Belmont Academy Charter School
A BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK SCHOOL

Belmont Charter Elementary School
A BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK SCHOOL

Belmont Charter Middle School
A BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK SCHOOL

Belmont Charter High School
A BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK SCHOOL

Inquiry Charter School
A BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK SCHOOL

STUDENT- FAMILY School Handbook 2026-2027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CEO Welcome Message Pg 4

Belmont Charter Network (BCN) Mission/Values Pg 4

BCN Community Member Expectations & Responsibilities Pg 5

SCHOOL ACCESS, STUDENT ACCESS & SAFETY Pg 5

- Visiting the School
- Collaboration/Meeting with School Staff
- Student Document Requests
- Student Contact Information
- Emergency School Closure Communication
- Emergency Drills
- Class Trips
- Video Surveillance
- Volunteering

ACADEMICS Pg 7

- Academic Program
- Grading Policy
- Grading Scale
- Report Cards and Progress Reports
- Homework Policy
- Honor Roll
- Promotion Requirements

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS Pg 10

- Arrival and Dismissal Policy
- Attendance Expectations
- 3 Categories of Absences
- Special Event Attendance
- Tardiness
- Early Dismissals
- Truancy & Project GO
- Attendance Awards
- Transportation

SPECIALIZED SERVICES Pg 13

- Specialized Services Overview
- Multi-tiered System of Supports
- Family Support Services

- Special Education Services
- Referral of Students for Screening
- 504 Plans
- ELL Services

STUDENT HEALTH Pg 15
- School Nurse
- School Administration of Medications
- Student Administration of Medications
- Immunizations

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT Pg 17
- Code of Conduct Expectations
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Code of Conduct Infractions
- Consequences
- Student Interventions
- Discipline Due Process
- Suspension Procedures
- Expulsion Procedures
- Manifestation Determination
- Bullying Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Locker Use Policy
- Search & Seizure Policy
- Metal Detector Entry Search Policy
- Loss of or Damage to School Property

TECHNOLOGY Pg 28
- Acceptable Use
- Privacy
- Network Security
- Personal Electronics
- Issue and Return
- Repair and Damage
- Repair and Damage Fees
- Repossession
- Handling and Care of Device

NOTIFICATIONS OF RIGHTS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES Pg 32
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act
- Photography & Videography Permission

- Student Abuse Reporting
- Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment
- Parents' & students' Privacy Rights to student Information and Education Records
- Confidentiality of Personally Identifying Information
- Teacher Qualifications
- Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy
- Title IX Notice and Complaint Procedure Summary
- Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth Policy Summary

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to Belmont Charter Network! We are honored you have trusted us with your child's education and excited to partner with you for the upcoming school year. We serve as a "community school" model focused on meeting the academic, social and emotional needs of each of our K-12 . If we discover a barrier to our students' learning, we have built a school model that can adjust to meet that barrier honoring the promise of each child and their ability to succeed.

Our approach includes not only a focus on academic success but the social emotional health of the whole student. We partner with the non-profit Community Education Alliance of West Philadelphia (CEAWP) and over 35 other community partners to host the following programs that enhance our students education experience and further our service to our community through our schools:

- Head Start/Pre-K
- School Based Health Care
- School Based Behavioral Health Care
- Out of School Time Programming
- Year Round Daycare
- College and Career Readiness

We look forward to the opportunities this school year will bring!

Jennifer Faustman
Chief Executive Officer
Belmont Charter Network

BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK MISSION

At Belmont Charter Network, we prepare students for life by promoting the academic, social and emotional well-being of each individual child. We believe every child has their own path. Our community schools support students and their families, inspiring students to realize their own unique potential.

BELMONT CHARTER NETWORK CORE VALUES

1. It takes a village.
2. Kids first.
3. Joy enhances learning.
4. Relationships are at the core of our work.
5. Every moment is a learning opportunity.
6. All students can succeed.

COMMUNITY MEMBER EXPECTATIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Each school community member plays an important role in creating safe and supportive learning environments for our students. To promote a positive and respectful learning environment, it is expected that families, students, and staff will conduct themselves in accordance with all school policies and procedures and model appropriate behavior at all times. In instances where conduct is unbecoming or inappropriate, individuals may be asked to leave the building and will only be allowed to return with administrative approval.

SCHOOL ACCESS, STUDENT ACCESS & SAFETY

Visiting the School

In order to ensure the safety of our staff and students, all visitors entering the building at non-arrival/dismissal times must report to the Main Office and provide, without exception, a valid photo ID and appropriate documentation (as needed) prior to signing in. Visitors must wear a visitor's pass for the duration of their visit. All external school doors are locked during the day. All visitors, including family members, will need to be buzzed into the building.

Guardians and family members are encouraged to participate in our school and must arrange visits in advance and follow the school visitor policy. When visiting or observing their student, guardians may not disrupt instruction or address other students. Violation of this policy will result in revocation of visitation and participation privileges, including field trips, classroom visits, and school events. *Please note that some days are not appropriate for visits (e.g. testing days). For this reason, the school reserves the right to deny visit requests.

1. **Entrance Protocol**
   - All visitors must enter through the **designated main entrance**.
   - Bags and personal items may be subject to **search** by security personnel.

2. **Security Screening**
   - All visitors must pass through a **walk-through weapons detector** or be scanned with a **hand-held wand**
   - Refusal to comply with the screening process will result in **denial of entry**.
   - Prohibited items (weapons, vapes, etc.) will be confiscated.

3. **Identification & Sign-In**
   - Visitors must present a **valid government-issued photo ID** (e.g., driver's license or state ID).
   - Visitors must **sign in** using the school's visitor management system.
   - A **visitor badge** is issued and must be worn visibly at all times.

4. **Escorted Access**
   - Visitors are often **escorted** to and from their destination by school staff or security personnel.
   - Unauthorized access to classrooms, hallways, or student areas is **strictly prohibited**.

5. **Permitted Purposes for Visit**
   - Valid visit reasons may include:
     - Scheduled meetings with teachers or staff
     - Student pickup/drop-off
     - Attending a school-approved event

- Unscheduled visits or visits without prior approval may be denied.

6. **Prohibited Items**
   - All weapons, illegal substances, and unauthorized electronics are strictly prohibited.
   - Items flagged during weapons detector screening will be inspected and possibly confiscated.

7. **Code of Conduct**
   - Visitors must follow all **school rules**, behave respectfully, and comply with staff directions.
   - Disruptive, aggressive, or non-compliant behavior may lead to **removal** from school property and possible **ban from campus**.

8. **Emergency Procedures**
   - During lockdowns or emergencies, visitor access is suspended.
   - Visitors on site during emergencies must follow **lockdown protocols** and remain under supervision.

Collaboration/Meeting with School Staff

To best meet everyone's needs, any guardian who wishes to meet with a member of the school staff, including a classroom teacher, a school director, before-or-after care staff member, or any support staff, must contact the staff member directly for an appointment. All staff and families are able to use the ParentSquare app to communicate directly with one another. Guardians are encouraged to reach out directly to staff/teacher with any specific questions or concerns about their students. Please know that we will not interrupt instructional class time for meetings.

Student Document Requests

Any guardian requesting information may report to the Main Office or send an email to the front desk. For guardian convenience and to avoid disrupting daily school business, paperwork requests such as transfer documentation and enrollment materials will be handled within 48 hours and may not be accessible immediately upon request. Please be aware that only the legal guardian of record may request such materials.

Student Contact Information

Up-to-date contact information must be on file in the Main Office at all times. Contact information includes guardian phone numbers, address, e-mail address, emergency contacts, and guardian employment information. If a phone number or other contact information changes, it is the guardian's responsibility to notify the Main Office, in writing, immediately. This can be done in person at the Main Office or via email. Please note, in order to change a student's address, 1 proof of address must be provided at the time the request is made. In order to change a student's guardian of record, current court documentation is required.

