



*2010 -2011 Belding Middle School
Student Handbook*



MISSION STATEMENT - BELDING AREA SCHOOLS

Belding Area Schools, in partnership with the community, is dedicated to the academic, social and personal growth of all students, so each becomes a contributing member of society.

WELCOME TO BELDING MIDDLE SCHOOL!

The staff of Belding Middle School welcomes you. Many exciting educational and extracurricular opportunities wait you, and we look forward to helping you grow and learn. Our entire staff will make every effort to assist you in any way possible. We are proud of Belding Middle School and its students.

It is important that you become familiar with this student handbook and agenda. Remember, the student handbook contents do not cover every existing situation but only basic, general areas. You and your parent(s) need to read the handbook together and become familiar with it as well as the format of this agenda.

We are looking forward to a great year!

Joel Olson
Principal

Andrew Feuerstein
Assistant Principal

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MEIJER DIGNITY & RESPECT AWARD PROGRAM

During the 2010-2011 school year, Meijer will again be sponsoring the Dignity and Respect Award. Staff will nominate students each month and a random draw of worthy candidates will determine the winner. Monthly winners will receive a framed award certificate and a \$25.00 Meijer Gift Certificate. The annual award winner will receive a framed award certificate, a \$100.00 Meijer Gift Certificate and their name will be engraved on a special plaque and displayed in a prominent location in the school with the heading "Meijer Dignity & Respect Award". This award has been developed as a way to recognize your students for exhibiting the values of dignity and respect in the school environment. This is NOT an award earned by excelling in athletics, academics, music, arts etc. It is truly intended to recognize strength in human relations skills. All middle schools students will be eligible for this award. There are two types of awards that will be given. One will be given to one student at the end of each month and an annual award will be given to one student at the end of the year.

STUDENT HANDBOOK BELDING MIDDLE SCHOOL 2010-2011

Belding Middle School is a Responsible Thinking Process (RTP) school. This means that we believe that all students are responsible for their own actions and must be taught to respect the rights of others. This means they have to learn how to think of ways to get what they want while, at the same time, respecting the rights of others in the school. Teachers have a right to teach and students have a right to learn in a safe environment. Our school strives to create an atmosphere conducive to learning utilizing the principles of safety, pride, dignity, courtesy, and respect in order to meet the educational and development needs of all students. None of the students have a right to disrupt at school, regardless of where they are, especially if they are preventing other students from learning or are threatening the safety and rights of others.

No student is allowed to disrupt in class or anywhere else in school. When they do, they are asked to think about what they are doing and compare their action to the rules or standards of wherever they are. If they persist in breaking the rules, they have lost their right to be where they are and are then assigned to the Responsible Thinking Classroom (RTC), where they stay until they indicate to the teacher that they are willing to follow the rules from wherever they came. The RTC teacher then teaches them how to work out a plan, which they will use to negotiate their return with the person who was in charge of wherever they were disrupting. Students are permitted to go to all other classes and other areas where they've been responsible, such as the library, cafeteria, and recess. The negotiation of the plan is a very important part of this process.

Students who do commit major infractions will be dealt with according to the handbook. We will continue to use the RTC room for infractions that require in-school suspension. We need to be clear and upfront that we will not tolerate disruptions in the RTC room. Disruptive students in RTC/ISS will be given one chance to own and correct their behavior. If they disrupt one more time they will be sent home that day. A parent conference will be needed before the child may return to school.

IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS THE AUTHORITY TO QUESTION BEHAVIOR OF ANY FORM WITHIN THE BUILDING, ON SCHOOL GROUNDS, AND AT SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND DEAL WITH BEHAVIOR ACCORDINGLY EVEN IF THAT BEHAVIOR IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN THIS HANDBOOK. THE BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCE CHART AT THE END OF THE HANDBOOK LISTS SOME - BUT BY NO MEANS ALL - THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING BELDING MIDDLE SCHOOL RULES.

ABSENCES

- **Parents must confirm every absence** by a phone call or note within 24 hours to the attendance line at 794-4426.
- **Absence notes should be brought to the attendance office before school** the day the student returns if a phone call has not been made.
- **Students absent from school four hours or more may not participate** in school related or sponsored **activities on that day**.
- Pre-excused absences can be arranged by contacting the attendance office (794-4426) three days before the absence. If you need to speak with the attendance secretary, call 794-4427 between 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Pre-excused forms are available in the office or on the school website.
- **Absences that remain unexcused after 48 hours** will be **treated as truancy**. Truancies will be made up minute for minute during lunch times and after school.
- **Reminders** to excuse absences will be made using the School Messenger System which places automated phone calls to the student's home number on the day of his/her absence.
- **Parents will be notified - by letter - of absences (whether excused or not excused) at ten days**. At 15 days of absences, parents will be asked to meet with one of the principals to agree on an Attendance Improvement Plan **Chronic absence patterns will be referred to the Ionia County Truancy office.**

ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

Any form of suspension or placement in the RTC/ISS room, greater than 3 hours, within 10 school days of the event will result in the student being ineligible for the activity night. Any form of suspension or placement in the RTC/ISS room, greater than 3 hours on the day of an activity or athletic contest will disqualify the student from that day's activity. Students may not also have overdue Media Center materials (including fines or fees) or past-due fundraiser moneys to participate in end of the year activities including the all-school picnic. Year-end class trips will have their own behavioral and attendance guidelines.

AGENDA

Every student is issued a BMS agenda. Students are required to have this agenda with them in every class every day. The purpose of the agenda is to keep track of assignments and due dates. Also included are four daily hallway passes. Students will not be given a pass out of a classroom without the agenda pass filled in properly and signed by the teacher. If a student's agenda is lost or stolen, it must be replaced. Replacements are available in the office at a cost of \$3.00.

ALCOHOL

Students are not to possess or consume alcohol on school property or at school-sponsored events. Students are prohibited from attending school or school-sponsored activities after having consumed alcohol. Students are also prohibited from possessing or consuming non-alcoholic malt beverages (such as Sharp's, O'Doul's, Kingsbury, and Zing Malt Beverage).

ANIMALS AND PLANTS IN THE SCHOOL

Persons bringing animals into the school must receive prior permission from the building administrator. Live animals, including all vertebrates, invertebrates, and toxic plants such as poison ivy or sumac, may be brought into the classroom for educational purposes. However, neither animals nor toxic plants should be kept overnight at school. While at school, animals must be appropriately housed, humanely cared for and properly handled.

ASSAULTIVE BEHAVIOR (See also “Harassment” Section)

Physical or verbal confrontations will not be tolerated under any circumstances in Belding Middle School. Serious attacks causing injury or verbal attacks threatening bodily harm may result in immediate recommendation for expulsion and a police report will be filed. The following will help define assaults; consult the Behavior Consequence Chart for specific sanctions.

Fighting - Minor

Minor fights are those characterized by pushing, shoving, name-calling, or encouraging/promoting a fight.

Fighting - Major

Major fights are violent confrontations with hair pulling, punching, kicking and/or biting.

The decision whether a fight is a major or minor offense rests solely with the building administration. Further sanctions may come as a result of students not cooperating with adult intervention.

Physical Assaults

Michigan Public Act 104 of 1999 defines “physical assaults” defined as “Intentionally causing or attempting to cause physical harm to another through force or violence.”

Physical Assault Against a school employee, volunteer, or contractor will result in the student being permanently expelled from all Michigan public schools.

By Michigan State Legislature Public Act 102 of 1999 every **student-on-student physical assault** on school property, at any school-sponsored activity, or in any school-related vehicle will result in the offending student being expelled up to 180 days.

