual. All this, while meeting the unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of the rapidly changing teenager, offers a significant challenge for a great school year.

I look forward to getting to know each of you as we learn and have fun together in this exciting year!

Mr. Mullen

GENERAL RULES /REGULATIONS

- School begins promptly at 7:45 a.m. and ends at 2:25 p.m. Please be on time!
- Be courteous and attentive to adults and peers.
- Be responsible for personal and school property.
- Be a leader. Contribute and cooperate in class.
- Be concerned. Always be mindful of others.
- Be industrious. Prepare your work; do it well.
- Be on time to school and to class.
- Students are not permitted to leave school grounds without office permission.
- Refrain from fighting, pushing, horseplay, or any form of physical contact.
- Lockers are school property and may be subject to searches at the discretion of the administrators.
- Students remaining after school must have written parental permission.
- Students who are absent from school may not participate in after-school activities on the day of their absence.
- Gum chewing is not permitted.
- Walkmans, Gameboys, iPods, and the like may not be used during school. Expensive

equipment brought to school is at the student's own risk.

- Students are prohibited from using cell phones or pagers during school. Students are not permitted to use pay phones during school hours. Students may call home from the office for emergencies or lunches.

BLACK RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

All members of the professional staff, parents/guardians, and students are directly responsible for positive behavior in our school. The goal is to ensure an environment in which desirable behavior is encouraged through positive support. Black River Middle School students are frequently advised of community and class expectations for responsible behavior in all areas of the school, on school grounds, and at all school functions whether they are in school or in a non-school location.

The Black River Middle School community is committed to fostering academic success and peace in the classroom. As a direct result of student effort and parent and teacher support, Black River Middle School students learn discipline as part of their regular instructional program. Our purpose is to ensure that students understand the positive and negative effects of their behavior and to assist them in making responsible decisions.

Adult interventions are focused on helping the student regain self-control and increase skills. Teachers work with their students each day to motivate feelings of hopefulness and confidence in the belief that they are and can learn to be skilled and responsible. Opportunities to learn and practice positive behaviors are embedded in daily success and the consequences of unacceptable behaviors.

Parent/guardian cooperation and support is essential to ensuring all Black River Middle School students the right to learn without a pattern of interruptions and to socialize at school without concern for aggressive or hostile actions. The staff continually strives to help students recognize conflict as part of daily life. Class and school rules are in place to guide the skills needed to develop and maintain positive relationships and personal confidence.

The Black River Middle School approach to discipline emphasizes prevention by establishing clear expectations and learning conflict resolution skills for collaborative problem solving. Teachers use direct instruction to develop interpersonal

communication and create classroom communities of high achievers and confident learners. Our goal is to provide Black River Middle School students the most nurturing and supportive atmosphere possible.

Major Offenses

The following violations are considered major offenses and will thus be handled by the school administration. A stricter consequence will be imposed by the administration as deemed appropriate based on the severity of the behavior.

- Fighting
- Destroying property
- Abusive, vulgar, or threatening language to a teacher, staff member, or other student
- Openly defiant or disrespectful to a teacher or substitute
- Skipping school or class
- Stealing
- Lying
- Forging notes and/or other forms
- Possession of sexually explicit material
- Possession or use of tobacco, fireworks, weapons, illegal drugs, and look-alike substances or objects
- All acts classified as criminal by the laws of the county and state.

Students suspended from school will not be permitted to participate in after-school activities, including sports, on the day and/or days of the suspension. Furthermore, students suspended from school may not be permitted to participate in future activities such as sports and school trips at the discretion of the principal.

HOMEWORK

Homework is an important part of learning. It prepares students for learning as they read, write, and study material already presented in class. While teachers may have slightly different requirements, parents can generally expect homework to be given Monday-Friday for a maximum of 60-90 minutes. Your child should also be prepared to work on long-term projects and assignments. It is the student's responsibility to complete all homework. When students are absent due to family vacations, teachers are not required to provide assignments BEFORE the child leaves.

Homework is posted to the Chester website (www.chester-nj.org) by 4 p.m. daily; click on the

BRMS eboard to access it. If a student is absent due to illness, he/she can check the eboard site, and upon return to school, seek extra help during the DEAR period.

Homework: It is the Teacher's Responsibility to:

- Design homework that is relevant to material presented in class.
- Design homework that broadens, deepens, or reinforces the student's knowledge.
- Not use homework for punitive reasons.
- Evaluate and provide feedback on assignments.
- Use discretion to decide the type, number, and length of assignments.

(These guidelines are suggestive, rather than delimiting or mandatory, and should be based on the level of ability.)

Homework: It is the Student's Responsibility to:

- Record all assignments in the agenda planner.
- Understand the assignment.
- Complete the assignment as outlined or explained by the teacher.
- Ask questions of the teacher.
- Complete work on time and legibly written.
- Determine a reasonable schedule with teacher and parental guidance.
- Accept that purposeful home assignments are part of the school program.
- Do his/her best work on assignments at home and in the classroom.