Mandated Reporting:

All school staff members are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Mandated reporters are required by federal and state law to report suspected child abuse or neglect immediately.

Emergency School-Closure Communication

All weather/ emergency information will be announced via emergency alert via Parentsquare and on Channel 6 under the school's name. Announcements shared through Parentsquare will come to families through text messages, auto-calls, and email, as well as alerts within the app itself. As a result, it is essential for phone numbers to be up-to-date at all times. Note that our school closings may not always follow the School District of Philadelphia closings.

Emergency and Evacuation Drills

School-wide drills will take place on a monthly basis. Students are expected to remain silent for the duration of the drill. Emergency drills and evacuations may require students to exit the building without their property, including jackets and book bags. These drills are done for safety reasons and in accordance with school and state laws.

Class Trips

We sponsor a number of field trips throughout the year, both during the school day and in conjunction with after-care programming, because we believe trips help enhance the school experience. Each student MUST have a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian in order to attend any class trip out of the neighborhood. Neighborhood walking trips (i.e. the local library, Fairmount Park, Concourse Lake, etc.) are covered by permission slips signed during the enrollment process and at the beginning of each school year. Certain circumstances may require an adult to accompany a child on a trip. Students must wear their school uniform on all trips unless it is noted otherwise on their permission slip.

Video Surveillance

For everyone's safety, 24-hour video surveillance is in use on the premises. Only staff authorized by Belmont Charter Network shall have access to the recordings. Video monitoring of buildings or areas for security purposes shall be retained for thirty (30) calendar days and then disposed of. Copies of video monitoring preserved as evidence for student hearings or court cases will be made part of the student's education record. Copies of recordings of incidents subject to investigations, court cases, or due process hearings must be retained until resolved. Videotape/film of students is considered part of a student's educational record as it is maintained by an educational entity and therefore, viewing of a videotape must adhere to regulations of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Volunteering

- In accordance with Pennsylvania state laws and for the safety of all students, any volunteer that has direct contact with students must provide copies of the following documents to the Main Office.
    - Child Abuse History Clearance
    - Pennsylvania State Criminal Record Check
    - FBI Federal Criminal History Record Check and Fingerprinting

- The fee for the Child Abuse Clearance and the Pa State Criminal Record Check clearance will be waived for a school volunteer.
- Volunteers may request a Child Abuse and a PA State Criminal Record Check clearance free of charge, once every 57 months.
- There will be a charge incurred for the FBI clearance, however if the volunteer has been a resident of Pennsylvania for the previous 10 years, the volunteer does not have to obtain an FBI fingerprinting clearance.
- EXCEPTIONS: Volunteers who are doing a one-time volunteer experience (such as field trip chaperones or one-time presenters) will not be required to have clearances on file. However, guardians with clearances will be given priority as chaperones for field trips. It is the expectation that these volunteers will never be left alone with any student. All students will remain in the presence of and under the supervision of a teacher or staff member at all times.

Any guardian or family member who wishes to volunteer and has questions about obtaining these clearances should contact your school's Main Office.

ACADEMICS

It is the mission of BCN schools to prepare all students to enter into and graduate from a post-secondary institute or to transition to the workforce with the necessary skills to secure a viable career. Additionally, BCN maintains compliance with all state laws and regulations regarding curriculum and graduation requirements.

Grading Policy

At Belmont, our grading policies strive to ensure that students' report card grades are an accurate representation of their skill mastery, growth, and the effort put into their work during the quarter.

- **Grade K:** Students receive a grade for: Reading, Math, Writing, Social Skills, Work Habits and Home Support.
- **Grades 1-2:** Students receive a **Habits grade** and a **Skills grade** for the core subjects of: Reading, Writing, Foundational Skills, Math, and Science.
- **Grades 3-4:** Students receive **Letter grade** for the core subjects of : Reading, Writing, Math, Science. Grades are based on a combination of assessments, classwork, participation and academic habits and responsibilities
- **Grades 5-12**: Students receive a **Letter grade** for all classes. Grades are based on a combination of assessments, classwork, participation and academic habits and responsibilities

Grading Scale

Grading Scale (K)

- Excellent (E)
- Satisfactory (S)
- Needs Improvement (N)
- Unsatisfactory (U)

Habits & Responsibility Grading Scale (1st - 5th)

- Exceeds Expectations (EE)
- Meets Expectations (ME)
- Approaching Expectations (AE)
- Needs Improvement (NI)

Skills Grading Scale (1st & 2nd)

- Above Grade Level
- On Grade Level
- Below Grade Level
- Well Below Grade Level

Core Class Letter Grading Scale (3rd - 12th)

- A ten (10) point +/- scale is used to show the numeric equivalent for letter grades
- GPA calculations only apply to high school students.

Letter Grade	Numeric Grade	GPA Points
A+	98-100	4.0
A	93-97	4.0
A-	90-92	3.7

B+	87-89	3.3
B	83-86	3.0
B-	80-82	2.7
C+	77-79	2.3
C	73-76	2.0
C-	70-72	1.7
D+	67-69	1.3
D	63-66	1.0
D-	60-62	.7
F	HS: 50-59 3rd-8th: 55-59	0

Report Cards and Conferences

We ask that all students in grades 3-12 and families use the online PowerSchool Portal to access and stay informed about grades, assignments, and progress in all classes by logging in at least once a week. If you need support with accessing the Powerschool portal, you can speak to your student's teacher or BCN's IT department. Report cards for K-12 are distributed after the end of each quarter to inform guardians of the student's academic status. Teachers will notify guardians if a student is failing or in danger of failing by sending home a progress report mid-way into the quarter. Note: State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the school administration determines that the grade was arbitrary, contains an error, or the teacher did not follow BCN grading policy.

- **Pre-Kindergarten:** Pre-Kindergarten families are required to complete a Getting to Know You Conference at the start of each school year, two scheduled home visits, and one parent/teacher conference per year. PreK students will receive two report cards.
- **Kinder - 12th:** Report card conferences are held at the end of the first, second, and third quarters. Guardians should attend each conference in order to receive their student's report cards. The fourth-quarter report card will be mailed home, and there will be no scheduled conference, unless a special request is made by the teacher or parent.

Homework Policy

At BCN, we believe that purposeful and targeted homework is essential for student success. Students and families should expect to receive homework in core classes through the grade levels. Students complete homework assignments to practice skills and strategies that have been taught at school, review learning so that it stays fresh, and take ownership of their learning. Homework is an opportunity for families to be involved in the learning process with their students. Families, students, and teachers are responsible for ensuring that homework is an effective learning experience. Homework should always be developmentally appropriate and is not designed to create undue stress for students. If this is the case for your child, please contact your child's teacher to discuss.

Student Responsibilities:

- Bring home assignments and materials
- Return assignments and materials to school on time
- Complete homework

Family Responsibilities:

- Provide a space for students to do their homework
- Make materials available (pencils, crayons, etc.)
- Read directions as needed
- Offer assistance, but not answers
- Let the teacher know if homework is a problem
- Check homework for completion

Teacher Responsibilities:

- Provide homework that is engaging and purposeful
- Give clear directions
- Check homework
- Provide feedback to students on their work and progress
- Let families know when homework is not being consistently turned in on time.

Honor Roll

Each grading period has a distinct honor roll listing. Students must meet the school-specific requirements to earn honors and distinguished honors recognitions. Additional details can be found in the school addendums.

Promotion Requirements

Students will be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by BCN. Please see school addendum for any school-specific promotion requirements.

