

**PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**Early Childhood – Grade Eight**

**2024–2025**



**THE BRIDGES**  
**ACADEMY**

CHARACTER • CONFIDENCE • KNOWLEDGE

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## **MISSION AND VISION**

The Bridges Academy inspires and empowers our students by developing character, confidence, and knowledge.

The Bridges Academy vision is to be a community of thriving and well-balanced students who are high-achieving critical and creative thinkers. With our evolving rigorous and engaging program, we foster a sense of belonging and create the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. While celebrating our diverse community of families, students, faculty, and alumni, we focus on building character, confidence, and knowledge.

## **NOTE TO PARENTS**

Welcome to The Bridges Academy.<sup>1</sup> Thank you for giving us the opportunity to partner with you in the education of your child(ren). By working together as a community, we will accomplish the mission of our school. At all times, the Academy's Administration,<sup>2</sup> Staff and Faculty are happy to assist you in your understanding and participation in the mission of the Academy.

This Early Childhood to 8th grade Parent/Student Handbook has been prepared to serve as a general guide to the philosophy and policies of the Academy. Since it is impossible to address everything pertaining to daily life at school, we encourage you to inquire in the Administration Office for any information not included here.

In order to realize the Academy's aim, parents and students must agree to uphold and support the philosophy and policies of the Academy. The Academy shall have complete discretion in all educational matters including, but not limited to, curriculum offerings, class and teacher assignments and the assessment of student and teacher performance.

A positive and constructive working relationship between the Administration and a student's parents/guardian is essential to the fulfillment of the Academy's educational purpose. Thus, the Administration may not extend the privilege of re-enrollment to a student if the Administration concludes that the actions of a student's parents/guardian make such a positive and constructive relationship impossible or otherwise seriously interfere with the Administration's accomplishment of its educational purposes. The Administration may decline enrollment or re-enrollment of any student or suspend or dismiss any student, at its discretion, for any cause deemed sufficient by the Administration.

The Administration may change or modify the philosophy or policies of the Academy without prior notice. A reasonable attempt will be made to notify parents and students of any such changes. The interpretation and application of the Academy's philosophy and policies rest solely with the Administration of The Bridges Academy. The Administration requires written acknowledgement by the parents/guardians and students of this Handbook and any future amendments. Parents/guardians, by executing the acknowledgement of receipt of this letter and accompanying Handbook, hereby release and hold The Bridges Academy and their employees, agents and corporate members harmless from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to their child's attendance at The Bridges Academy.

1. Throughout this Handbook, references to the "Academy," "Bridges" or the "school" are used interchangeably and refer to The Bridges Academy.

2. Throughout this Handbook, the term *Administration* refers to the Head of School, Dean of Students and Director of Finance.

Note: When reading, parents should be mindful that this handbook is intended for the entire school from Early Childhood to 8th grade. Therefore, some sections may be more applicable to specific families than others depending on the age of the child.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

The Bridges Academy considers all applicants for admission based upon its academic program and the applicant's needs and admits students accordingly. The Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, and any other characteristic protected by applicable law in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid decisions, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Children must reach the age of five (5) by December 1 to qualify for admission into kindergarten.

Children must reach the age of six (6) by December 1 to qualify for admission into the first grade.

All first year and new/transferring students will be accepted on a probationary basis for the first trimester they are enrolled. Generally, a new student's progress will be monitored and evaluated at three-week intervals through the probationary period in order to determine the student's ability to adjust to the Academy's philosophy and curriculum and the Academy's ability to meet the student's needs.

### **\*\* Early Childhood Toilet Training Policy**

*All children entering The Bridges Academy's Nursery or Emergent K program must be toilet trained. Children will not be admitted with pull-ups. Due to ratios and the busy nature of our classrooms there is not always someone available to help change your child if they have a urinary accident. Should this be the case, a parent will be called immediately to come change their child. Please be sure to provide the school with a spare set of clothes to change into and kindly return a replacement set the following day (this includes socks, pants, shirt, shoes, and underwear). Please send these items in a plastic bag that has been labeled with your child's name. If a student has an accidental bowel movement, a parent will be notified immediately so they may pick up their child. Due to health concerns for others, the child would not be permitted to stay in school for the remainder of the day. The Bridges Academy allows a four week grace period at the start of the school year for toileting accidents. At the end of the four week period, if a student exhibits continuous toileting accidents, it may be necessary for the child to take a leave of absence from the program until the toilet training process is complete.*

## **SCHOOL HOURS\***

Faculty	7:30AM–3:30 PM
K-8 Students	8:00AM–2:50 PM
drop off time*	7:45AM–8:00 AM
pick up time**	2:50PM–3:00 PM
Early Childhood	9:00AM-12:00PM
Early Childhood Enrichment	12:00PM-3:00PM

Main Office (exclusive of summer months) 7:30 AM–4:30 PM

## **TARDINESS**

The bell for homeroom rings at 8:00 a.m. for K-8 students. A student arriving after 8:10am is considered tardy to school and will be marked accordingly. A student arriving late must report to the Main Office for an admission slip.

The school day begins with the Pledge of Allegiance, morning announcements and important organizational needs that are vital to the students' academic success. It is important for all students to be punctual and present for this crucial part of the day.

A student who misses four consecutive academic classes (roughly 12 noon) will be marked absent a half-day.

A Middle School student is tardy if he/she is not in his/her assigned class when the bell rings to signify the start of the class period.

Lower school parents will be notified by the school administration if the student is excessively late within a marking period.

Any questions or concerns regarding attendance or tardiness should be referred to the Head of School.

## **AUTHORIZATION FOR STUDENT PICKUP**

Students may leave campus with their parents, or, with express parental permission, with other authorized persons. Such express parental permission may be authorized in advance on the emergency consent form, or in an emergency, by calling, emailing or writing to the main office. An emergency pick-up request will be processed only if the caller or authorized person is verified with the parent or legal guardian. Please note that the school can't guarantee that notes, emails, texts and/or voice messages be verified without adequate notice. This is for the safety of our students. This policy applies to all departures from campus, including but not limited to regular school dismissal, extended care, after school activities, athletic events, emergency closures, field trips and off-campus school events.

## **DISMISSAL/PICKUP**

Any student not picked up by the close of pickup time will be taken to the main office. If a child is regularly picked up late then will be referred to the ASKUS after school program.

## **STUDENT PICKUP DURING SCHOOL HOURS**

Parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from taking students out of school for any reason. The Academy recognizes that emergencies do arise and occasionally parents/guardians have no other alternative but to request a late arrival or early dismissal for a doctor/dentist appointment. A school calendar is provided so that doctor/dentist appointments can be scheduled during non-school times.

If an early dismissal is necessary, please put this request in writing and give it to the main office the morning that the early dismissal is required. Students must be signed out and picked up at the Main Office. Please see "Authorization for Student Pick Up Policy."

## **PARENT AND VISITOR PARKING**

Parking on campus is limited. The parking area to the north of campus is limited to faculty/staff cars only. Parents are encouraged to park on Snedecor Avenue and avoid parking in the front circle due to bus traffic.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL SCHOOL CLUBS PROGRAM PICKUP**

### ***After-School Pick Up Procedure On Campus:***

When clubs, sports, and activities meet after school on the Bridges campus, parents are expected to pick up the student at the conclusion of the activity. Students will be dismissed only to the parent or authorized parent designee.

### ***After-School Pick Up Procedure Off Campus:***

When clubs, sports and activities meet at a location off campus, parents are expected to pick up the students at the conclusion of the activity. Students will be dismissed only to the parent or authorized parent designee. Students remaining at the end of the activity will remain with the faculty or staff member until they are picked up by the parent or authorized parent designee. Repeated violations will result in removal from the activity.

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAM**

The Academy's faculty commits itself to foster a love of learning in each student by providing the skills necessary to pursue knowledge and the discipline required to master it. Our commitment is to provide The Bridges Academy graduate with the skills needed to pursue further educational goals at all levels with confidence and success.