Verbal Assaults

Public Act 104 of 1999 also calls for mandatory expulsion up to 180 days for verbal assaults against a school employee, volunteer, or contractor. The definition of a verbal assault is the following:

“Any intentional threat or offer to do bodily injury to another by force, under circumstances which create a well-founded fear of actual harm, coupled with the apparent ability to carry out the act if not prevented.”

ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes its responsibility to provide all students with an environment conducive to the development of their maximum learning potential. We accept the concept of chemical dependency and emotional health problems as treatable conditions and realize that simply excluding those students who are involved cannot solve the problems in our school. We recognize that there are many contributing factors in problems of this nature.

The district shall initiate intervention strategies via the Student Assistant Program under three circumstances: 1) student seeking help; 2) student exhibiting inappropriate unusual, or atypical behavior; or 3) as disciplinary action where the student has been found breaking rules adopted by the Board of Education. It is the policy of the district to refer students to licensed programs or individuals pursuant to the State of Michigan Public Act 368.

ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY/ATHLETIC HANDBOOK

Athletic eligibility is addressed in the Belding Area Schools Athletic Handbook. Any athletic or sports concern should first be addressed to the Belding Area Schools Athletic Director. (794-4957)

BIKES AND MOTORIZED “BIKES”

Bicycles are to be locked in the bike rack on the playground. Motorized bikes are not allowed. BMS is not responsible for damages to, or theft of, bikes brought to school.

BOMB THREATS/ARSON/FALSE ALARMS

The making of bomb threats by students as well as the willful or negligent starting of fires at school or on school property will result in immediate suspension of the student from school for up to ten (10) days pending a formal expulsion hearing with the Board of Education. Further, students are prohibited from causing a false alarm or a false 911 call to be made. All violations will result in a report being filed with appropriate law enforcement officials in addition to school sanctions.

BOOK BAGS/BACK PACKS/GYM BAGS

All bags of this nature are to remain in lockers during the school day. These bags are not to be brought into the classroom as they represent a hindrance to movement in the classrooms as well as in the halls and also represent a potential safety concern in emergency situations.

BULLY BEHAVIOR

Bullying is a form of harassment defined as: The repeated intimidation of others by the real or threatened infliction of physical, verbal, written, electronically transmitted, or emotional abuse, or through attacks on the property of another. It may include, but not be limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs, including ethnically-based or gender based put-downs, extortion of money or possessions, and exclusion from peer groups within school. Our school district is committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all of our students and staff. We believe that a friendly and secure school atmosphere is necessary to promote academic and personal growth.

We will tolerate no form of bullying within the school building, on school grounds, on school-sponsored transportation, or at any school-sponsored activity away from the school. We will intervene when bully behavior comes to our attention, and will enforce rules and consequences when bullying occurs. Consequences will be based on the severity and frequency of the bully behavior. We will also empower students to report bully behavior, particularly threats, violence, and harassment, and to treat others with respect.

CAFETERIA BEHAVIOR & FOOD

Students will act respectfully and show manners when in the cafeteria. Loud voices, eating when not seated, not cleaning up trash, and disrespect for any staff member monitoring the cafeteria will not be tolerated and will result in a referral to the office and possible cleaning of tables and/or floors or lunch detention time.

Identification codes are issued from the office of Food Director for every BMS student at the beginning of the school year for food other than the vending machines. Those students who continually forget their number may have to wait until the line clears in order to purchase food.

Food and drink may only be consumed in the cafeteria or in a classroom by special permission.

CAMPUS SECURITY

For the safety of our students and staff, **ALL** visitors (even parents and former students) must stop and register at the front office and receive a visitor badge. This badge must be worn at all times while in the building and is returned to the front office before exiting. The administration also reserves the right to deny a visitor access to the building if it will be disruptive to staff or students.

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM

Cheating is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated. Cheating is defined as - but not limited to - the following: copying another student's work; looking at another student's paper/test; taking the teacher's answer key; talking during testing; sharing work; using a "crib" sheet; and writing answers so they can be seen during testing.

Plagiarism is taking someone's written (or oral) words and using them as your own without acknowledging the source for the words. This includes taking the work of others from the Internet. Plagiarism is unethical and against the law.

CIGARETTES/TOBACCO PRODUCTS/ LIGHTERS/ ETC.

Students – and adults - are not to possess or use cigarettes, tobacco products, lighters, matches, etc., at school, on school property, at school-sponsored events, or within the Drug Free School zone (an area within 500 feet of school property).

CLASSROOM RULES

Teachers will distribute classroom/team rules. All students must abide by the rules set forth in the classroom as well as the consequences attached to the rules. Students may need to adjust from teacher to teacher on specific rules and requirements.

CLOSING/CANCELLATION

The decision to close or cancel school rests with the superintendent of schools. School closings or cancellations will be broadcast on all area radio and television stations. **In the event of school closing or cancellation, all middle school sporting events and practices are canceled.**

DIRECTORY INFORMATION (RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION ON STUDENTS

Each year the District will provide public notice to students and their parents of its intent to make available, upon request, certain information known as "directory information". The Board designates as student "directory information": a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; photograph; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; or any other information which would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy, if disclosed. It shall be the policy of the Belding Area Schools to release "directory information" to representatives of the armed forces and other agencies, which may request such information.

Parents and adult students may refuse to allow the District to disclose any or all of such "directory information" upon written notification to the District within twenty days after receipt of the District's public notice. Whenever parental consent is required for the inspection and/or release of a student's educational records or for the release of directory information, either parent may provide such consent unless stipulated otherwise by court order. If the student is under the guardianship of an institution, the Superintendent shall appoint a person who has no conflicting interest to provide such written consent. In the absence of any such written objection, the information may be released.

The District may disclose "directory information" on former students without student or parental consent. The Superintendent shall prepare administrative guidelines to ensure that students and parents are adequately informed each year regarding their rights to inspect and review the student's education records; request amendments if the record is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's rights; consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to unauthorized disclosures allowed by the law; file a complaint of District non-compliance with the Department of Education; obtain a copy of the District's policy and administrative guidelines on student records. The Superintendent shall also develop procedural

guidelines for the proper storage and retention of records and for informing District employees of the Federal and State laws concerning student records. No liability shall attach to any member, officer, or employee of this District specifically as a consequence of permitting access or furnishing student records in accordance with this policy and administrative guidelines.

The right to permit disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA) of Michigan law authorized disclosure without consent.

Disclosure is permitted without consent to school officials with legitimate educational or administrative interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent(s)/guardian(s) or student serving on an official committee, such as disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his/her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill her or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school District in which a student has enrolled or intends to enroll as well as to a person(s) specifically required or allowed by State or federal law. Disclosure is also permitted without consent to: any person for research, statistical reporting or planning, provided that no student or parent(s)/guardian(s) can be identified; any person named in a court order; and appropriate persons if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS/PROCEDURES

BMS teachers are expected to create a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning and maintaining order. Individual teachers will distribute and post the rules they have established and teachers will handle many discipline situations in their rooms. Every effort will be made to communicate with parents about disciplinary action; however, it must be kept in mind that one of the primary objectives of BMS is to instill a sense of responsibility in students. Students are expected to communicate with parents regarding the issuance of disciplinary actions. Disciplinary actions include - but are not limited to - the following: detentions (AM or PM), written assignments, cafeteria duty, confinement to the office, learning and/or behavior contracts, in-school and out-of-school suspension from school.

DISRESPECT/FAILURE TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

It is important that all individuals in the middle school show courtesy and respect. When students "talk back," use a disrespectful or sarcastic tone, or refuse to follow directions given by an adult in the building, measures will be taken to correct that behavior.