Homework: It is the Parent's Responsibility to:

- Establish a time and place in the home for the child to work on homework each day.
- Assist the child with homework when necessary without actually doing the assignment for the child.
- Check the child's homework to be sure it is completed each day.
- Agree that homework is a priority and act accordingly.

EXTENDED TRIPS / VACATIONS

Notify the nurse of any extended trip or vacation plans. The parent assumes responsibility to ensure that the student's educational requirements are met.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports serve as a short-term aid to help students to reorganize their schoolwork. Progress reports are mailed home in October, December, February, and May. Parents are urged to contact the teacher(s) directly at 879-6363 to further discuss the report.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are completed and issued four times per year: November, January, March, and June. Report cards are distributed in school in report card envelopes. Parents may keep the report card; however, the signed report card envelope must be returned to the student's advisory teacher the following day.

EMERGENCY CLOSING

In the event of a delayed opening, school will begin at 9:45 a.m.

School-related closings and delays will be communicated by the superintendent through the district's automated calling system. Your phone number must be on file at your child's school in order to receive a call. Therefore, please be sure to complete and return the requested emergency information that is distributed at the beginning of the school year.

DISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the Chester Township School District to not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, ancestry, national origin, or social or economic status in its educational programs or activities and employment policies as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and N.J.A.C. 6:4-1.1 et seq. Inquiries regarding compliance may be directed to Carmine Ciriaco, Affirmative Action Officer, Chester Township Schools, Chester, NJ 07930.

DRESS GUIDELINES

Parents and students are responsible for proper attire. Selections should reflect awareness of health and safety while keeping the ultimate goal of education in mind. Clothing that creates a needless

distraction will not be permitted. The following items are considered to be inappropriate:

- Skirts, shorts, and pants worn below the hips.
- See-through clothing that exposes undergarments or anatomy.
- Short-shorts and mini skirts.
- Tops with spaghetti straps.
- Tube tops, halter tops, and tops that expose the midriff may only be worn under a covering shirt that is buttoned.
- Tops or dresses with inappropriate neck and back lines.
- Pajamas/slippers
- Undergarments worn as outer clothing.
- Low riding pants or shorts that expose the midriff and/or undergarments.
- T-shirts with lewd or inappropriate messages.
- No hats are to be worn inside the building.
- Bicycle pants/spandex clothing is not allowed.
- Shoes with wheels are not permitted.
- Jewelry that can be viewed as a weapon, such as a bracelet with spikes, is not allowed.

JEWELRY POLICY DURING GYM

Students are not permitted to wear jewelry of any type during gym class for the safety and well being of all. Therefore, if a student is considering piercing ears or any other part of the body, then piercing should be planned over the summer or during an extended vacation.

LUNCH (CAFETORIUM)

Students may bring lunch from home or purchase a meal in the cafetorium for \$2.25. All students must report to, and eat their lunch in, the cafetorium.

Students will keep the cafetorium clean and a pleasant place to eat. Students are responsible for:

- Depositing refuse in the proper receptacles.
- Leaving the tables, chairs, and floor clean.

Failure to comply will result in loss of outside privileges.

Individual parties or celebrations (pizza parties, cakes, etc.) are not permitted.

CAFETORIUM REGULATIONS

- Enter and leave the cafetorium at a walk.
- Maintain a single line at each service area.

- Be seated and remain seated at your table until dismissed by the teacher or aide in charge.
- Refrain from unruly behavior.
- Leave the cafetorium only with the permission of a teacher or aide.
- Conversation at lunch tables is permitted and desirable. However, loud and boisterous talk, yelling, screaming, etc. are not acceptable.
- Do not throw any objects.
- The teacher and/or aide on duty are in complete charge. Supervising staff may issue lunch detentions for inappropriate behavior.
- On days when students are allowed outside, proper behavior is expected, or this privilege will be revoked.
- Students are not to take food from the cafetorium.
- Leave the tables, chairs, and floor clean and suitable for use by other students.

PARENT PICK UP/ DROP OFF

Students must be dropped off at the gym entrance no earlier than 7:35 a.m. Afternoon pickup is at 2:25 p.m. at the gym entrance in order to alleviate safety issues in conjunction with the buses. The safety of our students is our primary concern.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Students must ride on their assigned bus to and from school unless transported by their parent. Students are to get on and off the bus at the designated bus stops. **Students may not ride a bus to which they have not been assigned.**

The bus is an extension of the school system, and, as such, the same standards of behavior that apply in a classroom apply on a bus. The driver is in full charge of the bus at all times.

GENERAL BUS CONDUCT RULES

For the safety of all riders, students will adhere to the following rules of conduct and behavior:

- Show respect for the driver at all times.
- Show respect for the other passengers at all times.

While at the bus stop, students will:

- Be on time for the bus.
- Keep at least 6 feet away from the edge of the road when the bus approaches.

- Do not engage in pushing, shoving, ball playing, game playing, or any other activity that could place students in danger of being injured.
- If crossing a road to board the bus, cross in front of the bus and only after the driver signals that it is safe to cross.