Studies in grades Kindergarten through Grade 8 include:

Math

Science

English/Language Arts

Social Studies

STEAM

Computer Technology

Foreign Language

Music

Art

Physical Education

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL MATHEMATICS**

When students enter the Middle School, they are assessed according to mathematical ability as shown on standardized testing, performance and motivation. For students to be placed in advanced coursework they are generally expected to:

- Maintain a grade point within the A-B range for each trimester of the previous year;
- Achieve a cumulative stanine score of 7-9 on the Milestone exams; and
- Receive a teacher recommendation for the advanced coursework.

Acceleration or Enrichment in math can occur throughout the grade levels, however students in seventh and eighth grades are formally placed in designated math classes according to their ability and achievement. *Final placement of Middle School math is left to the discretion of the mathematics teachers and the Administration as they review the student's work and the above-mentioned criteria.* \* In most years, our goal will be to have all 8th grade students within the Algebra class.

Middle School students who are placed in advanced coursework with a year-end grade point average of C- or below will be required to complete twenty hours of additional math instruction during the summer months. The Head of School must approve the summer program in advance. After the approved summer program is completed, followed by passing a reexamination, the student's record will be amended and the student will be promoted to the next math level. Students failing to complete the summer instruction or pass the reexamination may be asked to repeat the same math level the following school year.

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

The Bridges Academy offers robust foreign language offerings in Spanish, French, and Mandarin from an early age. Students, with little or no instructional background, who

transfer into The Bridges Academy's middle school may be graded on a pass/fail basis until proficiency has been achieved.

## **REGENTS EXAM AND HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT**

By the 8th grade, The Bridges Academy offers select students courses in Earth and Space Science, Algebra and higher level foreign language. Those students may be eligible to receive a high school credit in those classes if they maintain an "A" or "B" for each of the trimesters in the seventh and eighth grades and receive a teacher recommendation. Students may be required to take a placement exam and/or End of Course exam in addition to receiving a recommendation for placement from The Bridges Academy. Final determination of placement and/or credits awarded will be determined by the high school he/she will be attending.

Middle School (7th and 8th grade) students in honors/accelerated math classes are expected to maintain an "A" or "B" average in these classes each trimester. Students who are unsuccessful in doing so may be recommended for a less challenging 9th grade course upon admission to high school.

Students taking Algebra and Earth and Space Science in 8th grade are expected to take the New York State Regents Exam for those subjects. Dates to be determined on an annual basis.

## **LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS**

The Bridges Academy is a rigorous independent school program that expects its students to be capable of performing on or above grade level. Students who do not meet this expectation will enter into a process by which the school will intend to support and/or remediate the difficulty to facilitate the child's learning process.

## **REFERRAL PROCESS**

- Upon identifying a student with an academic concern, the team of teachers may institute a number of support systems to try and provide the structure and routine necessary for a successful student experience. These steps may include: Agenda signing, encouraged attendance at extra help sessions and a parent meeting.
- If the concern is not addressed after instituting the first steps, the team, in cooperation with administration, may increase the measures of support within the school. This may include: mandated attendance at extra help, classroom/testing accommodations, weekly parent feedback or a student contract.

- Following the first two steps, if the student continues to struggle, the team of teachers, in cooperation with parents and administration may institute a more formally scheduled plan of support. This may include: scheduled times to meet with a learning specialist or reading teacher, in house testing accommodations, the initiation of informal or private screenings to inform areas of support.
- After the steps listed above have been adequately explored and the student continues to struggle, the plan of action moving forward would involve formalized evaluation of the student which might include the involvement of the local school district to provide support services or accommodations.

The Bridges Academy will determine accommodations that are capable of being offered within the school setting. Only those students with proper paperwork who have completed the review process are eligible to work with the resource teachers and receive learning accommodations. The Bridges Academy does not modify the curriculum although we will differentiate instruction to the best of our ability to ensure the success of all students. The Academy reserves the right to deny first time or subsequent admission contracts should it be deemed that the Academy can not successfully meet the needs of the child given its resources.

\*\* Interventions available are dependent upon grade level supports in place.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips, both day and overnight, are developed to provide a variety of experiences and to enhance the students' educational opportunities. Field trips are supplemental to the instructional program and bear a direct relationship to the normal school experience and curriculum. While field trips are not mandatory and do require advance written parental authorization for attendance, a student who does not attend a trip is still responsible for the coursework, if any, affiliated with the purpose of the trip and will be marked absent should they not attend.

Permission for a student to participate in a field trip, or travel as a member of a school class or group to approved off-campus activities, must be obtained from the student's parent or guardian in writing. Parents must sign a permission and responsibility statement along with a liability waiver and medical release for the student. If private cars will be used, the parent must also sign a permission slip for the student to travel with the designated driver.

New York State Law (The Electronic Signatures and Records Act) allows for digital signatures to have the same legal effect as handwritten signatures.

Field trips are privileges afforded to the students. From year to year, the field trip offerings may change. No student has an absolute right to attend a field trip. Students will be denied participation if they fail to meet academic or behavioral requirements.

Students who have received demerits, have been suspended in any of the marking periods prior to the trip will need permission from the Dean of Students or Head of School to participate in a trip. A "C" average must be maintained by students to participate in overnight field trips. The Head of School, at their discretion, may deny participation to any student based on general unacceptable behavior throughout the school year.

Upon the conclusion of a day field trip, students shall not be released to parents/guardians until the students' regular dismissal time.

## **TUTORING AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

### **Tutoring**

Outside tutors may not work on campus, and the teachers of The Academy may not tutor students they currently teach, on or off campus, regardless of the subject matter.

While tutors can be a valuable resource, it is strongly advised that the parent consult the teacher and/or school administration to determine the best course of action for each student. A strong working relationship between outside tutors and teaching staff often results in a more effective plan for remediation, therefore the tutor and teacher should establish and maintain a line of communication to support one another's efforts.

### **Specialists**

Speech/Language Pathologists may use The Bridges Academy facilities with administrative approval at parental or school district expense. Costs and procedure for payment will be discussed on an individual basis. All specialists must adhere to a screening process as outlined by the school.

### **Teacher Help**

Teachers will be available to all students for 20-30 minutes at scheduled times before and after school. Teachers will post these help session times on their individual faculty website. Attendance will be taken at these sessions and sent to the Main Office in order to maintain campus security.

# GRADING, ACADEMIC REPORTS AND HONORS

## GRADING SYSTEM FOR FIFTH THROUGH EIGHTH GRADES

### Core Subjects

A+ = 99-100  
A = 94-98  
A- = 90-93  
B+ = 87-89  
B = 84-86  
B- = 80-83  
C+= 77-79  
C = 74-76  
C- = 70-73  
D = 65-69  
F = 0-59.4

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## RETENTION OR COURSE REPETITION

Continued enrollment at The Bridges Academy may be denied if a student's grades indicate an inability or unwillingness to succeed academically. Students in third grade through eighth grade must maintain an overall "C" average. Poor marks accompanied by poor conduct may result in probation and/or dismissal.

## TRIMESTER AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Trimester and final examinations are scheduled for all students in grades 6-8. No exam will be given before the scheduled examination time. If a student does not take the examination at the time it is scheduled due to illness, then the student will be given a make-up exam at a time announced by the Administration. Report cards will be withheld until the examination has been completed. Trimester and final exams generally, but not in all cases, count as 10% of the overall grade for each trimester. All coursework and exams must be completed on or before the middle of June.

## PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARDS

Progress reports are made available midway through each trimester. Parents of students in Kindergarten through eighth grades may access grades through the parent

portal (Blackbaud). Information on this process is received through the Business Office. Report cards are sent to all parents at the end of each trimester. Please check the school calendar for specific dates.

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Graduation from The Bridges Academy is an honor. Bridges graduates are prepared academically for success in their future academic careers, as well as in their future role as responsible citizens in today's world.

An eighth grade student with a year-end grade of "F" in one or more subjects will not be granted a diploma. The student may receive a certificate of attendance. The diploma will be granted only upon satisfactory completion of summer work.