DRESS CODE

The Student Dress code, and the issue of student dress, are not questions of morality or decency; rather it is recognized that student attire does assist in establishing and maintaining the educational tone of the building as well as helping students in creating a positive, upbeat feeling about themselves and others. Students are expected to dress in neat, clean, safe attire. Any student attire that has a disruptive influence on the educational environment is immodest, unsanitary, or which deviates from the accepted standards of the community and this school, is prohibited. As new clothing styles arrive, the administration will notify parents and students if a given style is inappropriate at school. The following is provided as a guideline for parents and students:

1. Sleeveless shirts are permitted; however, the entire shoulder must be covered (no spaghetti straps or thin underwear type straps.) Additionally, the shirt should be high enough under the arm area that underwear is not visible and/or bare skin cannot be seen.
2. Tops that permit or promote a bare mid-riff or any tops that promote a less-than-modest image are prohibited.
3. Clothing that is derogatory to any group of people or is a “put down” to others (including the person wearing the clothing) is prohibited.
4. The inside seam of shorts must measure at least 5 inches for both men and women. Skirts and dress must be no more than four inches off the ground when kneeling.
5. Clothing that permits or promotes the exposure of underwear, boxer shorts, briefs, shorts, or other under garments is prohibited.
6. Saggy, baggy, oversized, pants and **flannel pajama pants** are prohibited. Pants are to be belted or secured at the waist.
7. Clothing made of skin-tight material (such as Spandex) is prohibited.
8. See-through clothing is prohibited.
9. Jackets, coats, and gloves are not to be worn in classes. The only exception is a coat may be worn when teachers grant permission.
10. Hats, headscarves, hoods, and headbands are not to be worn inside the building by boys or girls unless a “hat day” has been declared.
11. **All** attire including clothing, patches, buttons, and jewelry may not advertise or promote the use of beer, alcohol, tobacco, drugs or drug paraphernalia.
12. **All** attire including clothing, patches, buttons, and jewelry may not display any offensive, lewd or vulgar language, ideas, or symbols. Clothing with words, numbers, or expressions such as “420,” or other similar terms inappropriate references or vulgarities is not to be worn to school. It will be the judgment of the administration whether attire is vulgar or inappropriate.
13. Clothing that has been excessively mutilated or torn is prohibited. **Rips, tears, or holes above the knees in jeans or pants must not reveal bare skin or undergarments (leggings worn underneath jeans or pants will be permitted).**
14. Students may not have inappropriate tattoos, unnatural hair color (bright yellow, green, blue, etc) or display changes to their appearance (i.e. piercings other than ears) that may be distracting or disruptive to the educational environment.
15. No spike wristbands, neckwear or similar items will be worn.

Students who violate this policy will be immediately required to change into appropriate clothing or call parents to obtain suitable attire. Should the student be unable to secure suitable attire, the office will lend acceptable clothing for the day if appropriate sizes are available. Students will serve RTC/ISS until suitable clothing can be obtained.

DRUG AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, and selling any of the following mood-altering chemicals, controlled substances, or drug paraphernalia in the school, on school property, or at any school-related activity.

1. Alcoholic beverages
2. Marijuana, hashish, or any similar canna derivative
3. Amphetamines (speed, white cross, cocaine, etc.)
4. Phoenicia (PC, angel dust, etc.)
5. All hallucinations chemicals (lozenges, mesas, etc.)
6. Barbiturates
7. Opiates
8. Other mood-altering chemicals that can hinder the student's ability to learn or participate and could cause damage to the student's health
9. Yellow Jackets, or other over-the-counter stimulants or products that contains a stimulant or depressants.

Students are also prohibited from possessing, delivering, attempting to delivery, or ensuing to be delivered the following:

1. Represents to be a controlled substance
2. Represents to be of a nature, appearance, or effect that will allow the recipient to display, sell, distribute, or use the substance as a controlled substance
3. The Board of Education recognizes the complexity of problems that may be associated with drug abuse. The Board's concern is for the well-being and best interest of young people at all times while at the same time recognizing an obligation to parents and the community. As part of such an obligation, it is, at times, necessary that suspensions and/or expulsions be recommended in the case of student drug abuse. The administration had developed procedures for dealing with cases of suspected and admitted drug use to include counseling and referral as well as a procedure for dealing with drug use or traffic on school property. (Policy adopted February 14, 1983.)

DUE PROCESS

Every effort will be made by the administration and faculty to resolve problems with effective utilization of school district resources in cooperation with the student, parent(s) or guardian. Students will be given the right to a hearing with the appropriate administrator to answer charges of wrong doing against the student to hear evidence being used on the charges, and to present witnesses as well as evidence the student would like considered in the matter. If requested, the parent will also be granted the same rights of the students.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES/ CELLPHONES

Cellular telephones may only be used by students outside of regular school hours or in designated areas during the instructional day. Any cellular telephones causing a disturbance will be confiscated. All ringers/auditory alarms must be turned off during school hours.

In no case will any student utilize a personal communication device in a manner that would allow for an unfiltered connection to the Internet.

Video/camera devices are not to be used in an inappropriate manner or venue. Any violation will result in confiscation and/or possible disciplinary action.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/ CD PLAYERS/ MP3 PLAYERS / IPODS/ HANDHELD GAMES

These devices may be used responsibly before school, after school, and at lunchtime. They are not to be used in classrooms during instructional periods without consent of the individual classroom teacher. Students must register their device with the Student Service Office. Students assume responsibility for lost, damaged, or stolen devices.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency room exit and shelter procedures are placed each classroom. Students are to become familiar with the procedures. Fire and tornado drills will be held periodically to familiarize everyone with what to do in the event of an emergency of this nature.

Tornado Watches and Warnings

- A. If a tornado watch or warning occurs before school starts, school will not open and buses will not run.
- B. If a watch occurs during school, classes will remain in session. Buses will run when the danger has passed.
- C. If a warning is sounded during school, students will be sent to assigned shelter areas. Buses will not run until the danger has passed.
- D. During either a watch or a warning, students will be released to adults other than their parents with permission only.

ENDANGERMENT

Students are prohibited from creating a situation that could cause harm to themselves or to others. Such behaviors include - but are not limited to - throwing objects, tripping, and shoving. Students violating this rule will be subject to discipline based on the specific act.

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

It is the policy of the Belding Area Schools that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity or in employment.

Any questions concerning Title VI or Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin and on the basis of gender, respectively) or questions of discrimination on the basis of handicap should be directed to the district's superintendent of schools.

If any person believes that the Belding Area Schools or any part of the school organization has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of 1) Title VI of the Education Amendments of 1972, and 2) Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and 3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, he or she may bring forward a complaint which shall be referred as a grievance to the local civil rights coordinator at the following address:

*Belding Area Schools High School Principal 1975 Orchard St. Belding, MI 48809 (616)
794-4700*

EXPLOSIVES

Students shall not possess any type of explosive on school property or at school-sponsored activities. All violations will result in a report being filed with appropriate law enforcement officials.

The possession or use of smoke bombs, fireworks, firecrackers, or ammunition, etc., will result in suspension from school. First offense will result in five days suspension; second offense, 10 days; expulsion the third.

The possession or placement of a bomb or bomb-type device will result in immediate suspension from school for up to ten (10) days pending a formal expulsion hearing with the Board of Education.

FOOD/ SNACKS/DRINK OUTSIDE CAFETERIA

No food or beverages may be consumed outside the cafeteria except concessions during athletic contests or on special occasions in a classroom. Glass bottles are not to be brought to school. Vending machine beverages purchased but not consumed must be capped and sealed until the appropriate time and place. No food or drink may be consumed in the playground area during school. **Energy drinks are prohibited at BMS. They are not allowed in the cafeteria or to be stored in lockers.** Students will be allowed to carry water bottles with them throughout the day in order to stay hydrated.

GANG RELATED ACTIVITY

Any activity related to gangs - including but not limited to - the demonstration or use of hand signs, display of colors, pins, graffiti, or recruitment of other students is strictly prohibited. Violence related to gang activity will be grounds for referral for an expulsion hearing.