Retention

Kindergarten: Students in Kindergarten will be promoted unless the family, Head of School, Assistant Head of School, and teachers are in agreement that being retained is the best course of action for the student.

Elementary School: Students in grades 1-4 are eligible for retention based on grades and performance on Star360. Students who are failing ELA or Math for the school year will be considered for retention. Additionally, students who are performing in the Urgent Intervention/Below Basic category of the Star360 Reading or Math test may be considered for retention.

Middle School: Students in grades 5th-8th are eligible for retention based on grades and performance on Star360. Students who are failing ELA or Math for the school year will be considered for retention. Additionally, students who are performing in the Urgent Intervention/Below Basic category of the Star360 Reading or Math test may be considered for retention.

High School: Students in grades 9, 10, and 11 must accumulate the following credits in order to be promoted to the next grade. In high school, students may be required to repeat a course. Repeating a course may or may not impact a students' eligibility to be promoted to the next grade because promotion is determined by total overall credits.

- To be promoted from Freshman (9th) to Sophomore (10th), students must have a minimum of 6 credits.
- To be promoted from Sophomore (10th) to Junior (11th), students must have a minimum of 12 credits.
- To be promoted from Junior (11th) to Senior (12th), students must have a minimum of 18 credits.

Students with Disabilities: For students with disabilities who are recommended for retention, the IEP Team will review all related records. The team will consider the student's age, social and emotional development, and progress on IEP goals and be in communication with families on any such recommendations .

English Language Learners: Students who are EL will not be considered for retention based solely on their proficiency and progress in the ELL program. If a student identified as EL is eligible for retention, a support team will meet to consider the student's age, social and emotional development, and overall progress.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Being at school and on time every day is essential to your student's success at school. Students should not arrive at the school building prior to the "Doors Open" time indicated. Students arriving prior to this time will be unsupervised, and BCN will not be responsible for the student at this time. See your school's addendum for arrival and dismissal information.

School Hours

School	Official School Day Hours	Morning Drop Off Times
Belmont Academy	8:00 AM to 2:45PM	8:00 AM
Belmont Charter Elementary & MIddle	8:00 AM to 2:55 PM	7:45-8:00 AM
Belmont High School	8:00-2:45 (M//T/Th/F)/2:30 (W)	7:30-8:00
Inquiry Charter School	8:15 AM to 3:00 PM	8:00 - 8:15 AM

Attendance

Students at BCN Schools are expected to attend school daily. Attending school and being on time every day directly impacts your student's success. Missing school just 2 days a month may not sound like much - but they add up to 18 days or roughly 10% of the school year. Our goal is for every student to keep their attendance rate above 95% for the entire year, which equates to less than 8 absences over the course of the school year. **Students who miss more than 6 days of school are**

considered chronic absenteeism and students who miss that many school days are more likely to fall behind and drop out of school.

Under Pennsylvania law, **all students between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) must attend school every day.** Once a student is enrolled in school, they are subject to compulsory school laws until the student reaches age 18. **Guardians are responsible for ensuring that their student(s) between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) are enrolled in school and attend school regularly, on time, and for the entire school day.**

Categories of Absences

Absent - Unexcused: All absences are treated as unexcused until BCN receives a guardian note (See "guardian note" below.) If the school does not receive a guardian note within three (3) days of the absence, the absence may be permanently marked as "unexcused." Unexcused means that either no written note was submitted to the school upon the student's return or that the reason provided in the note was deemed invalid or that the student had already reached the maximum number of guardian notes permitted to excuse absences (5). *Examples of invalid excuses include (but are not limited to): babysitting, waking up late, illness of a family member, and vacation.* Absence reasons provided by guardians that are not outlined in the below list of appropriate excuse absence reasons be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may be considered unexcused, even with a guardian note.

Absent - Excused: Official documentation must be submitted within 3 days of a student's absence. If a student is absent for more than 3 consecutive days, a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation will be required when the student returns to school. BCN schools will excuse absences for the following reasons:

- Medical appointments
- Illness
- Required court attendance
- Death in the family
- Educational trips/college tours approved in advance by the head of school
- Observation of a religious holiday
- Out of school suspension

Absent - Excused Guardian Note: A maximum of ten (10) days, verified by parental notification can be marked as absent-excused during a school year. Guardian notes must include the student name, date of absence, reason and guardian name and contact information. All other absences require official documentation as described above.

Special Event/Afterschool Attendance

BCN is committed to providing high-quality enrichment events and programming for our students. In order to attend special events, athletic games, and after-school functions, students must be present in school the day of participation.

Lateness/Tardiness

Being on time to school every day is very important. Students who are late miss important instructional time and disrupt the learning of their classmates and the overall structure of the school day. Tardiness is tracked and negatively impacts a student's record. Excessive tardies may result in student/guardian meetings with school administrators.

Early Dismissals

Signing a student out of school prior to the whole school dismissal is considered an early dismissal. Early dismissals should not occur on a daily or regular basis. However, when you are anticipating a need for an early dismissal for your child, please report to the main office with your photo I.D. The adult requesting the early dismissal must be listed on the student's emergency contact form. Early dismissals are tracked and negatively impact a student's record. Excessive early dismissals may result in student/guardian meetings with school administrators. **The final period of the day includes important instructional time and schoolwide dismissal procedures. Early dismissals during this period result in lost learning time and can disrupt both student learning and school operations, for this reason, dismissals are limited to emergencies and/or confirmed appointments.**

Please note that students will only be released to individuals' guardians and/or individuals listed on their emergency contact form. We reserve the right to check photo identification during dismissal on a daily basis to ensure the safety of all students.

Responses to Non-Attendance/Truancy

Each Absence	Automated notification from ParentSquare in the form of text and email. Families can submit excused absence information through the ParentSquare notification. Additionally, families receive live outreach from a member of the ATIP or operations team.
3 Unexcused Absences	First Notification of Unexcused Absences Letter sent home via ParentSquare. *A student is considered legally truant at this point.
6 Unexcused Absences	Second Notification of Unexcused Absences Letter sent home via Parentsquare. Families are invited to participate in a School Attendance Improvement Conference (SAIC) to develop a Student Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP). **Any family with a completed SAIC & SAIP can be referred to Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Truancy Prevention Program: Project Go.*
10 Unexcused Absences	Third Notification of Unexcused Absences Letter sent home via Parentsquare **Any family with a completed SAIC & SAIP can be referred to Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Truancy Prevention Program: Project Go.*
15 Unexcused Absences	*Additional Referral Point for Philadelphia District Attorney's Office Truancy Prevention Program: Project Go.
15+ Unexcused Absences	Regional Court Referral.

BCN is dedicated to the academic, social and emotional success of all students. Regular school attendance is an integral part of this success. In an effort to enforce Pennsylvania's compulsory attendance laws, BCN partners with the District Attorney's office.Please note that records from previous years will be included in any referral. Our partnership with the District Attorney's office has been entered into with the very best of intentions for all of our students and families.

"Project Go" Partnership

As part of our truancy prevention program, any students with 6 or more unexcused absences and a completed SAIC & SAIP, may be referred to "Project Go", which is an early intervention and prevention program developed by the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office to hold guardians and excessively truant elementary and middle school students accountable for their truancy.

By law, all children are required to attend school daily until they turn 18. Participating schools notify the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office when a student has exceeded the number of unexcused absences agreed to as the limit for their school. From there, a letter is sent from the District Attorney's Office to the student's guardians advising them of their responsibilities under Pennsylvania law. Students and their guardians are required to attend a group meeting with the Assistant District Attorney, school staff, city agencies, and community-based organizations. Guardians are advised that continued attendance problems will not be tolerated and could result in court action for them and/or their students. At the same time, referrals may be provided for parenting classes, counseling, and other needed services.