## **GRADE POINT AVERAGES AND ACADEMIC HONORS**

The Middle School holds an honors assembly at the end of each trimester to acknowledge students achieving honor roll (95% average and above) and high honor roll (98% and above) average in all subject areas. Other acknowledgements for citizenship, participation and special recognition are also acknowledged. *Students with more than 3 demerits in a given trimester will not be eligible for the honor roll in that specific trimester.*

For GPA calculation purposes, classes meeting 1-3 times per week will receive .5 credit. Classes meeting 4 and 5 times per week will receive 1.0 credit.

Academic awards are awarded at the end of each year for the different subject areas. A graduating class Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be awarded based on the highest GPA for the 7th and 8th grade combined. As such, students granted admission to the school in 8th grade are not eligible for Valedictorian and/or Salutatorian.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The Bridges Academy believes that to prepare students for success, students must have an environment rich in academics and enriched through sports, the arts, and student organizations. As such, every effort is made to provide a variety of activities that round out the high quality education given to every Bridges student.

Each Middle School student is encouraged to participate in at least one extracurricular activity sponsored by the Academy, such as athletics, music, drama, student government, publications, or special interest clubs.

Attendance is taken at each session and the attendance log is sent to the main office in order to maintain campus security.

At the conclusion of the activity, coaches/moderators will take students to the main lobby for dismissal as noted on the activity registration form. As students leave with their authorized adult, student names will be checked on the official roster.

## **ELIGIBILITY FOR ACTIVITIES**

The Head of School, in consultation with coaches/moderators, may suspend a student from participation in extracurricular activities for any general or specific unacceptable behavior. Tuition payments should be up to date before a student may register for an activity.

*Students may not participate in any extracurricular activity after school (including but not limited to a practice, games, or competition) if they are not present for the entire school day, with the exception of doctor's appointments. A note from the doctor will be required.*

## **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

Faculty and Staff offer a wide variety of clubs for our students at an additional fee. Goals and specifics on these various offerings are distributed at the beginning of each trimester. Forms are sent home electronically and are also available through the main office. Parents must sign a permission form for students to participate in the various clubs, and payment must be made through your Blackbaud Tuition Management account.

Attendance is taken at each club session and the attendance log is sent to the Main Office in order to maintain campus security.

## **INTERSCHOLASTIC/INTRAMURAL SPORTS**

Interscholastic/intramural sports are available for students enrolled in fifth through eighth grade. These sports include, but are not limited to, basketball, volleyball and soccer.

A parental permission form and a current physical form must be on file in the nurse's office before a student may participate. Parents are advised that participation in sports is inherently dangerous and, while the Administration will attempt to secure the well-being of each student, it cannot guarantee the safety of all students involved in their activities and programs. In the event of a student concussion, The Bridges Academy will follow the [New York State Guidelines/Policies](#) for Concussion

## Management in Schools.

*Parents are advised that students who participate in The Bridges Academy- sponsored interscholastic or intramural sports programs or activities do so at their own risk. The Bridges Academy is not responsible for student participation in extramural sports not directly sponsored by the School. Parents are further advised that the Administration does not control or sanction any such programs or activity and that it shall not be held liable for any injuries or damages sustained by students or others arising from participation in such programs or activities.*

# STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

## HONOR SOCIETY

The Bridges Academy Honor Society requires a 6, 7, or 8th grade student to maintain a 95% overall average. In addition, students must maintain an 85% average or above in each individual class. The 95% overall average consists of all subject area grades combined. This average exceeds the national average requirement of 87%, as Bridges expects our students to excel.

In addition to the 95% average mandate, the following is required:

- Students must promote leadership.
- Students must develop exemplary character qualities.
- Students must model and encourage citizenship.
- Students must have documented participation in school community programs.

Once a student has maintained an overall average of 95% or above for two consecutive trimesters, he/she/they will receive an invitation to apply for Honor Society. Students will then complete the application and write a personal statement in order for membership to be considered. A student must then maintain the 85% class average and 95% overall average the entire school year. Grades will be monitored each trimester. Should a student fall below the grade requirements, they will be placed on probation for the following trimester. If their performance does not improve during that time, the student will not be permitted to continue within the organization.



## **STUDENT COUNCIL (GR. 4-8)**

Student Council is an important way to foster academic and leadership skills, generate school spirit, to show our students democracy in action and to teach our students that they can make a difference in their school and community.

Our members will embrace the ideals of honesty, respect, empathy, kindness and integrity in their character. Together, as a group and individually, they will develop their confidence to accomplish the goals they set out to achieve. Our members will need to expand their knowledge while learning new, creative and innovative ways to develop programs and ideas they plan to bring to our school to grow and flourish.

Our Student Council will consist of one class representative from 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition to our class reps, we will have a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The elections will take place in the fall. Together, as a cohesive unit, these students will make decisions and initiate projects for the betterment of The Bridges Academy.

In order to run for office, a student must have:

- At least a “B” average for the current school year and no failing mark in any subject;
- No chronic disciplinary problems which may have resulted in detention, suspension or other school consequences (A student’s record of demerits will be taken into consideration).

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **GENERAL ATTENDANCE**

The Bridges Academy places a high priority on regular and punctual attendance. Daily attendance is expected. Academic achievement is a result of various contributing factors, not the least of which is regular school attendance. Much more is learned in a classroom than is contained in a textbook. Students profit most completely when they play an active and involved role in the learning process.

## **STUDENT ABSENCES**

### **EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, LATENESS TO SCHOOL AND EARLY DISMISSAL**

New York State law specifies that students may only miss school for very specific reasons.

\* The following categories are considered excused absences, lateness to school and early dismissal in accordance with New York State School Law:

- School-sponsored or sanctioned trips or activities
- Personal Illness
- Court appearances
- Death in family and/or funeral
- Religious observances

The Bridges Academy also considers the following as excused absences:

- 8th grade approved high school visits (3) must be preapproved/communicated to the school
- In-school suspension

Unexcused absences, lateness to school and early dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Extended family vacations outside of the school calendar
- Appointments that can easily be made after school hours
- Oversleeping, missing the bus
- Studying for a test

Each day a student is absent, his/her parent/guardian is required to contact the Main Office BEFORE 9:00 a.m. At this time, the parent may make arrangements to pick up needed books and assignments for the student. Books will be available for pickup at 3:30 p.m. Parents of students who are absent should check faculty web pages for any work missed.

A doctor's note must be presented to the Main Office when the student has been absent with a contagious disease, or when the student has been absent exceeding three days.

If a student will miss school for more than one school day for any reason other than listed under excused absence, the parent must contact the Head of School or Dean of Students to discuss the nature of the absence and determine how this will affect the child's class work. Middle School students who are absent are responsible for meeting with their teachers and setting up a plan to make up homework, tests, or quizzes that were missed. For an extended illness and upon request, the main office can collect homework for a student. Parents should contact the Head of School if the student will be absent for more than three (3) days to ensure continuity of instruction. Students

who leave early or arrive late are responsible for meeting with teachers of classes missed that day.