GLASS CONTAINERS, BOTTLES, PERFUMES & COLOGNES

Glass containers, bottles, perfumes and colognes in the building are prohibited for safety reasons.

HANDBOOK RECEIPT

It is the policy of the Belding Area Schools' Board of Education that each student and his/her parent(s) or guardians(s) must sign a receipt for the Student Handbook indicating they have received, read, and understand, the BMS Student Handbook. This form will be given to you by your homeroom teacher and must be signed and returned by October 1.

HARASSMENT – GENERAL or “Bullying”

Harassment is not a one-time situation involving two students or a group of students. Harassment takes place over a period of time. Bullying or harassment can include – but is not limited to the following: Name calling; pushing/shoving; negative comments about clothing or body parts; and malicious gossip to ruin a person's reputation. Behavior of this nature that causes a student to feel intimidated will be considered as harassment or bullying. Students who feel they are being harassed must report the behavior to the office immediately.

HARASSMENT - SEXUAL

Statements under this section of the Student handbook have been extracted, in part, from the Belding Area School's policy 8051 adopted on June 21, 2004 regarding Sexual Harassment. Sexual harassment is a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972, and the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual discrimination and is against the policy of the Belding Area Schools.

Sexual harassment is defined as:

- A. Unwelcome sexual advances; or
- B. Requests for sexual favors; or
- C. Other verbal or physical conduct or communication of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive nature.

Parents of students, or students themselves, who believe they have been the victim of sexual harassment by another student, adult volunteer, paraprofessional, teacher, or administrator, are to notify the building principal or assistant principal promptly OR the Superintendent's office. A copy of the formal Sexual Harassment Policy (GBC) is available from the Superintendent of schools at the address listed under the Equal Educational Opportunities section.

HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS

Michigan Merit Curriculum Guidelines for High School Credit and Graduation

Please find information pertaining to the new Michigan High School Graduation Requirements listed below. As always, you are welcome to contact your child's school with any questions you may have or visit <http://www.mi.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-38924---,00.html> for more information regarding Michigan's graduation requirements.

Earning High School Credit:

A credit is a completed unit of study. Credits may be earned through successful coursework (59.5% or higher grade in course). This grade will be based at least in part on student performance on subject area assessments, which measure the extent to which the student meets state credit expectations and guidelines. Students may also potentially earn credit by testing out, taking advanced placement courses, on-line classes, dual enrollment and "related" courses (vocational/career tech. courses etc).

8th grade Algebra I credit requirement:

A student must earn at least a cumulative grade of C- (69.5%) over the course of 3 trimesters including the mid-term and exit exams to earn high school credit for Algebra I. High school credit may also be earned by testing out of the course by scoring at least 76.5% (C+) on the MDE end of course examination.

8th grade Spanish I A and Spanish I B requirement:

A student must earn at least a cumulative grade of C- (69.5%) over the course of 3 trimesters including the mid-term and exit exams to earn high school credit for Spanish I A and Spanish I B. High school credit may also be earned by testing out of the course by scoring at least 76.5% (C+) on the end of course examination(s).

Possible High School credit options at BMS

- Online experience (Any of the following BMS courses will fulfill: Web Design, Multimedia, Video Productions, Computer Applications I or II)
- Spanish (36 weeks of Spanish at the MS (Spanish I-III) will fulfill 1 graduation requirement for foreign language if a passing grade (59.5%) is achieved in each MS section. Student may earn HS credit as well by passing HS end of course Spanish Test.
- Algebra I (using criteria above)

Testing Out of High School Courses:

A student who wishes to test out of a class must fill out a request prior to the deadline of June 1st for the following school year. Applications for testing out will be available in the Main Office. The application requires a parent signature. If a student decides to attempt to test out of a class, a syllabus and a textbook (if utilized) will be provided by the appropriate BHS department. At no time, should a student expect to receive instruction. Testing out will occur during a several day time span during the weeks prior to school beginning in the fall. Students must earn a minimum of a C+ (76.5%) to be considered successful.

Personal Curriculum Options:

Basic information is listed below. For more details refer to Belding Area Schools Board Policy 7113, <http://www.mi.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-38924---,00.html> or contact a high school counselor at (616) 794-4900.

- **Four Reasons for a student to request a PC**
 - To add additional math, English, science or world language courses.
 - To modify credit requirements because he or she has transferred from out of state or from a non-public school.
 - To modify the credit requirements based on a student's disability.
- **Subjects that cannot be modified**
 - English Language Arts
 - Science
 - World Languages
 - Civics
 - Online Learning Experience

Exception – Students with a disability and transfer students

HONOR ROLL

Students who meet the requirements for the Honor Roll will have their names published at the end of each marking period. The Honor Roll will consist of any student receiving 2.7 honor points or more.

Grade

Points

A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1.0
D-	0.7

IDENTIFICATION CARDS

All BMS students will be issued picture student ID cards. The cards are bar-coded for use in the Media Center and for purchase of meals in the cafeteria. Students must have their ID cards with them at all times. They also must show their ID cards to enter Activity Nights. Lost or stolen cards may be replaced in the office at a cost of \$5.

ILLNESS/INJURY/CLINIC USE

Students who become ill during the day are to report to the office so care may be given and a record maintained. Calls home for illness may not be made from classrooms. All injuries are to be reported immediately to the clinic or office. Office personnel will assist the student and evaluate the condition. If school personnel feel the student's condition warrants, his/her parent or other person listed on the emergency card will be contacted. Students who claim illness or injury and leave the building without the knowledge or permission of the office will be considered truant. Students who go to the restroom rather than report to the office for personal or medical reasons will also be considered truant.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

The Library Media Center is available to BMS students. Students who violate LMC rules face the loss of LMC privileges. Students who lose or destroy material or equipment are responsible for the cost of replacement or will be fined the cost of damaged materials. All fines, fees, and overdue obligations must be met during the school year to be eligible to attend activities. Two weeks prior to the close of the LMC year-end, students must have all fines, fees and overdue obligations met and paid to be eligible to attend end of the year activities including the school picnic.

LOCKERS

Lockers are provided as a convenience to students and remain the property and under control and supervision of the school district at all times. Lockers may be examined periodically (or as needed) to locate contraband items. Stickers must not be placed in lockers, and lockers must also meet criteria of Student Dress Code in regard to appropriateness of inside locker decorations. Padlocks are not to be used. Students who willfully or negligently damage or misuse lockers will be responsible for the damages and could lose locker privileges. Students must use their assigned lockers unless the office grants a change.

MAKEUP WORK

Students with excused absences will be allowed two days for each day of excused absence to complete work missed. It is the responsibility of the student to ask for the missed work. Requests for work for absent students must be made in the office in advance.

MEDICATION

Students are not allowed to carry or dispense any type of medication including over-the-counter medication to themselves or others. **This includes cough drops, Midol, Motrin, or Tylenol-type drugs.**

A parent or guardian must bring any medicine to be given at school to the front office. This medicine must be in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician specifically identifying the contents by name, dosage, etc. All medication shall be clearly identified on the outside of the vial or package, and the medication will be stored in a secured area. School personnel will administer the medication. Students who must carry an inhaler with them at all times must have a completed "Asthma Action Plan" on record in the office. The parent(s)/Guardian(s) request/permission and a physician's instruction for administration shall be renewed every school year.

Students who use any medication, stimulant, or depressant – prescribed or not prescribed – and do not follow these guidelines will be subject to the discipline outlined in our drug policy (see the "Drug and Substance Abuse Policy" section of this handbook.)

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

The Belding National Junior Honor Society operates under a set of predetermined policies, procedures and chapter bylaws set forth by the National Junior Honor Society. Selection into the chapter is based upon service, leadership, character, and scholarship criteria.