Attendance Awards

Our goal is for every student to keep their attendance rate above 95% for the entire year, which equates to less than 8 absences over the course of the school year. Students meeting attendance goals will be recognized through incentives and other special privileges. Attendance recognitions occur throughout the year.

Transportation

The School District of Philadelphia is responsible for the transportation of students to and from school. According to the District's policy, students who reside GREATER than 1.5 miles from their respective school buildings will receive a yellow bus or SEPTA transportation. Students who qualify for SEPTA transportation will receive SEPTA key cards. Students are expected to follow the student code of conduct when riding the bus and school consequences for student misbehavior on school busses, up to and including removal from the bus, may apply. For additional information regarding transportation, contact the school's main office. If you experience any challenges with the bus in regards to timeliness, call the school district first, and then please let the school office know so that we can reach out to the bus companies as well.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES

BCN believes that all students should be supported to reach their potential. We take the necessary measures to meet the needs of individual students and to ensure that they can access their education regardless of disability. Our special education program complies with federal and state special education laws.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Belmont Charter Network implements an MTSS framework for intervention and support. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) involves Quality Core Instruction, assessment, and intervention to ensure that ALL students receive the level of support they need to be successful. Support is categorized into 3 tiers of increasing levels, Tier 1, 2 and 3. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a school-wide, data driven, proactive framework for improving learning and behavioral outcomes for all students. It utilizes evidenced based practices and effective systems to support our students. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports focuses on meeting the academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs of each student. Students who may need additional Tier 2 or Tier 3 support in any of the MTSS areas may be referred for a collaborative problem-solving session where the staff, student and family come together to create a support plan to best meet a students' additional needs.

Prevention and Family Support Services

Our schools offer Prevention and Family Support Services to assist families and students in identifying any barriers to student success. These services focus on strengthening academic ability, personal/social/emotional wellbeing, and family empowerment. Please note that the Department of Prevention and Family Support team members are not therapists;

however, they can provide temporary/short-term support to help students overcome acute issues. Our Family Support Specialists and Student Success Coordinators have a comprehensive, innovative approach to helping each student be successful at our school. Please reach out to the main office if you are interested in learning more about these services.

Special Education Services

BCN provides a continuum of special education programs and related services to eligible students. These services are provided at no cost to parents or guardians, individualized to meet each student's educational needs, and reasonably calculated to yield meaningful educational benefit and progress. Services are designed to conform to an Individualized Education Program, or IEP, and are delivered directly by the school entity, through referral, or by contract. Together, these guarantees are known as a Free Appropriate Public Education, or FAPE.

Special education is designed to meet the needs of each eligible student, including specially designed instruction conducted in the classroom, home, community settings, hospitals, institutions, and other settings. Related services available to students include transportation and other supportive services that help ensure a student benefits from their IEP. These related services may include, but are not limited to, speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, social work services, school health services, recreation and rehabilitation counseling services, assistive technology services, parent counseling and training, and interpreting services.

Eligibility for these services is determined through the Child Find and evaluation process described below.

Referral of Students for Special Education Services (Child Find)

BCN has developed policies and procedures to identify students needing special education services including the implementation of an MTSS (Multi-tiered Systems of Student Support) framework. If a student is thought to be eligible for special education services, teachers, other school personnel, or guardians may refer the student for a screening and/or evaluation. Guardians suspecting that a student may have a disability and need special education services can request a screening or evaluation at any time by calling the Main Office, talking with their student's teacher, submitting a written request, or contacting the Head of School. The school team will review existing data such as health records, guardian interviews and history, functional vision and hearing evaluations, speech, language, PT and OT screenings (if needed) . If a special education comprehensive evaluation is requested by the guardian or by the school team based on the data reviewed, the appropriate certified personnel will conduct the evaluation maintaining all timelines. No evaluations may be conducted without written guardian permission.

State and federal law afford many rights and protections to students with disabilities and their guardians. A summary of these rights and protections follows. Interested persons may obtain a complete written summary of the rights and protections afforded by law, together with information about free or low-cost legal services and advice, by contacting the Assistant Head of Specialized Services or school principal.

Prior Written Notice**:** The public school must notify the guardian in writing whenever it proposes to initiate or to change the identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement of a student or whenever it refuses to initiate or make a change in the identification, evaluation, educational program, or placement requested by a guardian. Such notice must be accompanied by a written description of the reasons for the proposal or refusal, the options considered, if any, and the reason why such options were rejected.

Consent**:** The public school cannot proceed with an evaluation or reevaluation or with the initial provision of special

education and related services without the written consent of the guardian. A public school may override the lack of consent for an initial evaluation by requesting the approval of an impartial hearing officer or judge following a hearing. If the guardian fails to respond to a written request for permission to reevaluate, however, the public school may proceed with the proposed reevaluation without consent. A public school may not seek a hearing to override the refusal of a guardian's consent to an initial placement in special education.

Protection in Evaluation Procedure**:** Evaluations to determine eligibility and current need for special education and related services must be administered in a manner that is free of racial, cultural, or linguistic bias. Evaluations cannot consist of a single test or assessment and testing must be a valid measure of the psychological, social, emotional, or other learning characteristics or behavior that the school is using it to measure. Testing and assessment must be administered in accordance with professional standards and the criteria established by the publisher. It must be administered in the native language of the student.

More Information**:** Detailed printed information about available special education services, programs, and policies is available from the school upon request. Anyone interested should contact the Head of School. Information and communications are in English but will be provided in the native language or other modes of communication used by guardians, if appropriate. More information can also be found on our website: www.belmontcharternetwork.org

504 Plans

If a student is found to have a disability that requires accommodations in the educational environment but is not found to require specially designed instruction, they may require a 504 plan for those accommodations. If appropriate, the 504 Plan team, of which the guardian is a member, will create and implement a 504 Plan. The 504 Plan will specify the appropriate accommodations or modifications needed to ensure student access to the learning environment. These services and protections for students with a disability are separate and apart from those services and protections applicable to all eligible or exceptional students enrolled (or seeking enrollment) in special education programs.

EL Services

BCN provides educational programming for English Learners (EL) and assures their appropriate participation in all aspects of the school curriculum. In accordance with our philosophy to provide all students with a quality educational program, appropriate, planned instructional programs are provided for students who identify as having a language other than English used in the home. The goal of English Language Development (ELD) programming is to increase English language proficiency for eligible students so that they are able to meet academic standards and achieve academic success. Services are designed to be inclusive and are integrated into the classroom setting as much as possible.

Eligible students are identified through the Home Language Survey, which is provided in English and translated if requested, followed by the WIDA Screener. Identification is completed within 30 days of enrollment for students who enroll before the start of the school year, and within 14 days of enrollment for students who enroll during the school year, in accordance with the Pennsylvania English Learner Identification Procedure (ELIP).

More information about the structure of ELD is available on our website and in the Main Office.

STUDENT HEALTH

The school nurse maintains medical records for each student in accordance with HIPPA and FERPA regulations. Guardians are required to submit the following medical forms: Medical consent form, Medical Emergency Contact Form, Physical Form, and Immunization History. *If guardians fail to submit an Immunization History form, their student may be excluded from school.

The following services provided on site are:

- Immunizations, physical assessments and dental screenings and cleanings (with parent consent)
- State-mandated health screenings, referrals and follow-up
    - Vision Screening – All Grades
    - BMI Assessment – All Grades
    - Hearing Screening – K – 3rd , 7 and 11
    - Dental Screening --K, 3, 7
    - Medical Examination -- K, 6, 11
    - Scoliosis Screening -- 6, 7
- Documentation and reporting (SHARRS)
- Chronic health condition oversight, guidance and management
- Referral to mental health services and supports
- On-call advisement from a certified nurse practitioner

Guardians must inform the nurse promptly of any special health problems and should contact the nurse if they have questions or would like to schedule a confidential appointment. If a student experiences a medical emergency during the school day, the student will be given immediate attention. Students should not personally call home if they feel ill; they should report to a teacher or a trusted adult who will contact the school nurse. Guardians will be notified if their student is too ill to return to class.