## **ILLNESS**

As a school community, we share the common goal of protecting our students and providing a safe, comfortable environment for them to learn and grow. As we progress through the “different” seasons, which will bring a variety of illnesses such as colds, the flu, stomach “bugs”, and other illnesses, please be reminded of the following health guidelines that The Bridges Academy follows to ensure the healthiest environment possible for the students. Mild illness is common but here are some reasons for exclusion from the school setting:

- If a student has a persistent fever higher than 100.4 or a stomach “bug,” either vomiting, diarrhea or both:
  - the student must stay home from school the following day to lessen the chance of spreading the virus to others and be symptom-free without medication, (Motrin, Tylenol) which would mask the temperature/symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.
- If a student has a rash of ANY kind, possible infected skin lesions or mouth sores:
  - please have the rash treated and confirmed by a doctor that it is not transmittable to others
  - a doctor’s note is required before the student can return to school
- If a student has an excessive, productive cough, runny nose or high pitched or barking sound (whooping cough), difficulty breathing with any increased activity/wheezing or unusual lethargy, please do not send him/her into school
- Strep Throat ( positive throat culture confirmed by M.D.):
  - the student must be taking antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school
  - please inform the school nurse of any (+) throat cultures
- Eye Discharge, (Pink Eye), characterized by redness, irritation, itchiness, puffy eyes and yellow or greenish discharge from the eyes, can also lead to discharge or crusting around the eyes or eyelashes:
  - must be taking antibiotic ( eye drops) for at least 24 hours and a doctor’s note is required before the student can return to school
- Severe ear pain or discharge from the ear
- Impetigo - may return to school 24 hours after treatment started
- Head Lice- may return to school after treatment. Parent must bring student to the school nurse to be cleared before returning to class
- Ringworm:
  - may remain in school that day with lesion covered
  - may return to school after 24 hours of treatment
  - areas must stay covered for 48 hours when returned to school
  - doctor’s note is required before the student can return to school

- Chicken Pox - the student cannot return to school until six days after onset of rash and all lesions have dried and crusted
- COVID-19- 5 Day Quarantine (Minimum) after onset of symptoms in addition to diagnostic screening.
- Any condition that you think may be serious or contagious to others
- Frequent hand washing (inside and outside of school) should be encouraged
- The decision to send home is at the discretion of the school nurse

If a student becomes ill or develops a fever while in school, he/she should report to his/her teacher for permission to go to the Nurse's Office. If the student is too ill to remain in class, the parent/guardian will be notified by the school nurse to pick up the student. Absences of more than 3 days require a medical note to return to school.

**COVID-19:** In most cases, The Bridges Academy will follow the guidance and recommendations of the CDC in regards to exposure, quarantine and mitigation of the COVID-19 virus.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html>

### **MAKE-UP WORK/TESTS**

Students are responsible for making up all work/tests missed within two (2) days of excused absences (i.e. illness, funeral). After two (2) days, no make-up work/tests will be accepted and the student will receive a zero. For extended absences of five days or more due to illness, students may have ten (10) days to make up all work/tests missed. Parents should confer with the teachers or the faculty web pages to determine the work/tests needed and due dates.

Teachers are not required to provide assignments or homework prior to a planned absence from school. They can post information about upcoming assignments on their web pages, and parents can access the teacher's web page for that information, as it is available. There is no guarantee that information will be posted in advance since assignments may be altered in some way. If you know that you will be absent from school, you will need to make arrangements to complete your work AFTER you return and not before you leave.

Tests or quizzes that are missed due to unexcused absences, such as extended vacations, must be taken immediately upon return to school. ***Final exams will not be rescheduled or made up unless the absence is excused.*** Homework missed during unexcused absences may not be made up. Credit will not be received for this missed work. Teachers will not be held responsible for re-teaching material that is missed due to unexcused absences.

If a parent has contacted the office prior to 9:00am, then the parent may make arrangements for the day's work to be sent to the office to be picked up. Books will not

be available until after 3:30pm. Otherwise, make-up work will be given to the student upon his or her return to school. Parents of students who are absent should check faculty web pages for any work missed.

Make-up tests must be made up before or after school. Arrangements must be made with the teacher. The teacher will notify the Main Office in order to maintain campus security. Students should be picked up by the parent or the authorized parent designee in the Main Office.

- *A suspended student shall come to school at a time and place designated by the Dean. If a test or announced quiz is being given during the time of suspension, the test shall be graded as if the student were in school.*
- *A suspended student shall keep up with schoolwork by accessing the faculty web page. All homework is to be done and turned in at the end of the suspension time. However, this work shall receive partial credit as determined by the teacher. Work not completed and turned in shall receive a zero (0).*

## **STUDENT CHARACTER AND DISCIPLINE**

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES**

The classroom teacher and, when necessary, the Dean of Students and/or Middle School Dean of Student Life handle minor disciplinary infractions.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT**

Students are expected to behave consistent with the mission, philosophy, and spirit of the school. Since the school cannot anticipate all conduct that violates this policy, the administration can take any form of disciplinary action, including expulsion, against any behavior that violates this policy, even if not specifically stated in this handbook.

### **MAJOR SCHOOL VIOLATIONS**

The following constitute major violations that will result in disciplinary action as determined by the Administration. This list is representative and should not be construed a complete list:

- Violence or threats of violence against a student or school employee, whether actual or implied
- Violence or threats of violence against school property, whether actual or implied

- Vandalism: Misuse/abuse of school property, including graffiti, carving breakage, etc. Students will be charged for any removal, repair or replacement of damaged school property.
- Psychological/sexual/physical/verbal harassment or intimidation
- Bullying and/or harassment
- Tampering or interfering with security and set-up of school computers; use of faculty, staff or administrative computers, and failure to adhere to Technology Guidelines
- Skipping school or classes/leaving school without permission
- Lewd or obscene behavior/sexually inappropriate behavior
- Disrespect toward faculty, staff or other students
- Unsportsmanlike behavior during athletic competitions, including inappropriate language, disrespect toward officials, violence toward another player or coach, etc.
- Stealing
- Drug and Alcohol Use
- Smoking and Vaping  
*Smoking and possession of lighters and matches are strictly forbidden on school property or at any school-related function. A student found in violation of this policy is subject to immediate dismissal. State law mandates that smoking and the use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited at all times within fifty (50) feet of The Bridges Academy facility and surrounding property.*
- Weapon Possession  
*Weapons, parts relating to weapons, or items that resemble weapons (whether operable or not) are strictly forbidden on school property or at any school-related function. A student found in violation of this policy may be subject to immediate dismissal, with the school having the option of referring the matter to civil authorities. In addition, any written materials featuring weapons are not permitted.*

## **THREATS OF VIOLENCE**

The disciplinary consequences for a student whose verbal or written comments, including email and/or other social media messages, that threaten serious bodily harm to another student or member of the faculty or staff or destruction of property, may include, but not be limited to:

- Immediate suspension from the school;
- Treatment or consultation by a psychologist or psychiatrist at the parents' expense and/or by the school counselor, both of whom may be asked to submit a written evaluation. If it is determined that the child was serious about the threat and has the capacity to carry it out, the child may be expelled from the school. If it is determined that the child did not seriously intend to do harm to others, the child may be allowed to return to the school, at the discretion of the Head of School

- If allowed to return to school, the child may be placed on probation with an indication that, should a similar threat occur, the child will be expelled from school;
- The school should inform the Department of Education of these cases.
- The school may submit an informational report to the police.

## **USE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL**

The sale, possession, or use of illegal drugs (including drugs that are not specifically prescribed to the student) or alcohol in any form, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol during school time, on school property, or at a school-sponsored function, is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, the school, in any matter involving drugs or alcohol, may choose to notify the police and refer the matter to the civil authorities. The school will cooperate fully with all law enforcement agencies in matters regarding substance abuse. A student found in violation of this policy is subject to immediate dismissal.

## **SMOKING & VAPING**

Smoking, including the use of “vapes” and possession of lighters and matches are strictly forbidden on school property or at any school-related function. A student found in violation of this policy is subject to immediate dismissal. New York State law mandates that smoking and the use of tobacco products is strictly prohibited at all times within fifty (50) feet of the Academy facility and surrounding property.

## **WEAPON POSSESSION**

Weapons, parts relating to weapons, or items that resemble weapons (whether operable or not) are strictly forbidden on school property or at any school-related function. A student found in violation of this policy may be subject to immediate dismissal, with the school having the option of referring the matter to civil authorities. In addition, any written materials featuring weapons are not permitted.

## **MINOR VIOLATIONS**

If a Middle School student commits a minor violation, the following consequences can be expected:

**DEMERIT:** Typically, one demerit will be assigned for minor school violations. Teacher will record the infraction within the database. The Middle School team leader will then follow up with the student and parent accordingly. Parents will be notified of infractions.