OBSCENE, FOUL OR UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE AND GESTURES

Obscene, profane, foul or unacceptable language and gestures are not tolerated at BMS. The use of these will result in disciplinary actions. Obscenities directed at staff or adults will be dealt with in a severe manner.

PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

In order to maintain a business-like atmosphere, public displays of affection - including but not limited to - hand holding, kissing, and romantic hugs will not be allowed. Engagement in sexual behavior or acts on school property is grounds for suspension and/or expulsion.

QUESTIONING BY LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL OR PROTECTIVE SERVICES AUTHORITIES

The administration will make every reasonable effort to notify parents or legal guardians before permitting the interrogation or detainment of a student by law enforcement personnel. Law enforcement authorities may not question students at school without parent permission. If law enforcement officials find it necessary to interview a student during school hours and the parent requests, one of the building principals may represent the parent to insure the student's rights are represented. By state law, Protective Services personnel have the authority to interview students without parental permission.

RESPONSIBLE THINKING CENTER (RTC)/ISS

The BMS RTC room is used as a "time-out" placement for students. The classroom teacher or an administrator can assign RTC. Placement in RTC can range from a class period, to a day, to several days.

During RTC time students will work on assignments prepared by the classroom teacher and will be assisted by the paraprofessional in charge of the RTC room. Students sent to RTC will receive a list of rules and are assigned a seat. The student may not talk, sleep, or leave the room except with permission. Students who remain in the RTC room during the designated lunch period must either eat their own sack lunch or the served lunch. A student in RTC for lunch may not use the ala carte line for any reason. If the rules in RTC are not followed, more severe consequences can occur. Students serving RTC/ISS for more than 3 hours are also not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities, after-school activities, or any Belding Area School sports or other activities the day of the suspension. Students who fail to negotiate their RTP plans with the appropriate staff member will continue to serve in the RTC room at lunch and during the class time/ contact time with that staff member.

RETENTION POLICY

Students who fail two or more core academic classes in two or more trimesters may be recommended for retention the following school year. The final decision to retain will rest with a team consisting of the student's parents, teachers, principal, and counselor.

Eighth grade students must earn a minimum of 14 credits in their 8th grade year to progress to the ninth grade. Each core and encore class is worth one credit each. Students who fail to earn 14 credits will be retained and required to repeat 8th grade classes for at least one trimester the following school year. Students who qualify for retention will be notified by May 1 of their 8th grade year. Parents may appeal the grade level retention by requesting a meeting with the principal, current teachers, and counselor before the end of the current year. Guided Independent Reading grades will not factor into the 14 credits required.

SCHEDULE CHANGES

To the greatest extent possible, all teacher/class requests submitted last spring were honored if submitted in a timely manner. The master schedule and individual student schedules are in delicate balance. Changes in student schedules will be kept to a minimum. Any request for such change **must be made in writing to the building principal.** Those requests will be addressed on an individual basis.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

All school property is held in public trust by the Board of Education. Use of such property, including - but not limited to - school lockers and student desks is provided for student convenience. The Board makes notice of its intent to retain joint control over such property provided for student use. Further, the Board expressly maintains its right of access to that property.

SKATEBOARDS/ROLLER SKATES/SHOES with WHEELS

For the safety of all students, skateboards, roller skates, and shoes such as “Heelys” with built-in wheels are not to be used in school or on school grounds. Wheels are to be removed from Heelys shoes before wearing them to school. Violations will result in confiscation and/or possible disciplinary action in repeat cases.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER/BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

BMS values its dedicated substitute teachers who have a very difficult task. In order to support our substitutes, any student who is sent out of a classroom by a substitute teacher will receive discipline action.

TARDINESS

Students will be issued 30 minutes of lunch detention for three unexcused tardies to individual classes in each trimester. Students will fill out an RTP tardy plan after their third tardy in a trimester. Six and subsequent tardies will result in further detentions. The classroom teacher will handle tardiness issues; however, chronic tardiness will be referred to the office and will result in this late time being made up during lunch or after school. Chronic tardiness may also result in the student losing extra curricular privileges including field trips and the school picnic.

TECHNOLOGY USAGE POLICY - VIOLATION

Technology is an increasingly important part of a student’s education. Belding’s Electronic Information Access and Use Policy specifies the rights and responsibilities associated with the proper use and care of the school’s very expensive technological hardware and software. Besides being a tremendous asset, the use of technology also lends itself to special degree of misuse. Misuse may take the form of questionable ethical practices, criminal activity or vandalism. Students will be disciplined for violation of the policy based on both the intent and end result of their actions.

TEXTBOOKS

Students are issued textbooks for most classes at the beginning of the year. The teacher will record the number of the textbook and its condition. Students are responsible for taking care of textbooks issued to them and will be fined for undue wear or charged the cost of replacement if the book is found to be unusable or lost. Students are asked to keep textbooks covered during the year.

TIMES – SCHOOL DAY

Every effort is made to open the building by 7:05 AM, and students should not arrive before that time. . In the afternoon, students are to leave the building 15 minutes after the bell unless directly supervised by an adult or attending a sanctioned school club, activity, or sport. **Athletes waiting for practice will remain in the area designated by the office while waiting for practice.**

TRIMESTER GRADING

Each twelve-week trimester will be divided into two six-week marking periods. These two marking periods, and a final exam (if given), will be averaged together to determine a final trimester grade. Official grade point averages will be determined by the trimester grade. Report cards will be issued after each marking period. Progress reports or report cards will be issued approximately every three weeks.

VALUABLES/PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are not to bring non-essential valuables to school. This includes - but is not limited to - unregistered devices such as MP3 players, CDs, or electronic games. Prohibited items include roller blades, skateboards, televisions, squirt guns, and card collections. Items of this nature will be held in the office until returned to parents.

VISITORS

BMS is unable to accept student visitors during the school day. BMS allows only Belding Middle School and sixth grade Faith Community Elementary students to attend Activity Nights. Students may not bring younger siblings.

WEAPONS

Students are prohibited from possessing weapons of any description at school or school-related activities or on the way to or from school under the provisions of MCLA 30.1313. Weapons include - but are not limited to - firearms, daggers, dirks, stilettos, knives with blades over 3” in length or knives opened by mechanical means. Other weapons include iron bars, brass knuckles, numb chucks or other instruments that could cause injury to others. Students are also prohibited from possessing items that replicate any of the above that when displayed could cause a reasonable person to believe it was real and therefore feel threatened.

Students with knowledge of weapons that are present at school or school-related activities must immediately report such information to the nearest school personnel. Failure to do so will constitute violation of this policy and the student will be subject to disciplinary action including suspension or expulsion.

Students responsible for bringing weapons to school or school-related activities, or found in control or possession of weapons, will be subject to discipline including expulsion from school. All confiscated weapons will be turned over to the Belding City Police Department within 48 hours. A copy of any report involving a weapon at school will also be submitted to the Belding City Police Department.

CIVIL RIGHTS INFORMATION

Equal Education Opportunities

It is the policy of the Belding Area Schools District that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender or handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity or in employment.

Any question concerning Title VI or Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin and on the basis of gender, respectively) or questions related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap) should be directed to the district’s superintendent of schools.