School Administration of Medication:

Student medication can only be administered by the school nurse or designated personnel. Guardians must supply a yearly form, signed by a doctor, specifying student medication dosage and instructions. Forms are available in the main office and the Nurse's office. Medicine will only be administered according to a doctor's instructions. School personnel are not permitted to administer over-the-counter drugs to any student. Students are not allowed to bring medication to school without proper documentation. All medicine brought into school must be in the original pharmacy packaging and should be brought to the nurse's office immediately.

BCN will permit the school nurse to administer medication to students provided that:

a) guardians provide to the school nurse a completed medication administration form from the student's physician;
b) guardians submit a new medication administration form following any changes to the student's medication;
c) the guardians or student provide to the school nurse the medication in the original container, and this container is clearly labeled with the student's name, physician's name, medication name, dosage, and frequency of administration; and
d) guardians submit a new medication authorization form each school year.

All medicine brought into school must be in the original pharmacy packaging and should be brought to the nurse's office immediately. Under no circumstances are any BCN staff or contractors other than the school nurse, school physician, or a substitute school nurse allowed to administer any medication to a student. At the end of the school year, it is the guardians'

responsibility to pick up any unused medications from the nurse's office. Medication remaining in the nurse's office following the end of the school year will be properly disposed of in accordance with school policy.

Student Administration of Medication

Excluding medicine for asthma and/or life-threatening allergic reactions that have been properly documented through the process listed above**, no medicine can be in a student's possession**. This includes, but is not limited to, medicated cough drops, acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, etc. BCN will permit the self-administration of medication by a student for asthma or other potentially life-threatening illnesses or a life-threatening allergic reaction provided that:

1. guardians provide to the school nurse written authorization for the self-administration of medication;
2. guardians provide to the school nurse written certification from the physician of the student stating that the student has asthma or another potentially life-threatening illness or is subject to a life-threatening allergic reaction and is capable of, and has been instructed in, the proper method of self-administration of medication;
3. the student notifies the school nurse following each self-administration of the medication
4. the permission is effective for the school year for which it is granted and is renewed for each subsequent school year upon fulfillment of the requirements in paragraphs (a) through (c) of this subsection.

Immunizations

Students must be up to date on immunizations in order to attend school in Philadelphia. See below for the following required immunizations:

All K-12 Students	**For attendance in 7th grade:**	**For attendance in 12th grade:**
• Diphtheria, Tetanus, & acellular Pertussis (DTap) 5 doses* • Polio (IPV) 4 doses** • Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) 2 doses • Hepatitis B (HepB) 3 doses • Varicella (VZV) 2 doses	• Tetanus, Diphtheria, & acellular Pertussis (Tdap) 1 dose • Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV4) 1 dose	• Meningococcal Conjugate (MCV4) 2 doses***

*DTap - A fifth dose is not necessary if the fourth dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after dose 3

**Polio - A fourth dose in the routine IPV series is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age ≥4 years and ≥6 months after the previous dose.

***MCV4 - Second dose is not needed if MCV4 #1 was given after 16th birthday

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

School Culture Vision: At BCN, we are committed to cultivating safe, supportive, and consistent learning environments across our schools. We ensure that positive behaviors are explicitly taught, modeled, and reinforced by all staff, and that our responses to behavior are equity-centered, student-focused, and rooted in dignity and growth.

Code of Conduct Expectations

In order to create a supportive, safe, and nurturing learning environment, it is expected that all students conduct themselves in accordance with all school policies and procedures and model appropriate behavior at all times. The Code of Conduct applies to all students while they are in school and/or at any school-sponsored activity such as a class trip or a sporting event. The Code of Conduct also applies to all students while they are traveling to and from school, using any mode of transportation (walking, school bus, SEPTA, etc.). Additionally, the Code of Conduct applies to off-grounds and after-hours behavior if the incident impacts the school community.

Restorative/Logical Approach to Student Discipline

BCN takes a restorative approach to resolving conflict and preventing harm. Restorative approaches enable those who have been harmed to convey the impact of the harm to those responsible, and for those responsible to acknowledge this impact and take steps to put it right. Restorative justice practices aim to keep our students in school, where they can learn how their behavior affects others.

The three main goals of restorative practices are
(1) Accountability: Restorative justice strategies provide opportunities for wrongdoers to be accountable to those they have harmed and enable them to repair the harm they caused to the extent possible.
(2) Community Safety: Restorative justice practices recognize the need to keep the community safe through strategies that build relationships and empower the community to take responsibility for the well-being of its members.
(3) Competency Development: Restorative justice practices recognize and increase the pro-social skills of those who have harmed others, address the underlying factors that lead our students to engage in disruptive behavior, and build on strengths in each student.

Our staff works diligently to:

- Provide encouragement for students
- Notice growth towards behavior goals and expectations
- Teach and reteach our school's behavior expectations
- Give prompt, frequent, and explicit feedback to students

Student Behavior Intervention Supports

BCN schools are dedicated to the academic, social and emotional success of all students. BCN staff are trained to provide intervention support. Intervention support can include, but is not limited to, the following: community service, creation of a behavior contract, creation of safety plans, conferences, preferential seating, proactive check-ins, reflective essay, referral to the school-based Intervention and Referral Services team, referral to the Student Assistance Program, restorative conferencing, student behavior trackers, and use of classroom-based "Calming Corner." Intervention provides students with the supports needed to prevent behaviors, teach prosocial behavior, and reinforce positive behaviors.

Behavior Infractions: At times, all students will experience difficulty meeting our behavior expectations. Our staff will respond in calm and respectful ways to help students make progress towards success. Many problems that arise will be handled in the classroom. If difficulties persist or are severe enough, other school staff will be involved in helping to problem solve around the student's behavior. Behavior infractions are broken down into the following three categories:

Level 1 Infractions negatively impact BCN's culture and community of safety, respect, and cooperation. These community infractions can include but are not limited to class disruptions, violation of classroom rules, and not following staff redirection.

Level 2 Infractions significantly impact BCN's culture and community of safety, respect, and cooperation.	
Level 2 Infractions	**Definitions**
Verbal Altercation	Behavior involving one or more students where no punches, slaps or hits are exchanged (no physical contact is made). This includes, but is not limited to, any non-threatening words and/or actions that are directed towards a student in either an overtly loud, profane, or demonstrative manner (e.g., "cursing out" and obscene hand gestures)
Pre-Fight	A physical exchange between students that involves aggressive or confrontational contact but does not escalate to fighting. Examples include pushing, shoving, grabbing, gripping, chest bumping, playfighting, or similar physical actions where no punches, slaps, kicks, or other strikes are exchanged and no injury occurs.
Promoting or instigating Violence/Provocation	Watching, encouraging, or instigating a pre-fight/fight before, during, or after school or through the use of any form of social media. Taping or posting a fight with Belmont students is considered as promoting violence.
Cut Class/ Cut School/ Presence in Restricted Area	Leaving or cutting class and/or school (truancy) without permission - please note: a class cut includes leaving the supervision of the teacher during a fire drill or any other type of evacuation or an assembly program.
Harassment	A single incident involving physical, verbal, written, electronic threat, or intimidation used to place another person in fear of bodily harm through verbal threats without displaying a weapon or subjecting the person to actual physical attack.
Persistent Disruption	Behavior that continuously stops the learning of the entire class, despite the teacher's multiple attempts to redirect, support, and/or intervene throughout the same class period.
Verbal/Non-verbal Aggression towards staff or student	This includes, but is not limited to, any non-physical aggression such as threatening words and/or actions that are directed towards a student or staff member in either an overtly loud, profane, or demonstrative manner (e.g., "cursing out" a staff member, screaming about extreme disdain for an individual, and obscene hand gestures)
Cheating/ Plagiarism and Forgery	Plagiarism is using, without permission, the ideas and writings of another, either word for word or in substance and representing such as one's own. Forgery is the signing of a document in another's name. Cheating includes deceit, fraud, or deception (e.g., copying another's assignments, assisting another to cheat by lending one's own work, and giving or receiving aid during a testing period).
Theft/Vandalism	Theft/stealing of any property valued at $50.00 or less. Vandalism is intentional or reckless damage to, or an attempt to damage, the property of another or the causing of damage valued at $50.00 or less.
Inappropriate Use of School Technology	Using school or personal technology in a way that disrupts learning, violates school rules, compromises safety or privacy, accesses inappropriate content, or interferes with the rights and well-being of others.