**DETENTION:** Three demerits per trimester = detention during Flex period. Subsequent Detentions = One hour after school detention

Minor Demerits Include:

- Tardiness to class
- Gum chewing: prohibited before, during and after school
- Failure to follow a teacher's directions
- Non-conformance to the uniform code
- Classroom, hallway, or stairwell disturbances
- Use of prohibited electronic equipment

In addition to a demerit, teachers may assign students detentions or other consequences with administrative approval. A one-day notice for detentions must be given to parents.

*A special note regarding non-conformance to the uniform code:* Students in fifth through eighth grades may receive a uniform violation for any infraction of the Academy dress code. Three uniform violations in a trimester will result in a detention.

## **DISCIPLINARY POLICIES AS GUIDELINES**

The disciplinary policies and procedures set forth in this handbook provide guidelines that the school may, in its discretion, employ in regulating student conduct. They do not, however, limit the school's right to freely and fully exercise any and all disciplinary measures, with or without prior notice or warning.

## **DEROGATORY LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Derogatory language is composed of words that tend or intend to detract, denigrate, disparage or belittle and can often be considered offensive. Often derogatory language includes slurs, stereotypes and/or negative references to nationality or ethnicity, race, color, sexual orientation, sex, gender/gender identity or expression, class, religion, body size/type or disability. Language that is used to denigrate, belittle, or offend; considered hurtful toward any one person or group of people; or in any way adversely affects the school and/or members of the school community, whether spoken, written or shared using text mobile devices and/or social media (e.g. private or public messages or postings on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.), will not be tolerated. This includes reciting or singing published material (e.g. song lyrics) out loud that includes derogatory language. The Bridges Academy will treat all suspected or confirmed violations of this policy as serious matters that deserve a prompt, firm and predictable response. As a community, we are committed to ongoing



conversation and education about the evolution and use of language. However, hate speech of any kind will not be tolerated and violations will result in immediate disciplinary action, not excluding suspension or expulsion. This policy extends to and includes any such communication; image or illustration that is prepared or originates off school grounds and adversely impacts the educational environment at school. As such, The Bridges Academy exercises its right to discipline students for acts near or related to the school, when a student's conduct has a detrimental effect on the health, safety or welfare of the student, of other students, of the school or of school personnel.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

The school is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all of its students. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- Physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;
- Damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property;
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;
- Placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property;
- or
- Creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities.

### **Definition:**

***Bullying*** may involve but is not limited to: *teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct.*

*Cyber-bullying includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites).*

*This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.*

### **Scope**

*This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:*

- *On school premises before, during, or after school hours;*
- *On any bus or vehicle as part of any school activity; or*
- *During any school function, extracurricular activity or other school sponsored event or activity.*

### **Reporting Complaints**

Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the school immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the

incident must be promptly reported to the Head of School. The Head of School will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the school may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the Head of School's discretion.

False reports or accusations of bullying also constitute a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **CHEATING**

Cheating is an academic offense that undermines the integrity of the academic program. A student found guilty of cheating will receive no credit for the test, examination, or assignment on which he/she cheated (i.e. should one student copy another's homework, both are cheating). A grade of zero will be averaged into the trimester grade. Students will also be issued a demerit. Parents will be notified by the teacher. Further disciplinary action may be taken based upon the circumstances of the event.

A second offense of cheating may mandate administrative action resulting in suspension or dismissal from school.

### **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION**

Inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing that connote more than simple friendship, are not permitted in school, at school dances, or at any school event. Those who violate these rules may be subject to disciplinary measures.

### **SEARCH POLICY**

The school may inspect purses, book bags or any property including cell phones or electronic devices brought on campus for reasons of theft or other concerns. Lockers are the property of The Bridges Academy and can be opened and inspected at any time. Authorized school personnel or law enforcement may search as needed

## 2024-2025 Dress Code

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p><b>FULL DRESS UNIFORM</b> – <i>Required every Wednesday and special days (to be announced by Head of School). Black, Brown or Navy Blue Sneakers preferred, may be worn every day (non-marking sole).</i></p> </div>		
<b>SLACKS/SKIRT/SKORT/JUMPER</b>	<b>Khaki</b> slacks, skirt or skort – <b>OR-</b> Navy jumper with school emblem	<b>Khaki</b> slacks, skirt or skort ( <b>*no shorter than 1 inch above knee</b> )
<b>SHIRT</b>	<b>White</b> short or long sleeve button down shirt with collar- <b>OR- White</b> round collared (Peter Pan collar) shirt ( <i>worn with jumper</i> )	<b>Light Blue</b> short or long sleeve button down shirt with collar
<b>TIE</b>	<b>Maroon/navy</b> stripe ( <b>*CLIP-ONS OKAY</b> ) – <b>OR- Tab tie</b> <i>Maroon/navy stripe (worn with jumper)</i>	<b>Maroon/navy</b> stripe ( <b>*NO CLIP-ONS</b> )
<b>SWEATER</b>	<b>Navy</b> V-neck cardigan with school emblem ( <i>*not required if jumper is worn</i> )	-NOT REQUIRED-
<b>BLAZER</b>	<b>Optional: Navy</b> blazer with school emblem- <i>may be worn instead of sweater but is <b>not required</b></i>	<b>Navy</b> blazer with school emblem
<b>HOSIERY</b>	<b>Khaki</b> crew socks ( <i>with slacks</i> )- <b>OR-Navy</b> knee socks or <b>Navy</b> tights ( <i>with skirt, skort or jumper</i> )	<b>Khaki</b> crew socks ( <i>with slacks</i> )- <b>OR-Navy</b> knee socks or <b>Navy</b> tights ( <i>with skirt or skort</i> )
<b>SHOES</b>	<b>Black</b> or <b>Brown</b> leather - <b>OR-</b> <b>Sneakers</b> with non-marking soles	<b>Black</b> or <b>Brown</b> leather ( <i>heels/sole may not be higher than 1 inch</i> )- <b>OR-</b> <b>Sneakers</b> with non-marking soles
<b>BELT</b>	<b>Black</b> or <b>Brown</b> leather ( <i>*only required with slacks</i> )	<b>Black</b> or <b>Brown</b> leather ( <i>*only required with slacks</i> )
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p><b>OPTIONAL UNIFORM</b> – <i>May be worn Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri</i></p> </div>		
<b>OPTIONAL SHIRT</b>	<b>White</b> short or long sleeve polo with school emblem.	<b>Light blue</b> short or long sleeve polo with school emblem.
<b>SLACKS/SKIRT/SKORT</b>	<b>Khaki</b>	<b>Khaki or Navy</b>
<b>SWEATER</b>		

	<b>Navy</b> Quarter Zip Pullover or crew neck cardigan with school emblem ( <i>polo must be worn underneath</i> )	<b>Navy</b> V-neck, cardigan, vest or Quarter Zip Pullover with school emblem ( <i>polo must be worn underneath</i> )
<b>OPTIONAL SUMMER UNIFORM</b> - <i>May be worn the 1st day of school through September 30<sup>th</sup> &amp; May 1<sup>st</sup> through the last day of school.</i>	Grades K-4: <b>White</b> short sleeve polo with school emblem; <b>Khaki</b> shorts	
	Grades 5-8: <b>Light Blue</b> short sleeve polo with school emblem; <b>Khaki</b> or <b>Navy</b> shorts	
	Grades K-8: <b>Khaki</b> crew socks	

**Order uniforms from Lands' End at [www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com) (Preferred school #900158809)**

*\*Please note: Fleece items are approved but are **not** to be worn during school day.*

\*\* Hairstyles must reflect the modesty that is in keeping with The Bridges Academy dress code.

# **GENERAL INFORMATION**

## **ACCIDENTS**

All accidents and injuries are reported immediately to the Administration Office personnel. Parents will be notified by the Nurses Office personnel.

## **ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

The Academy carries supplemental accident insurance for all students attending The Bridges Academy. This insurance is in effect for incidents occurring on the premises as well as travel to and from school. This is supplemental coverage only. The family's insurance carrier is primary and school supplemental accident insurance is secondary. For further information on this insurance, please contact the Business Office.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Student birthdays may be celebrated during the student's class time. We ask that no food items be purchased for birthday celebrations. However, students are permitted to bring small gifts such as pencils, stickers, etc. for their classmates.