If any person believes that the Belding Area School District or any part of the school organization has inadequately applied the principles and/or regulations of

1. Title VI of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972,
2. Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act of 1972, and
3. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, he/she may bring forward a complaint which shall be referred as a grievance to the local civil rights coordinator at the following address:

Belding Area Schools
High School Principal
1975 Orchard Street
Belding, Michigan 48809 (616) 794-4700

The person who believes he/she has a valid basis for grievance shall discuss the grievance informally and on a verbal basis with the local civil rights coordinator, who shall, in turn, investigate

the complaint and reply. If that informal reply does not satisfy the complainant, a formal complaint may be pursued according to the following guidelines:

1. A written statement of the grievance, signed by the complainant, shall be submitted to the local civil rights coordinators within five business days of receipt of answers of informal complaint. The coordinator shall further investigate the matters of grievance and reply in writing to the complainant within five business days;
2. If the complainant wishes to appeal the decision of the local civil rights coordinator, he/she may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Secretary of the Board of Education. Such statement must be delivered to the board of education's offices at 1975 Orchard Street, Belding, Michigan, not more than five business days after receipt of the local coordinator's reply (a, above). In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the board of education (or a committee appointed by the board) shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within forty days of receipt of such appeal. A copy of the board's disposition shall be sent to each concerned party within ten days of this appeal;
3. If the complainant remains unsatisfied, he/she may appeal through a signed, written statement of appeal to the Board within five business days of his/her receipt of the Superintendent's response in Step 2. Failure by the complainant to appeal the complaint within the time limit provided shall bar the complaint. In an attempt to resolve the grievance, the Board shall meet with the concerned parties and their representatives within fifteen business days of the receipt of such an appeal. A copy of the Board's disposition of the appeal shall be sent by the Board Secretary to each concerned party within ten business days of this meeting by certified mail.
4. Upon completion of or in the grievance process, complainants have the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education. The complaint should be directed to the following address:

Office for Civil Rights
600 Superior Avenue, Suite 750 Cleveland, Ohio 44114 Phone: (216) 522-4970 Fax: (216) 522-2573

Helpful Community Resource Telephone Numbers:

Community Mental Health:	(616) 527-1790
Youth Service Bureau	(616) 527-5332
DHS Protective Services Child abuse and Neglect	(616) 527-5252
Health Department	(616) 527-5339

AGAIN, IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS THE AUTHORITY TO QUESTION BEHAVIOR OF ANY FORM WITHIN THE BUILDING, ON SCHOOL GROUNDS, AND AT SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND DEAL WITH BEHAVIOR ACCORDINGLY EVEN IF THAT BEHAVIOR IS NOT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN THIS HANDBOOK. THE BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCE CHART AT THE END OF THE HANDBOOK LISTS SOME - BUT BY NO MEANS ALL - OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING BELDING MIDDLE SCHOOL RULES.

BEHAVIOR CONSEQUENCE CHART

BEHAVIOR	1 ST OFFENSE	2 ND OFFENSE	3 RD OFFENSE
Alcohol	5 days suspension + parent meeting	10 day suspension + parent meeting	Suspension pending expulsion hearing
Arson	Suspension pending expulsion hearing + police		
Assault – Physical Against School Employee	Suspension pending expulsion hearing + police		
Assault – Physical Against Other Student	Expulsion up to 180 days + police		
Assault – Verbal Against Other Student	Up to 3 days out of school suspension + parent meeting	Up to 10 days out of school suspension + parent meeting	Suspension pending expulsion hearing + police
Bomb Threat	Expulsion + police		
Bullying	Up to 3 days suspension	Up to 5 days suspension	Up to 10 days OSS
Cafeteria Behavior Problem Or food/drink outside of cafeteria	Café work and/or 1 lunch detention	Café work and/or 2 lunch detention	Café work and/or 1 day ISS
Cheating / Plagiarism	Loss of assignment credit + up to 2 days ISS	Loss of assignment credit + 3 days ISS	Loss of assignment credit + 1 day out of school suspension
Chronic Misbehavior	Up to 2 days ISS	Up to 3 days ISS	Up to 4 days ISS/OSS
Cigarettes / Tobacco / Lighter	3 days ISS	3 days out of school suspension	5 days out of school suspension
Disrespect	Up to 1 day ISS	Up to 2 days ISS	Up to 3 days ISS/OSS
Dress Code Violation	Warning and call home; new apparel brought RTC until change is made	Call home; lunch or after school detention + RTC until change is made	Rest of day ISS
Drug / Illegal Substance: sale, distribution, supply	Suspension pending expulsion hearing + police		
Drug / Illegal Substance: possession	5 days out of school suspension + parent meeting + police	10 days out of school suspension + parent mtg.	Suspension pending expulsion hearing
Drug/Over the Counter Medication : sale, distribution, supply	5 day suspension + parent meeting + police	Suspension pending expulsion hearing	
Drug/Over the counter Medication: possession	Up to 3 day suspension + parent meeting + police	5 day suspension + parent meeting	10 day suspension + parent meeting
Electronic communication devices	Held for student pickup at the end of the day	Held for parent pickup	Held for parent pickup + lunch detention
Endangerment	Up to 2 days suspension	Up to 3 days suspension	Up to 10 days suspension
False Alarm – Minor disruption	Up to 2 days ISS	Up to 5 days ISS	Up to 10 days suspension
False Alarm –Major Disruption	Up to 3 days OSS	Up to 10 days OSS	Suspension pending expulsion hearing
Fighting – minor	Up to 3 days ISS	Up to 5 days ISS	3 day out of school suspension + parent mtg.
Fighting – major	OSS rest of day + 2 additional days	OSS rest of day + 4 additional days	OSS pending expulsion hearing
Gang-related activities	5 day suspension + meeting	Suspension pending expulsion hearing	
Harassment-General	Up to 2 days suspension	Up to 3 days suspension	Up to 10 days out of school suspension
Harassment-Sexual-Racial	3 days suspension ISS/OSS	5 days out of school suspension	Suspension pending expulsion hearing
Insubordination	Up to 3 days suspension	Up to 5 days suspension	Up to 10 days OSS
Locker Abuse	Up to 1 day ISS & restitution	Up to 3 days ISS & restitution	Up to 10 days OSS & restitution
Obscene/Foul Language & Gestures	Up to 1 day ISS	Up to 2 days ISS	Up to 3 days ISS
Public Displays of Affection	Warning	1 day ISS	2 days ISS
Substitute Teacher Problem	Up to 1 day ISS + teacher consequence	Up to 2 days ISS + teacher consequence	3 days ISS + teacher consequence
Technology Usage Violation	Up to 2 days ISS plus loss or suspension of privilege	3 days ISS loss of privilege	5 days ISS plus loss of privilege
Theft-Major (over \$10)	3 days OSS + restitution + police report	5 days OSS + restitution + police report	Suspension pending expulsion hearing
Theft-Minor (under \$10)	2 days ISS + restitution	3 days ISS + restitution	5 day suspension + restitution
Threats/Intimidation	Up to 3 days suspension	5 day suspension	10 day suspension
Truancy/Tardy	Time made up during lunch or after school	Time made up during lunch or after school	Time made up during lunch or after school
Vandalism	Up to 10 days suspension, restitution and police report	Suspension pending expulsion hearing, restitution and police report	
Weapons	Suspension pending expulsion hearing + police		
Weapons (not under mandatory expulsion)	Up to 5 days suspension	Up to 10 days suspension pending expulsion hearing + police	Suspension pending expulsion hearing + police

Belding Area Schools

Transportation Policy

MISSION STATEMENT

The Belding Area Schools Transportation Department is dedicated to providing safe and efficient transportation to eligible Belding students to the School they attend from the vicinity of their home.