Level 3 Infractions are very serious violations of the Code of Conduct and/or are criminal violations of Pennsylvania state law. An informal hearing is mandated for all Level 3 infractions.

Level 3 Infractions	Definitions
Theft/Vandalism	Theft/stealing of any property valued at $50.00 or more. Vandalism is intentional or reckless damage to the property of another or the causing of damage of property in excess of $50.
Bullying/Cyberbullying	Repeated intentional conduct that is directed to another student or students, in or outside a school setting, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive, and that either: ● Substantially interferes with a student's education, or ● Creates a hostile learning environment, or ● Substantially disrupts school operations.
Possession of a weapon, drugs, vapes, alcohol, banned items, and/or paraphernalia	Drug Possession: Illegal/inappropriate possession of drugs (illegal substances), use, or illicit activity (the intent to use, distribute in any form or for any reason, store, or purchase illegal substances and paraphernalia) on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event is absolutely prohibited. Tobacco Policy: Students are not allowed to possess, use, and/or distribute any product containing tobacco while on school property or at a school-sponsored event. The use of tobacco is defined as the possession and/or use of a cigarette, hookah pipe, pipe, cigar, chewing tobacco, snuff, or a related tobacco/vapor product, and paraphernalia. Vaporizers & Electronic Cigarettes Policy: Students are not allowed to have on their person or use any item that they possess such as an electronic cigarette or e-cigarette or vape pen. Students are prohibited from having any vape pens that simulate smoking. Alcohol Policy: Students are prohibited from knowingly possessing, using, distributing, manufacturing, or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage while on school property during the school day as well as at any school-sponsored activity, function or event, or while on any vehicle used to transport students. Weapon: A weapon, as defined by Pennsylvania law is, any object, device, or instrument that is designed as a weapon or that is capable of threatening or inflicting serious bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to: any firearm, shotgun, or rifle, whether loaded or unloaded; any knife, cutting instrument, or cutting tool; any nunchaku; any chemical agents such as pepper spray or mace; stun gun; incendiary device; and any other tool, instrument, or object used or intended to be used to inflict serious bodily injury to another. The term shall also include any simulated, replica, toy, or look-alike weapon.
Arson and/or Possession of Explosive Devices	Arson refers to the malicious burning of another's property. Students may not possess or use fireworks or the paraphernalia needed to explode them on school grounds or during a school activity.
Terroristic Threats	Acts intended to commit violence, terrorize, evacuate the building, or otherwise cause a serious public inconvenience or safety risk.
Sexual Misconduct	This may include attempting or carrying out a sexual act with oneself or another person whether it is consensual or non-consensual.
Sexual Harassment	The unwelcome sexual advances, sexual gestures, sexual comments, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature

Physical Aggression toward Staff or Student	Intentional physical contact directed toward a student or staff member that causes, attempts to cause, or threatens to cause physical harm, pain, or minor injury, but does not result in serious bodily injury.
Physical Assault /Simple Assault	An unlawful physical attack by one person upon another that causes serious bodily injury to another, including injuries requiring medical treatment beyond basic first aid.
Physical Altercation or Participation in group fight	Physical altercation/participation in a group fight is defined as the exchange of physical blows (including, but not limited to, hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, and shoving) where physical contact is made with another student.

Infraction Consequences

When students violate our Code of Conduct, we work to provide opportunities for students to learn from their choices and rebuild relationships with their peers or adults. Each infraction level has a range of possible consequences. Potential consequences include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Redirection, Inquiry, Class Point Deduction, Teacher Assigned Consequence, Referral to Dean or Behavior Support, Classroom Removal, Detention, Loss of Privilege, Restorative Action Conference, Guardian Meeting, Detention, Behavior Contract, Disciplinary Hearing, Suspension, Alternative Placement, Expulsion.

Use of Restraints

Restraints to control acute or episodic aggressive or self- injurious behavior may be used by a trained staff member when a student poses an immediate risk to themselves or to others and less restrictive measures are ineffective. The IEP team will meet to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of an IEP if restraints are used to control the behavior of a student with a disability. The use of restraints may not be included in an IEP for the convenience of staff, as a substitute for an educational program, or as a form of punishment. Mechanical restraints, which are used to control involuntary movement or lack of muscular control for students with certain conditions, may be employed only when specified by an IEP and endorsed by a medical professional qualified to make the determination. Mechanical restraints prevent injury and promote normative body positioning and physical functioning for these students.

Suspension and Expulsion Procedures and Guidelines

An exclusion from school can occur by suspension or expulsion. The following policy governs the process for excluding any student. All students will be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. Any case involving possible expulsion will also require a formal or informal hearing in accordance with the Pennsylvania School Code.

In School Suspensions

Students may be assigned in-school suspensions as a result of disciplinary action. Due process includes the following steps:

- The student will be informed of the reason for the in school suspension and be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) before the in school suspension goes into effect.
- Parents/guardians will be notified of the in school suspension.
- The student will continue to receive educational services during the in-school suspension and will have the responsibility to make up exams and other work that was not able to be completed during in-school suspension.
- When the in-school suspension exceeds ten (10) consecutive school days, an informal hearing shall be offered to the student and the student's parents/guardians prior to the eleventh school day.

Suspensions

A suspension is a student's exclusion from school for a period of one (1) to no more than ten (10) consecutive school days. Suspensions of kindergarten, first, and second-grade students should not occur unless another person suffers serious bodily

injury as a result of their actions. In-school and Out-of-school suspensions may be assigned by the head of school or member of the Culture Team. Students have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while suspended and shall be permitted to complete assignments within Board-determined guidelines. Suspensions may not run longer than ten consecutive school days and any suspensions lasting more than three (3) school days require prior approval by the Managing Director of Student SUpports & Systems or designee. Anything over ten (10) days in a row is an "expulsion" and comes with additional rights to a formal hearing (see expulsion section below). Due process includes the following steps:

- Prior to a suspension, the student will be informed of the reason for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond, with the exception of circumstances which pose a threat to the health, safety, and/or welfare of the school community.
- Parents/guardians will be immediately notified of the suspension in writing via ParentSquare or the guardian email address on file.
- When the suspension exceeds three (3) school days, the student and parent/guardian shall be given the opportunity to participate in an informal hearing consistent with Pennsylvania law. The school shall offer to hold the informal hearing within the first five (5) days of the suspension, and the parent/guardian will receive sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal Disciplinary Hearing (DH). Informal Disciplinary Hearings enable the student to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why they should not be suspended. All relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended will be presented, and the school and parents/guardians will discuss strategies for avoiding future offenses. At the hearing, the student has the right to question any witnesses present and to speak and produce witnesses on their own behalf.
- Students with disabilities may be assigned a suspension on a case by case basis (see Manifestation Determination section below). Students with Intellectual Disabilities must never be suspended unless a parent is in agreement and provides permission. This is considered a change of placement for students with Intellectual Disabilities and a NOREP must be issued.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the exclusion of a student from the charter school, by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, for a period of time exceeding ten (10) consecutive school days. Expulsions may be permanent or for a specified period of time. BCN will only seek to exclude a student when absolutely necessary. If a student is expelled from school, pursuant to state regulations, the guardian is responsible for ensuring the student's continued education. *Please note that exclusions affecting students with IEPS will be governed by applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

A student may be permanently expelled from school for severe infractions as outlined in this handbook. No student will be expelled without an opportunity for a formal expulsion hearing before the Board of Directors, a duly authorized committee of the Board of Directors, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the Board of Directors.