## **BOOKS AND BACKPACKS**

All books and bags must be clearly marked with the student's first and last name. For space and safety reasons, Middle School students may not use backpacks during the school day. Middle school students have the opportunity to go to their lockers between classes to obtain needed books and supplies. Books, bags and other personal possessions should not be left in the hallways.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER**

If a student has a change of address or telephone number, parents/guardians must immediately notify the Business Office & Main Office in writing as well as update their profile on Blackbaud.

## **CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS**

State law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to The Office of Children and Family Services. The Academy will cooperate with all child protective investigations.

Child protective investigations sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, The Bridges Academy will seek to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The Bridges Academy will also request the presence of a school staff member during the investigative interviews on school property. However, please note that, under state law, The Office of Children and Family Services and local law enforcement have the discretion to conduct unannounced interviews and to disallow school staff member presence during these interviews.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

The Academy is interested in the well-being and safety of its students. New York State statutes require that professional persons, including all school personnel, report any known or suspected child abuse to The Office of Children and Families to the State Department's abuse registry or directly to the local office of the department responsible for investigation of reports.

### **Procedures**

If there is a report to the school or a suspicion of abuse, maltreatment, or neglect, a verbal report is made within 48 hours after the person first suspects abuse, neglect or maltreatment. If the suspected abuse or neglect involves a person responsible for the custody, care or welfare of the child, the report must generally be made to the New York State Department of Family and Child Protective Services. All other reports should be made to any local or state law enforcement agency, another state agency near where the abuse occurred, or any agency designated by a court as responsible for the protection of children.

New York State Mandated Reporters in a school setting include but are not limited to: teachers, aides, speech and resource teachers, guidance counselor or psychologist, school administrators. For more information about mandated reporting, [click here](#).

A report reflects the reporter's belief that a child has been or may be abused or neglected or has died of abuse or neglect. The reporter will identify the following information, if known:

- The name and address of the child;
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child; and
- Any other pertinent information concerning the alleged or suspected abuse or neglect.

### **Notifying the Parents**

The Office of Children and Family Services or law enforcement agency conducting the

investigation is responsible for notifying the parents when a child abuse report has been made concerning their child. The school and The Bridges Academy staff does not ordinarily notify parents of such investigations unless Child Protective Services directs the school or staff to do so.

### **Disciplinary Action for Perpetrators of Child Abuse**

Suspected perpetrators of child abuse, including school employees, volunteers, or students, may be removed from the school premises and may be subject to arrest and criminal prosecution. Those who engage in child abuse in the workplace, or who use school facilities, property, or resources to engage in child abuse are subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal from employment, engagement, or educational programs.

## **CUSTODIAL/NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS**

The Bridges Academy abides by all provisions of New York State law with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the child, to the academic records and to other school-related information regarding the child. If separated or divorced, a certified copy of all custody and visitation orders must be sent to The Bridges Academy. If amended at any time, a certified copy of the amended orders must be sent to the Head of School. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, or that a parent is not permitted access to the child, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with a certified copy of the court order.

### **Testifying in Divorce or Custody Proceedings**

It is requested that parents not compel the attendance, testimony, or deposition of any school employee in any divorce, custody, or other legal proceedings which may in any way involve the dissolution of marriage or the determination of parental/custody rights. In the event that a parent or legal guardian disregards this request, any school personnel who are required to attend legal proceedings may be represented by an attorney. In addition, any and all legal fees and costs incurred by the school may be charged and become the responsibility of the requesting parent or legal guardian.

## **EMERGENCY INFORMATION FORMS**

Emergency information for all students should be completed at the beginning of the school year. This information must be completed and submitted before the first day of

school. Please be sure to update any changes throughout the school year.

## **FINES/DISCIPLINE**

Should a student damage school property, fines are imposed according to the severity of the offense or the value of the property including, but not limited to, repair or replacement. Depending on the circumstances, such actions may result in discipline, up to and including dismissal.

## **FIRE/LOCK-DOWN AND DISASTER DRILLS**

Fire, lock-down and disaster drills are planned periodically during the school year to acquaint and remind students of escape routes and procedures. They are often unannounced in order to review our safety and communication protocols. *Silence* is mandatory during every drill; demerits can be issued if students talk during fire drills.

The Bridges Academy Emergency Plan is overseen by the Head of School, administration and the Board of Trustees and made available to all staff with emergency exit postings available in all classrooms. This plan was written with guidance from our local and federal emergency agencies.

Drills can be concerning for students, especially in the younger grades. It is recommended that parents reinforce the school messaging regarding the safety of all students and the importance of familiarizing themselves with important school routines and guidelines.

## **FUNDRAISING/BUSINESS VENTURES**

All fundraising projects conducted under the auspices of The Bridges Academy will be in concert with the mission and purpose of Bridges.

The fundraising policy pertains to all fundraising activity that involves the Academy or its constituents. This policy addresses all funds raised that benefit the school or benefit another charitable organization.

All gifts-in-kind or donations to a specific sport, club, or program must be pre-approved. All gifts-in-kind must be pre-approved by the Head of School to assure that student and operational needs are being best served. All restricted annual fund programs must be pre-approved by the Head of School and the Board of Trustees.

All fundraising projects must be registered with school administration at least three weeks prior to the anticipated start date. Fundraisers are not to be conducted until a notification of approval has been issued in writing by the Head of School. Such



registration must include a detailed description of the nature and purpose of the project, and a copy of all solicitation materials such as letters, flyers, brochures, etc.

Approved fundraisers for the benefit of an institution or charity other than The Bridges Academy will require that donation to be made payable to that entity and not to the Academy.

All fundraising projects benefiting the school must comply with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code for non-profit organizations.

Only approved fundraising materials that benefit The Bridges Academy or an approved charity will be distributed or mailed to The Bridges Academy families and then only after approval from the Head of School.

Any fundraising project that does not comply with this policy is subject to cancellation by the Head of School.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Every student entering or attending public or private school must be immunized, as required by 2164 of the Public Health Law. In accordance with that law, public school and private school students must be immunized for:

- Diphtheria and Tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine and Pertussis vaccine (Dtap/DTP/Tdap)
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine (MMR)
- Polio vaccine (IPV/OPV)
- Varicella (Chickenpox) vaccine
- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MenACWY)
- Haemophilus influenzae type b conjugate vaccine (HiB)
- Pneumococcal Conjugate vaccine (PCV)

As a prerequisite for your child's admission to, or continued attendance at school, you must have your health care provider administer the immunization, unless you state a valid reason for withholding such consent. Unless our school nurse receives documentation of immunization from your child's health care provider, he/she will not be permitted entry to school. ( See <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf> for more information about immunization requirements for school entrance/attendance.) No child may be admitted to, or allowed to attend school for more than 14 days without an appropriate immunization certificate or other acceptable evidence of immunization. In addition the school principal must report to the local health authority the name and address of any student refused admission or continued attendance for lack of proof of immunizations.

State Public Health Law 2164 also mandates that children who are not fully immunized can only continue to attend school if they are in the “process” of completing the ACIP Catch Up Schedule. “In Process” status requires that the child has received at least the first dose of each immunization series and has age appropriate appointments to complete the series according to the ACIP schedule. The school requires a list of the missing vaccines with documented appointment dates from our physician. Schedules that do not meet the vaccination intervals specified by the schedule are not acceptable. A child following a schedule other than the one provided by ACIP must be excluded from school.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

When it is determined that there will be a closure or modified schedule, notice will be sent via phone message, email, text, web site, social media and through the local media. Wherever possible, this decision will be made the night before, but in some cases, it is not possible until the morning of, no later than 6am. On most occasions, we will follow suit with what the West Islip School District decides to do, although we always have the discretion to do what suits our school as the need becomes apparent.

In the event of an early dismissal, we will send out a message using the mediums mentioned above indicating the time of dismissal and any special instructions that may need to be followed. School district busing can often cause delays, so planning for an alternate car pickup either by the parent or authorized person is strongly advised. Early dismissals tend to be a complex undertaking, so if there is a significant question about closing early, we will make every effort to close in advance.