A. Operation of System

1. In organizing and operating the transportation system, all applicable statutes, rules and regulations of the State of Michigan and its agencies, shall be strictly adhered to and all recommendations and suggestions shall be carefully considered.
2. In all cases, first consideration shall be to provide eligible pupils safe transportation to regularly scheduled classes. Careful consideration shall be given also to efficiency and economy of operation.
3. Transportation will be provided to the District for all extra class activities unless there is a shortage of funds. Students are prohibited from driving personal automobiles to District-sponsored activities held during the school day unless student self-transportation is approved as per policy 4350.
4. Transportation shall be considered a privilege to be enjoyed by a student only as long as he accepts responsibility for his own conduct, carefully follows all rules and regulations and promptly responds to the directions and requests of the bus driver.
5. Wherever possible, stops for students, who qualify for transportation, will be located within one-quarter (1/4) mile of their homes. Stops will be kept to a practical minimum. Parents will be responsible for transportation from the home to the bus stop. Belding Area Schools will be responsible for transportation from the assigned bus stop of the child to and the return from school. This shall apply to all students K-12.
6. The measurement of the mileage to determine student eligibility for transportation shall be the responsibility of the Transportation Supervisor. His measurement shall be accepted as conclusive evidence of eligibility for transportation – except, that any person who feels himself aggrieved by this measurement may, at his own personal expense, employ a qualified engineer to make a more precise measurement and may present this measurement to the Superintendent of Schools along with an application for approval of transportation service for children living in his home who are legal residents of the school system.
7. Students identified by an individual educational planning committee (IEPC) as a “Handicapped Person” in accordance with RE40.1702, who would otherwise be unable to participate in an appropriate special education program or service operated or contracted for by the Ionia Intermediate Schools, shall be eligible for only that additional transportation, determined by the committee, to be necessary for the person to participate in the program or service. Only students identified by an IEPC shall be eligible for transport services that exceed those described above.
8. A Belding resident pupil enrolled in a nonpublic school shall be eligible for transportation to his nonpublic school (if that school is located within the boundaries of the Belding Area Schools system) according to the same eligibility provisions and schedules in effect for public school pupils.
9. School transportation equipment shall be used only for the transportation of pupils to and from school and be used to furnish transportation to groups identified by and in accordance with the school code.
10. The Board recognizes the needs of the District to own or lease vehicles to carry out the instructional program and the business of operating the schools. The Superintendent is authorized to determine the extent to which District-owned vehicles might be used for official school business. Such vehicles shall not be used for personal travel unless expressly approved by the Board. Drivers of school-owned vehicles shall be properly licensed. Privately-owned vehicles may be used to conduct school business when approved by the Superintendent.
11. There shall be no charge for pupil transportation to non-mandatory, non-credit events unless it is determined by the Board of Education that adequate funds to support these activities are not available; in which case, such charges shall be determined, as permitted by State regulations, according to procedures recommended by the Administration and approved by the Board.
12. Routes are to be planned to keep individual riding distance and time to a practical minimum.

13. Each eligible pupil will be assigned to use a specific bus and bus stop and shall not be permitted to use any other bus or bus stop without permission from the Transportation Supervisor, or his designee.
14. The Transportation Supervisor may grant permission for a pupil to ride a different bus or use a different stop. Such permission may be granted only upon request of a parent, guardian or other responsible adult. The request shall be for a specified period of time subject to the following conditions and limitations:
 - a. The request change must not result in the overcrowding of any bus; alteration of any regular bus route, bus stop or time schedule or in any other way interfere with the regular operation of the transportation system.
 - b. The purpose for which special permission is requested shall be:
 - i. To relieve a temporary situation which would otherwise cause a severe hardship on a pupil getting to and from school.
 - ii. For such other emergency or unusual reason as shall be approved by the Transportation Supervisor, or his designee.
 - c. Drivers are to transport only their regularly assigned passengers unless other authorization is received from the Transportation Supervisor.
 - d. In an emergency, written requests may be waived. Emergency requests should be made to the child's Principal, who will be responsible to coordinate necessary actions with the Transportation Supervisor.
 - e. In case of an emergency with the bus transportation system whereby the buses are unable to run, it is the responsibility of the parents to get the children to and from school.
15. Parents may request transportation to or from baby sitters. The request may be granted, if the following conditions are met:
 - a. An established stop will be used.
 - b. There is room on the bus to accommodate the student.
 - c. The stop will be the same every night.
16. Groups of students will not be transported for overnight slumber parties, scouting, etc.
17. The safety and conduct of a pupil while going to and from a bus stop and while waiting at a bus stop, is the responsibility of the parent. The school recognizes a secondary responsibility to assist and cooperate with the parents.

B. Expectations for Student Behavior and Discipline Response for Misbehavior

1. Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of and are responsible to the driver of the bus. This includes advising students concerning rules and regulations, assigning seats, encouraging good behavior, and other generally accepted means of maintaining and developing constructive pupil-school relationships. Continued disorderly conduct or persistent refusal to submit to the authority of the driver shall be sufficient reason for a pupil to be denied transportation in accordance with regulations as set by the Belding Board of Education. No driver shall require any pupil to leave the bus before he or she has reached his/her destination. Under no circumstance, shall a parent stop a school bus for personal reasons. The parent shall contact the Supervisor of Transportation and the problems will be handled through his office.
2. For minor infraction or first-time offenses, the driver will issue a warning by means of a "Bus Conduct Report". Copies will be given to the student, Supervisor and building Principal. To assure the parent has seen the Bus Conduct Report, it must be signed by a parent returned to the driver.
3. For repeated offenses or a major infraction (i.e. fighting or in some other way jeopardizing the safety of the bus) the driver may issue a Conduct Report suspending the student from riding the bus. Copies of the Conduct Report will be given to the student, Transportation Supervisor and building Principal. This Conduct must be signed by the parent and returned to the driver. Typically, suspensions will be given as follows:

1st Bus Conduct Report:	Warning
2nd Bus Conduct Report:	One-Day Suspension
3rd Bus Conduct Report:	Two-Day Suspension

4. If either because repeated suspensions have failed to improve behavior or, because of gross misconduct on the bus, the student may be denied the privilege of riding the bus for extended periods by the Supervisor of Transportation and the building Principal.

In case of extended suspension, the Principal will notify the parents and explain to them the action of the student and the length of the suspension. The bus driver cannot permit the suspended student to ride on the bus until the suspension period has been completed by the student.

In case of a student over 18 years of age, it is required that only the student be notified of the suspension.

In case of suspension, the parent or the student has the right to appeal to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education. The Superintendent shall establish the procedure and time limits for appeal. The parent shall be notified, in writing, of this procedure. The parent shall be responsible for the transportation of the pupil to and from school during the effective time of any suspension of the pupil's riding privilege.

5. In emergency cases or serious misbehavior which demand immediate action, the driver may request that the Supervisor remove a student from a bus until regular disciplinary procedures are instituted.

6. **Basis Rules for Bus Stop Conduct**

- a. Stay off the traveled roadway at all times while waiting for a bus.
- b. Wait until the bus has come to a stop before attempting to get on or off.
- c. Leave the bus only with the consent of the driver.
- d. Enter or leave the bus only at the front door after the bus has come to a stop, except in case of emergency.
- e. Cross the traveled highway, if necessary after leaving the bus, in the following manner:
 - i. Make certain the bus is not moving.
 - ii. Upon leaving the bus, go to the front of the bus within sight of the driver and wait for the proper signal for crossing.
 - iii. Upon signal from the driver, or from a personal escort, look both to the right and left and proceed across the highway in front of the bus.
 - iv. Walk (do not run) in front of the bus when crossing the highway.
- f. Student conduct rules described in Building Use Student Handbook (fighting, substance abuse, etc.) shall be enforced while the student is riding district transportation equipment.
- g. It should be remembered that administrators have the authority to question misbehavior of any form within the building, on school grounds, on district transportation equipment, at school-related activities or when directed toward any staff member. Any behavior which adversely affects the learning process or atmosphere of the school, as interpreted by the administration, will be handled by disciplinary action.