Expulsions will be brought before the Board of Directors by the CEO or designee who will notify the Board of Directors that the school is recommending a student for expulsion. The Board will weigh all of the evidence presented by the school administration and by the student and/or student's guardians/guardians and/or their attorney at the formal expulsion hearing before voting on the question of whether or not the student should be expelled.

The Board will vote on whether the student should be expelled for any length of time or whether a lesser sanction will be imposed. The Board or its designee shall notify the student's guardians/guardians of the date of the vote prior to the vote taking place. The guardians/guardians will have the opportunity to address the Board. Expulsions will be effective upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board.

Expulsions are permanent unless a period of time for the expulsion is specified at the time the Board votes on the expulsion. Expulsions for weapons-related offenses are a minimum of one year.

Expulsion Hearing Due Process Requirements

- Written notification of the charges will be sent to the student's guardians by certified mail and via email if on file with the school.
- At least three (3) days' notice of the time and place of the hearing, which will include a copy of this policy, hearing procedures, and notice of the right to representation by legal counsel. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing twenty-four (24) hours in advance if they can present reasonable cause for the extension.
- The hearing will be private unless the student or guardians request a public hearing.
- Representation by counsel at the guardian's expense
- Disclosure of the names of witnesses against the student and copies of their written statements
- The right to request that witnesses against the student appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined
- The right to testify, present arguments and call witnesses on the student's behalf.
- A written or audio record will be kept of the hearing and a copy made available to the student by request.]
- The hearing will be held within fifteen (15) school days from the date of the suspension or the date notice of charges is received unless a delay is mutually agreed to by both parties due to extenuating circumstances.
- Should a suspension from school last longer than 10 school days, remote learning will be provided for the student until the hearing can take place (no longer than 15 school days).
- Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing will be provided to the student and family along with the expulsion decision. An appeal may be filed in accordance with the Local Agency Law to the Court of Common Pleas within thirty (30) days of receipt of that Adjudication.
- A written adjudication shall be issued after the Board of Directors has voted to expel or not expel a student. The adjudication may include additional conditions or sanctions.

In the event that your student is in the disciplinary process of suspension or expulsion, the school remains available to answer your questions. You may reach out to your school office or email information@belmontcharternetwork.org

Manifestation Determination

A manifestation determination is required by the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when considering the exclusion of a student with a disability that constitutes a disciplinary change of placement.

The local educational agency (LEA), parent, and relevant members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team conduct a review to determine if the behavior that is subject to disciplinary action is directly related to the student's disability (i.e., a manifestation of the student's disability).

Students with disabilities cannot be disciplined for behaviors that are related to or are manifestations of their disabilities. The IEP team must answer the following questions:

1. Was the behavior caused by, or directly and substantially related to, the student's disability?

2. Was the behavior the direct result of the LEA's failure to implement the IEP?

If the IEP team answers "yes" to either question, and therefore determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, the proposed disciplinary action is voided and the team must immediately take steps to remedy any and all deficiencies in the IEP. A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) must be conducted and a positive behavior support plan must be implemented. If an FBA and a positive behavior support plan were completed, then the IEP team must review and modify them as necessary. If the IEP team determines that the behavior is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the disciplinary action may be applied with the provision that the LEA must continue to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

Bullying:
BCN is committed to dealing with bullying behaviors in our schools to create a safe environment. Any student or employee who engages in an act that injures, degrades, or disgraces another student or staff member, disrupts the educational process, or interferes with a student's opportunity to obtain an education shall be subject to disciplinary action. This includes behavior or language through electronic (e.g. cyberbullying, etc.) or online methods. Bullying includes, but not be limited to, incidents that are reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as gender, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin, religion, disability, socioeconomic status and/or political beliefs.

Definitions: Bullying is defined as an intentional electronic, written, verbal, non-verbal, psychological, or physical act or series of acts directed at another student or students, which occurs in a school setting*, that is severe, persistent, or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:

- Substantial interference with a student's education.
- Creation of a threatening environment.
- Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the school.

*"school setting" shall mean in the school, on school grounds, in school vehicles, at a designated bus stop or at any activity sponsored, supervised or sanctioned by the school.

Bullying can take many forms and can include a variety of behavior. As defined in this policy, bullying refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:

1. Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person to hurt someone.
2. Verbal – racial slurs, name-calling, teasing, taunting, harassment, gossiping, spreading rumors.
3. Nonverbal – threatening, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, cyberbullying (bullying that occurs by use of electronic or communication devices through means of e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, photo and video sharing, chat rooms, bash boards, or web sites).

Bullying is further characterized by the following three (3) criteria:

- It is aggressive behavior or intentional harm doing.
- It is carried out repeatedly over time.
- It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g. one (1) person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker, or socially more powerful).

Procedure for Responding to Bullying

Step 1 – Reporting: A student or their guardian who believes they have been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy is encouraged to immediately report the incident to the head of school or school staff. A school employee who witnesses, suspects, or is notified that a student has been subject to conduct that constitutes a violation of this policy shall immediately report the incident to the head of school or designee. The complainant or reporting employee is encouraged to report the incident in writing to the head of school, but oral complaints shall be acceptable.

Step 2 – Investigation: Upon receiving a complaint of bullying, the head of the school or designee shall investigate the complaint. The investigation may consist of individual interviews with the complainant, the accused, and others with knowledge relative to the incident. The investigator may also evaluate any other information and materials relevant to the investigation. The investigator shall attempt to secure statements from all participants in and witnesses to the complaint. The complainant shall not be required to meet face-to-face with the accused. The obligation to conduct this investigation shall not be negated by the fact that a criminal or other investigation of the incident is pending or has been concluded.

Consequences for Violations:

If the allegations are confirmed, the building principal or designee shall:

1. Inform the student(s) found to have violated this policy and his/her parents/guardians of the results of the investigation, including the actions of the student and the consequences for his/her actions.
2. Review the definition of bullying and the district's policy on bullying with the student(s) and his/her parents/guardians.
3. Administer the consequences for the behavior relative to the number of offenses and the severity of the behavior.

A student who violates this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action consistent with the Code of Student Conduct, which may include:

1. Counseling.
2. Parental conference
3. Loss of school privileges/exclusion from school-sponsored activities
4. Transfer to another school building, classroom or school bus
5. Detention
6. Suspension
7. Expulsion
8. Referral to law enforcement officials

Harassment

It is the BCN's policy to maintain an educational environment in which harassment including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual violence in any form is not tolerated. BCN defines harassment as verbal, nonverbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, age, race, color, sexual orientation (known or perceived), gender identity expression (known or perceived), national origin/ethnicity, religion, disability, English language proficiency, socioeconomic status, and/or political beliefs. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. In line with Federal regulations (Title IX), the District defines sexual harassment as any instance of quid pro quo harassment by a school's employee; any unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would find so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it denies a person equal educational access; any instance of sexual assault (as defined in the Clery Act), dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as defined in the Violence Against Women Act).