## **LOCKERS**

Each Middle School student is assigned a locker or shelf space. No marks, decals, posters, etc. are to be placed on the lockers or shelves. Lockers are the property of The Bridges Academy and can be opened and inspected at any time. Authorized school personnel or law enforcement may search as needed.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Articles found should be turned in to the following places and may be claimed from the same areas:

- Books, supplies, clothing, gym clothes, athletic supplies are kept inside the Dean of Students Office.
- Glasses, purses, jewelry, money and other valuables are kept in the Administration Office.

The Bridges Academy assumes no responsibility for items that are lost, misplaced, or

stolen. At the end of each month, items will be donated to local organizations.

## **LUNCH/SNACKS**

Lunch will be served beginning the first full day of school. Students may participate in the lunch program or bring their lunch. To read about the program and create an account, please see the school's website. Lunch items are available on a daily basis. Parents may limit their child's selections by designating the items and days.

Beverages other than water are not permitted on campus other than at lunchtime.

Lunch Restrictions:

- Lunch brought in by outside vendors will not be accepted by the Administration Office.
- Student use of the microwave is not permitted.
- Bottles or any other item made of glass may not be brought on campus.

Snack Guidelines:

- Snacks may be consumed only at designated times throughout the day as determined by the teacher.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own snacks as sharing of food is prohibited.

## **NUT AND ALLERGY AWARENESS**

To the extent that the Bridges Academy is able, nut products have been eliminated from our campus, as well as school-sponsored events and activities. In addition, we ask that families refrain from sending peanut or other nut-based foods to school. Nonetheless, it remains the responsibility of families of those children with severe food allergies to work closely and cooperatively with our school in order to clarify the exact nature of the medical condition; and to closely monitor and make sure that their children avoid the foods to which they are allergic. Classroom teachers and administration will be informed of the details and will establish protocols for our response if a severe allergic reaction does occur.

On some occasions, parents will be asked to provide an alternate treat when there is an all class occasion that may involve bringing food in that may have inadvertently been exposed to nut products. Our school does not accept responsibility for baked goods or any other products that are brought to campus that may unknowingly have been exposed to or have nut based products within them. Allergic students who are authorized to self-administer and the school administrative staff have ready access to parent provided epinephrine auto-injectors in the event of anaphylaxis, but this may only be accomplished to the extent that you inform us as to the specific allergies and to the

other necessary medical responses. Additionally, our school has a limited number of epinephrine auto-injectors that are stored in a designated cabinet for general use in the event of an emergency.

## **MEDIA RELEASE FORM**

All parents are required to designate Media Release Permission at the time of enrollment of the student.

This information indicates a parent's consent or non-consent to use their child's picture, video, interview and/or student work in media presentations about the school. If changes are necessary, the form must be updated and returned to the main office. If a form is not signed, the photo may not be used in the Yearbook.

## **MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

All new students to The Bridges Academy, as well as students entering Toddler, Nursery, Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 7th grade, must present a current physical examination record given within the last year. In addition, New York statutes require mandatory vision and hearing screenings.

Any medical condition that affects a student's physical activity must be noted on the medical form. If a condition arises after an examination record is filed, it must be reported to the Administration Office.

All medical examinations must be recorded on the official health department form, which is available at all doctors' offices. Health forms can also be found on our Bridges website for you to print for your convenience.

## **MEDICATION**

Students are not permitted to carry or distribute any prescription or non-prescription drugs or treatments, including aspirin, on the school grounds or at any school function. The administering of medicine to a student outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to school personnel except under unusual circumstances. When it is necessary for students to take prescription medication during school hours, the parent is to bring the medication in its original container to the Nurse's Office for safekeeping. The medication is to be accompanied by the form letter from the child's physician indicating the dosage and times/frequency the medication is to be taken. In addition, the child's parent is to countersign the physician's letter.

At the proper time, the student is to come to the Nurse's Office to take the medication in the presence of the school nurse. The nurse will record the name of the child,

medication, date, time, amount and method of dosage. No medication of any type, prescription or non-prescription, may be distributed or kept in a school locker, book bag, or carried on a child's person unless pre-approved by Administration.

## **MESSAGES**

In keeping with the Academy's policy to interrupt classes as little as possible, parents/guardians are asked to settle as many plans as possible before the start of the school day. The Administration understands that there are times when emergencies arise concerning pick-up plans and a message will be given to the student. When there is an EMERGENCY change in plans, parents/guardians contact the Main Office. Students will not be called out of the classroom to call home.

## **ON-CAMPUS CLASS PARTIES**

Throughout the year there will be grade level celebrations to acknowledge holidays or special events. Details of these gatherings are arranged between the class parent and teacher. With the exception of fresh fruit/vegetables and frozen treats, food items will be purchased through the designated school vendor who will ensure portion size and potential allergens in each ingredient. The vendor will deliver the necessary items to the school on the day of the event.

## **OFF-CAMPUS CLASS PARTIES**

The Bridges Academy does not sponsor, oversee, or in any way control parties or social functions at private residences or off-campus sites. School-sanctioned events are specified on the calendar or are identified as such in written notices generated and distributed by The Bridges Academy. Parents/guardians are advised that The Bridges Academy and their employees, agents and corporate members are not liable and will be held harmless from any claims or liabilities that allegedly arise from or are related to student attendance at parties or social functions at private residences or from their attendance at functions not sponsored by The Bridges Academy.

*Students engaged in conduct that is contrary to the mission and philosophy of the Academy may be subject to disciplinary action regardless of whether the conduct occurred at an Academy-sanctioned function or off campus.*

*\*Invitations should not be distributed in school unless an entire class/grade is invited.*

## **PARENT CONCERNS**

Concerns about a student's academic progress and/or conduct should be discussed with the faculty or staff member directly involved. If additional concerns remain, a

conference with the faculty member and the Administration may take place.

Parents are encouraged to confer with teachers if they have a question or would like additional information related to their child. To facilitate this process, an email to the teacher with a message is most helpful. The teacher will respond at his/her first opportunity. It is imperative that parents refrain from conferring with teachers during school hours or during a school activity when a teacher has a direct responsibility to his/her students. Parents/Guardians shall not contact a teacher at his/her home.

There will be a designated parent teacher conference day in the fall, and as needed in the spring to review progress of the child to that point in the year. Meetings can also occur at mutually convenient times for parents, teachers and/or administration.

## **PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

The purpose of the Parents' Association (PA) is to promote the welfare of The Bridges Academy by maintaining a close working relationship among parents, faculty, administration, and staff. All parents of current students are automatically members and are encouraged to attend the regularly scheduled Parents' Association meetings as indicated on the all-school calendar. Volunteers are always welcome to help with the many events organized. Those interested in helping with any of the PA's functions should call the specific chairperson.

## **REVIEWING RECORDS**

If a parent/guardian or student wishes to review his/her school records, the request must be made in writing to Administration giving at least twenty-four (24) hours notice.

## **SCHOOL NOTICES**

In order to keep parents/guardians well informed, newsletters, announcements and notices will be sent home via email, hard copy, or postings on the school's website. Parents/guardians are asked to read them in their entirety. Please adhere to deadlines for any materials to be returned to the Administration Office or the homeroom/sponsoring teacher.

## **STUDENT PLANNERS**

Students in all grades are expected to be responsible for their work at school and home. This is their vocation as a student. As part of their responsibility, students in second through eighth grades are provided with an assignment book for all assignments and other important classroom information.

## **TECHNOLOGY USE**

The Bridges Academy provides students with access to the school network, the Internet and various technology equipment and programs for school related work. The Academy expects all students to access all technologies in a responsible and ethical fashion in compliance with all applicable policies both in and out of the school setting.

Parents & students must review and sign the Technology Acceptable Use Policy. This document governs the use of computers and all other technologies, such as Chromebooks, iPads and cell phones.