C. Basic Rules for Bus Riding Safety

1. Follow directions given by the driver.
2. Wait until bus has come to a complete stop before attempting to enter or leave the bus. Remain seated while bus is in motion. Enter or leave the bus only at the front door, except in case of emergency.
3. Do not leave the bus without the driver's consent, except at home or school. No unauthorized stops will be made.
4. Occupy only the seat assigned by the driver. Keep feet out of aisles, off of seats and off the back of seats. Standing will not be permitted unless all seats are filled to capacity.
5. Musical instruments will be held by the owner. Do not leave them in the aisles, or at front or rear emergency door.

6. Sit erect with your feet on the floor. Keep head, arms and hands inside bus.
7. Avoid unnecessary disturbing noises. The driver should not be distracted while bus is in motion. Do not shout at passing persons or vehicles.
8. Be courteous! Use no profane or vulgar language.
9. Help keep the bus clean.
10. Be considerate of small children.
11. Inform driver when absence is expected from school.
12. Fighting, pushing, shoving or other rowdy behavior will not be tolerated.
13. Report any damage you observe to the driver. Student-caused damage to the interior or exterior of the bus will result in payment for damages and in suspended bus riding privileges.
14. No pets or animals may be transported on the bus.
15. A student will leave or board the bus only at his or her assigned stop. Any deviation must have prior approval of the Transportation Supervisor, upon written request of the parent and approval of the building Principal.
16. The bus driver has the authority to issue a report of misconduct for violation of the rules by a student.

D. Field Trips (including Athletics and Band)

1. All rules which apply to students on regular bus routes, also apply to students on field trips.
2. Failure to follow the rules may result in the loss of future riding privileges. This may apply to entire groups or teams as the situation warrants.
3. Students on a field trip must be supervised on the bus by a staff member other than the driver.
4. All students riding to an event must return to the school from which the trip originated on the same bus. It is the responsibility of the chaperone to enforce this. Any exceptions will be the responsibility of coach or chaperone in charge.

E. Responsibility of the Parents: It is the responsibility of parents whose children are transported by the Belding Area Schools.

5. To ascertain and insure that their children arrive at the bus stop ten (10) minutes before the scheduled stop time.
6. To provide necessary protection of their children when going to and from the bus stops.
7. To accept joint responsibility with the school authorities for proper conduct of their children while the children are in school custody.
8. To make reasonable effort to understand and cooperate with school employees responsible for pupil transportation.

F. Guidelines for Special Education

9. All Rules and Regulations which apply to general education transportation will also apply to students assigned to special programs.
10. Parents or Guardians must be available to help load or unload those students who need assistance. It is the parents' responsibility to get the student from the house to the bus.
11. Drivers will not drop a student off when it is obvious there is no one home. If this situation arises, the driver will radio the transportation office for guidance. If convenient, the driver will stop back at the home at a later time. The Parents/Guardians may be requested to pick up the child at the transportation office at the completion of the route. The student may be dropped at an alternate drop-site if such a site has been listed on the student's Emergency Information form and someone is known to be at that alternate site. If Parent/Guardian cannot be contacted within a reasonable time after completion of the route, the student will be taken to the Police Station.
12. Parents will be asked to fill out an Emergency Information Form giving medical information, emergency instructions and other pertinent information.

13. Any special equipment to be used in transporting a student identified for special education (i.e. harnesses, restraints or medical equipment) will be identified by the IEPC or its use coordinated with the parent, Transportation Supervisor and Building Administrator.

G. Operation of School Buses During Times of Inclement Weather

14. **Morning Run:** Upon consideration of the road and weather information available, the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, will decide whether buses can safely travel their routes. The completeness with which any route is covered will be in accordance with the judgment of the Transportation Supervisor and the driver of the bus on that particular route. Roads which are not traveled in the morning will not necessarily be traveled in the afternoon. Parents who bring their children into school should plan on picking them up at the end of the school day.
15. **Early Dismissal:** Buses will be sent out early whenever, in the opinion of the Superintendent of Schools or designee, it is felt that deteriorating weather and road conditions advise early release of students.
16. **Belding Area Schools Two-Hour Delay Policy:** When the weather requires the District Administration to delay the start of school by two hours because of fog, snow, ice or other conditions, it is important that parents, students and staff understand what a “two-hour delay” means.

First of all, in the event of a “two-hour delay, there will no morning Pre-K programs (ECDD, Jumpstart, Preschool, Headstart). Afternoon sessions of these programs will start on schedule.

Buses will pick students up at their regular bus stop two hours after their normal, scheduled time. For example: if a child normally catches the bus at 6:30 a.m., the pick-up will be at 8:30 a.m. on days when a two-hour delay is called.

Likewise, school will start two hours after the normal start-time, so High School students will begin classes at 9:25 a.m. (students should report to their second block class) and morning Heartlands will be cancelled; middle school students will begin classes at 9:30 a.m.; Ellis Elementary students will begin classes at 10:45 a.m. and Woodview Elementary students will begin classes at 10:50 a.m.

If the start of school is delayed, breakfast will not be served but lunch will be available as usual. Dismissal time will remain the same.

Safety remains the primary focus when the determination is made to close school or delay the start of school by two hours. From time to time, it may be predicted that a two-hour delay will allow morning fog to lift or roads to be cleared. If the weather has not cleared after the two-hour delay, school will be cancelled for the day and broadcast via local media. Please remember that parents always have the right to make the final decision if they feel it is not safe to send their child(ren) during inclement weather.

17. **Parental Prerogative:** If parents feel that it is unsafe for their children to ride the bus because of poor weather or road conditions, they should keep their children home. Also parents are encouraged to pick their children up at school and take them home if the parents feel that weather or road conditions will be unsafe at the regularly-scheduled school dismissal time.
18. **Closing Information:** Local radio, TV and Internet Sites will broadcast information furnished by our school district regarding all actions necessary in the event of “severe or hazardous weather” situations.
19. **Severe and Hazardous Weather Bulletin Policy Tornado Policy –** to clarify terms used, definitions are stated to guide intent and interpretation of this Bulletin.
 - a. **Tornado Watch:** means weather conditions are such that tornadoes could occur.
 - b. **Tornado Warning:** means a tornado has been sighted in the area.
 - c. **Hazardous Weather:** means that weather and/or resulting road conditions are such that the safe operation of vehicles involves unnecessary risk.
20. **Operation Procedures when the school receives official information of a TORNADO WATCH during school hours,** action by school authorities will depend on the extent of the forecast and time element involved.
 - a. The situation may require action as follows:
 - i. Dismissal of students that walk to school with instructions to proceed immediately for their homes or other parentally designated places.
 - ii. Transportation of others as time permits: an attempt to transport the Middle and High School students to their regular bus stops first, followed with the transportation of elementary students approximately one hour later.

- b. Generally, no children will be picked up and brought to school by buses when a Tornado Watch is in effect.
 - c. Parents or designated representatives may pick up children at school if they so desire, but are requested to avoid school bus loading areas and bus traffic routes.
- 21. When the school is officially notified of a TORNADO WARNING during school hours, it is expected that the time available will be insufficient to disperse students. If so, procedures will be placed in operation to provide the students with maximum protection offered at each school building.
- 22. If HAZARDOUS WEATHER conditions develop when schools are in operation, the Superintendent of Schools, or his designee, will decide on the matter of early dismissal of students. Such decision will be based on reports and information received by the Transportation Supervisor. Procedures for early dismissal in this situation are as follows:
 - a. The Middle and High School students will be dismissed first and appropriate bus route schedules will be placed in operation.
 - b. Elementary students in session will similarly be dismissed approximately one hour later depending on prevailing weather and road conditions.
- 10. HAZARDOUS WEATHER conditions may develop requiring a decision by the Superintendent of Schools or his designee not to commence operation of schools on a particular day. Action will be based on reports and information received by the Transportation Supervisor and on consultation with the Superintendent.