While on the bus, students will:

- Behave in an appropriate manner so as not to distract the driver.
- No throwing objects of any sort.
- Remain in assigned seat at all times (no changing of seats).
- Keep head, arms, and legs in the bus, not extended out the window.
- Speak in a reasonable tone of voice. Do not call out to passersby or shout to other passengers.
- Keep the bus clean. No eating, chewing gum, or littering on the bus.
- Fighting, spitting, threatening of other students, and vandalism are strictly prohibited.

Upon departing the bus, students will:

- Remain seated until the bus has completely stopped and the driver has opened the door.
- Cross in front of the bus. Cross only when the driver gives the go ahead.
- Go directly into the school building, to home, or to a previously arranged destination.
- Not push, shove, or engage in any unruly behavior that could endanger other departing passengers.

The Board has authorized principals to allow temporary changes if a parent has a medical emergency. However, this can be done only if the sending and receiving parents of all children involved submit written permission to the building principal.

At all other times children must board and depart the bus only at the stop to which he/she has been assigned.

ITEMS PROHIBITED ON THE BUS

At all times the following are prohibited at the bus stop or on the bus:

- Cigarettes or other smoking items
- Combustible materials such as lighters and matches
- Weapons of any sort

- Alcohol/drugs
- Any hazardous materials

Possession of any of the above will be reported to the Chester Police.

PENALTIES FOR MISCONDUCT OR VIOLATION OF BUS RULES

A student may be excluded from bus privileges by the building principal for disciplinary reasons. The parent or legal guardian will be required to provide transportation to and from school during the time when bus privileges are revoked. The following penalties will be enforced when students violate the aforementioned rules and procedures:

1st Offense

The driver will fill out a Bus Conduct Report that will be given to the building principal. The principal or designee will assign an in-school punishment to the student. The parent/legal guardian will be notified. If, however, the first offense is serious enough, it may result in suspension of bus privileges, as deemed necessary by the principal. This suspension is normally for three days; however, it may be for up to 10 days.

2nd Offense

The building principal or designee will contact the parent/legal guardian either by phone or in a meeting to alert them to the offense. The student will receive an after-school detention. However, it may result in suspension of bus privileges for seven days or up to 10 days.

3rd Offense

The student will lose his/her privilege for a period of 2-5 days. Additionally, a parent meeting will be required before the student regains bus privileges. In this process the student will be afforded a hearing before the building principal or other supervisor in the principal's absence before the loss of bus privileges occurs. This suspension may not exceed 10 days.

4th and Subsequent Offenses

The student will lose bus privileges for a period of 5-10 school days with additional in-school penalties assigned by the building principal. The parent/guardian will be required to meet with the principal or designee. The student and his parent/guardian will be entitled to a hearing with the principal before the loss of bus privileges occurs. Additionally, the parent/guardian has the right to appeal this penalty to the Superintendent.

Penalties assessed by the principal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Apology to the driver and other students
- Meeting with law enforcement personnel
- Special projects agreed upon by principal and parents

Continued infractions of the rules of bus conduct will result in a hearing before the Board of Education. This could result in a loss of bus privileges for the remainder of the school year.

FIELD TRIPS

The Black River Middle School staff believes that students have much to learn by experiencing the community and the world through meaningful connections to course study. Field trips are designed to enrich the classroom experience. All field trips are supervised by Black River Middle School teachers and are approved by the principal. No student will be denied participation on field trips due to financial need. If a student receives an out-of-school suspension at any time during the school year, future attendance on field trips will be at the discretion of the principal. The following guidelines should be followed when attending a field trip:

Appropriate Dress – The key is to remember the students are representing the school. Therefore, neat, appropriate attire with no obscene slogans or pictures on shirts is expected. In addition, no short-shorts, cutoffs, or bare midriffs are permitted.

School Rules- are in effect at all times during trips.

Facility Rules- Rules of the facility being visited are to be strictly followed.

Bus Company Regulations on Field Trips

1. Bring only an individual snack. No large bags of candy or snacks.
2. No drinks or food on the bus. No carbonated beverages. No glass-bottled beverages.
3. Walkmans are permitted on the bus, but they must be left on the bus when touring the field trip site.
4. The bus driver is not responsible for items lost, stolen, or left on the bus.
5. Boom boxes are not permitted.

Touring

It is expected that students will be attentive listeners when visiting a field trip site. Courteous behavior is expected when guides, teachers, or other site personnel are speaking. Students must remain with their group and group leader unless otherwise instructed.

Tardiness to School

Students are expected to be in school on time. Students who are late must report to the main office to sign in. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. A record of tardiness will be maintained, and detentions will be assigned as deemed necessary.

Students must arrive to school no later than 11:00 a.m. in order to participate in after-school activities, including sports.

Tardiness to Class

Teachers have been directed to see that students arrive to class by the designated time. The schedule of penalties for tardiness to class is as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1 st & 2 nd offense - | Reprimand by teacher |
| 3 rd offense- | Detention with teacher |
| 4 th offense- | Detention with teacher, parents contacted |
| 5 th offense- | Detention with principal |