### **Receiving and Returning a Chromebook**

- Students are issued a Chromebook and charger that will be collected at the end of each school year for maintenance.
- Any student who transfers out of The Bridges Academy is required to return their Chromebook and charger. If the Chromebook and charger are not returned, the parent/guardian will be held responsible for payment in full. The school reserves the right to withhold academic records if need be.

### **Student Gmail Accounts**

- Students are provided with a school gmail account for academic purposes only. The interface is monitored by network administrators and is subject to filtering of inappropriate content.
- The Bridges Academy Google Apps for Education account is designed for students to email students and teachers internally within our own domain. Students are not able to email external email addresses.
- Students are not permitted to add their personal Gmail accounts to their Chromebooks and should only login to their machines using their Bridges Google account. The Chromebook is not a personal device.
- Students should not transmit language/material that is profane, obscene, abusive, or offensive to others.
- All emails and content on the Chromebooks are the property of The Bridges Academy and may be archived for use.

### **Chromebook Use and Handling**

When transporting your Chromebook, a few simple things can be done to protect it:

- Purchase a case for the machine.
- Keep the machine dry and protect it from any liquid or food.
- Always use two hands when handling your Chromebook.
- Do not walk with an open screen.
- Use your Chromebook on a flat, hard, stable surface.
- Do not lean on top of the Chromebook.

- Do not leave the Chromebook in direct sunlight or near a heat source.
- Clean the screen with a soft, dry anti-static, or micro-fiber cloth. Do not use window cleaner or any type of liquid or water on the Chromebook.
- Plug in your machine every day after school allowing the battery to fully charge.

### **Chromebook at School**

Students must bring their machines fully charged to school every day. Students are responsible for bringing their Chromebook to all classes. Chromebooks are not permitted in the cafeteria or at recess (indoor or out).

### **Chromebook at Home**

If a student leaves their Chromebook at home, they must phone parents to bring the Chromebook to school. Repeat violations of this policy will result in a demerit.

### **Video and Sound**

Students may not record teachers, lessons or take pictures without permission. Cameras and audio recording features on the Chromebook should only be used with teacher approval. Sound must be muted at all times unless permission is obtained from the teacher for instructional purposes. If a student uses video and sound without permission, a demerit will be issued.

### **Chromebook Software**

All Chromebooks are supplied with the latest Google Chrome Operating System and other applications to support our curriculum. Students are not permitted to install additional software or extensions on their Chromebook.

### **Inspection**

Students may be selected at random to provide their Chromebook for inspection. The purpose for inspection will be to check for proper care and maintenance as well as inappropriate material being carried into the school.

### **Storing a Chromebook**

When not in use during the school day, Chromebooks should be stored in lockers or cubbies. They should not be left in the hallway. Nothing should be placed on top of the Chromebook.

### **Chromebooks Left in Unsupervised / Unsecured Areas**

A Chromebook should not be left in an unsupervised area such as the cafeteria, unlocked classroom, library, gym, hallway, bathroom, bus, or car. Unsupervised Chromebooks will be confiscated and taken to the Head of School's office. Disciplinary action will be taken for leaving a Chromebook in an unsupervised location. A demerit may be issued.



**Accidental Damage or Lost Chromebook**

Chromebooks are school property and are subject to a disciplinary response in the event of misuse or mishandling. The Bridges Academy technology department is the first point of contact for any issues with a machine.

**Insurance**

Chromebooks that are taken home are insured. This insurance covers accidental damage and standard perils. If a student has a problem with their Chromebook, they must bring it to the STEAM Lab for inspection and to obtain a loaner while the machine is being repaired.

Parents may not bring a Chromebook to an outside vendor for repair and will be charged for full replacement cost of a device that has been lost.

**Repairing or Replacing a Chromebook**

- A loaner Chromebook may be issued.
- Students and parents are responsible for the loaner Chromebook and are held accountable if the loaner Chromebook is damaged.
- If repair is needed due to malicious damage, the school may refuse to provide a loaner Chromebook.

If a Chromebook is lost, a student's SmartTuition account will be charged \$200 for a replacement. If an adapter is lost, the account will be charged \$25.

**CELL PHONES AND PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of cell phones is not permitted on campus during school hours (including dismissal), school activities, field trips and extracurricular activities. Cell phones and other devices must be turned off during school time and stored in backpacks, lockers or with the teacher if there is a cell phone collection area in the classroom. Should a cell phone ring during the school day, a student will be issued a demerit. Should a student be found with a cell phone, the device will be turned in to the Dean until a parent retrieves it, and a demerit will be issued. Should a second offense occur, the device will be kept by the Dean for a predetermined period of time.

All personal electronic equipment such as, but not limited to, laser pen pointers, Bluetooth devices, etc., are not permitted on campus without prior approval. "Smart" watches are treated as a cellular device and must also be powered off and stored in backpacks or lockers. Students found wearing and using a Smartwatch during the school day will receive a demerit.

**TELEPHONE MESSAGES AND TELEPHONE USE**

No student will be called from class for a telephone call. If it is necessary to leave an

emergency message for a student, the main office staff will take the message and deliver the message.

Phone calls by students will be allowed only in emergency situations. Forgetting school items does not constitute an emergency. **A member of the office staff will place the phone call for the student in the event of illness or a concern about pickup.**

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks are loaned to students every year from Suffolk County BOCES for students who live in Suffolk County. Each textbook that is assigned must be returned at the end of the school year. Workbooks are provided but do not need to be returned unless specifically requested. BOCES will require payment from the parent or guardian for any lost or damaged textbooks. Students not residing in Suffolk County should contact their home district for textbook information.

## **TUITION PAYMENTS**

The Bridges Academy uses the services of Blackbaud Tuition Management in the billing and payment process for tuition. Information on registering for this service is provided by the Business Office of the school.

Parents are expected to make full and timely payments for their child's education. No records will be sent to transferring schools of students whose financial commitment is in arrears. (See Enrollment Contracts)

## **VIDEO SURVEILLANCE**

In keeping with applicable local, state and federal law, The Bridges Academy routinely records video images throughout school premises. Surveillance cameras are in locations where the individuals being recorded have no expectation of privacy and are in plain sight. Parents/guardians are advised that these recordings are being made and that they may be routinely reviewed by The Bridges Academy Administration, Staff, Faculty and/or law enforcement, as the Administration deems appropriate under the circumstances.

## **VISITORS**

In order to maintain a secure and safe campus, all parents, visitors, and service workers must check in to receive a visitor pass and check out through the front office. The only exceptions to this policy are during school-wide and grade-level events.

The learning environment is not to be disturbed by parents or visitors. Students may not bring guests to classes.

All paraprofessionals including but not limited to speech pathologists, audiologists, and physical therapists must adhere to a screening process as outlined below for Volunteers and Chaperones.

***Students, parents and faculty are not to open any door leading to the exterior of the locked campus, allowing an unauthorized person into this secured area. This is a serious violation of school security. All parents and visitors must gain access to the campus from the front office.***

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS AND CHAPERONES**

All parent volunteers and chaperones for school events on campus must check in and receive a visitor pass and check out at the security desk. In order to maintain a secure and safe campus, entering and exiting the school is only through the front entrance.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

Parents/guardians of students who are withdrawn from The Bridges Academy are required to complete and sign the proper withdrawal forms of the school given by the business office. These forms must be signed and all financial obligations for the academic year must be met in order for student records to be forwarded to another school. *Tuition payments, 10% registration deposits and all fees are nonrefundable.*

The procedure for withdrawing a student from The Bridges Academy is as follows:

- The parent must formally notify the Business Office.
- The Business Office will conduct an exit interview with the parent.
- The parent will sign the proper withdrawal forms.
- The parent will meet all financial obligations.
- The student's academic records will be forwarded to the next school upon request of the receiving school.

The Bridges Academy does offer a tuition insurance plan that families can enroll in for an additional charge which covers the cost of tuition for the school year (in full or in part) should a family need to withdraw due to unforeseen circumstances. For more information, contact the business office upon enrollment. \*\* All new students must accept the tuition insurance policy during their first year at The Bridges Academy.