Examples of potential Title IX Sexual Harassment violations include
1. Bullying or Harassment based on sex or gender identity or expression
2. Bullying or Harassment based on Pregnant or Parenting status
3. Bullying or harassment in the form of
    a. Comments, threats, gestures, or rumors of a sexual nature
    b. Sharing/showing images/videos of a sexual nature
    c. Non-consensual sex acts and sexual violence

Such conduct must have taken place during a BCN education program or activity and against a person in the United States to qualify as sexual harassment subject to Title IX regulations.

Substance Abuse

Drug and alcohol abuse prevent students from achieving their potential. For this reason, school leaders may involve the office of Family Support Services (FSS) to intervene with any students who are exhibiting signs of drug and alcohol abuse. BCN has a student Assistance Program (SAP) for students experiencing problems with drugs and alcohol. FSS personnel will provide appropriate referrals to counseling/support services for students. Any student at BCN exhibiting behavioral symptoms indicating alcohol and substance abuse may be given a drug/alcohol test (guardians will be notified whenever a test is issued). Symptoms may include intoxication, slurred speech, an unsteady walk, impaired coordination, slowed reflexes, an odor, a physical expression, brief intense euphoria, repetitive physical mannerisms (e.g., lip chewing, constant grinding of teeth, and constant scratching), violence, a blank expression, sexual promiscuity, nausea, and an elevated heart rate.

If a student tests positive they may be scheduled for a disciplinary hearing while the counselor will refer the student to the Student Assistance Program (SAP) for counseling/supportive services. Guardians are responsible for seeking outside treatment for their student. BCN must receive a treatment plan and regular updates from the outside treatment agency. To ensure BCN's receipt of regular updates from the outside treatment agency, guardians/guardians must sign a limited release of information form. The SAP coordinator or school social worker can provide the release/exchange of information form. The student may be re-tested sixty (60) days from the day of the initial testing date.

Locker/Cubby Use Policy

Lockers are provided for the use of students but remain the property of the school. Students may not use a locker to store a substance or object which is prohibited or which constitutes a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the occupants of the school building or the building itself. Students are required to:

- keep their lockers locked at all times;
- avoid sharing lockers, switching lockers, or using any locker other than the one assigned to them;
- notify the administration when a lock is lost or a locker is malfunctioning.

As a condition of providing student lockers storage areas , Belmont Charter School reserves the right to enter such storage areas at all times, without the permission of the student to whom the storage areas are assigned and that students should have no reasonable expectation of privacy for this school-owned property.

It is further agreed by students that entry by Belmont Charter School's personnel or law enforcement in a student locker or school storage area is a lawful search, and any items found therein which are unlawful to possess, or which have been used contrary to any school rule or policy, may be confiscated.

Search and Seizure Policy

The Board of Trustees of Belmont Charter is dedicated to ensuring the safety of its students, families and staff. As such, safety concerns now may require the use of magnetometers or scanning devices for comprehensive searches in secondary schools or random entry searches of students and visitors, to schools, school buses, or school programs when circumstances in a community, or information received by the school, raises a heightened likelihood of weapons possession and/or violence in a school or between segments of the student population.

The Board of Trustees acknowledges that the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures. As such, any and all such searches or seizure must be justified and of reasonable scope.

While recognizing the important protections that students enjoy under the Fourth Amendment as well as the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution (related to equal protection and privacy), the Board of Trustees has weighed the importance of the protection of students' rights against the importance of a safe school and has determined that it must maintain a safe environment to support the learning environment – which is supported by state and federal courts. As such, the presence of weapons in our schools had led the Board to conclude that certain searches are reasonable, including a school Entry Search.

Students and visitors upon entering the school building, school program, athletic contest, or activity location are subject to a search of their physical person and all items in their possession by means of metal detectors, X-ray equipment, or by hand, for the purpose of preventing the introduction of weapons, contraband, or illegal items

A weapon, as defined by Pennsylvania law is any object, device, or instrument that is designed as a weapon or that is capable of threatening or inflicting serious bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to: any firearm, shotgun, or rifle, whether loaded or unloaded; any knife, cutting instrument, or cutting tool; any nunchaku; any chemical agents such as pepper spray or mace; stun gun; incendiary device; and any other tool, instrument, or object used or intended to be used to inflict serious bodily injury to another. The term shall also include any simulated, replica, toy, or look-alike weapon.

A student may be subject to an individual search (including their person, bookbags, purses, backpacks, etc.) only if there is reasonable suspicion that:

1. There has been a criminal infraction or the violation of a school policy or rule governing behavior or discipline, and
2. The individual who is the subject of the search participated in the infraction or violation, and
3. Evidence of the infraction or violation, or proceeds from them, may be in the possession of the student in the location to be searched.

Except in situations when there is an immediate threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the student or others, the scope of a search should be limited to the least intrusive means available. Escalation of the scope or intensity of the search may occur only when warranted by the seriousness of the infraction or violation, and the information supporting the investigation.

Students may be requested to remove outerwear, shoes, blazers, coats, sweaters, jackets, shoes, or below the knee socks, or to loosen a belt or sash, provided this request does not result in the exposure of a person's bare skin or undergarments in the areas above the knees and below the neck.

No search procedure by a school employee shall be conducted on a student that involves reaching under a person's clothing to come into contact with the person's bare skin or undergarments or expose a person's bare skin or undergarments in the area above the knees and below the neck is forbidden. Any such intrusive searches may only be conducted by law enforcement if such law enforcement official deems it necessary to further investigate the presence of a weapon (see below).

When school authorities have exhausted all reasonable alternatives and still have reason to believe that contraband or proceeds of a crime are in the possession of the person being investigated, the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) may be called and presented with the facts. School personnel shall then leave the issue of any further investigation of any person to the discretion of the PPD and shall not urge any particular course of conduct by the police or demand the student to cooperate with the police.

Any person who refuses to cooperate in the scanning process will be referred promptly to the head of school or his/her designee for appropriate action.

Metal Detector Entry Search Policy

To combat school violence and the potential presence of weapons in our schools, BCN may utilize metal detectors to detect firearms, knives, and other weapons in their secondary schools. This policy is applicable in all situations in which students are subject to school disciplinary rules pursuant to state law as well as the Student Code of Conduct including: 1) on school grounds immediately before or during school hours, or immediately after school hours, or at any other time when the school is being used by a school group; 2) off school grounds at a school activity, function, or event; or 3) traveling to or from school or a school activity, function, or event.

Authority: Pursuant to 24 PS- 13-1317.2, it is prohibited for a student to possess a weapon on any school property, any school-sponsored activity or any public conveyance providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity.

Additionally, under 18 PS § 912(b), a person commits a misdemeanor of the first degree if they possess a weapon in the buildings of, on the grounds of, or in any conveyance providing transportation to or from any elementary or secondary publicly funded educational institution, any elementary or secondary private school licensed by the Department of Education or any elementary or secondary parochial school.

As used in this policy, the term "weapon" shall include, but not be limited to, any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury.

The CEO may recommend that the school purchase metal detectors approved for BCN's intended use, shall schedule training and re-training for all personnel using metal detectors, and shall coordinate all metal detector tests in accordance with the requirements as outlined in the manufacturer's specifications and BCN procedures.

Procedure: All students may be subject to screening. In the event metal detector screenings are conducted:

- Metal detector screenings of students and their belongings shall be conducted in an orderly and safe manner, consistent with industry standards for use of the detectors, and consistent with minimizing intrusion into students' privacy rights.

- Students and their personal belongings shall be screened by BCN employees using a hand-held metal detector (wand) owned by BCN or other metal detector equipment. The screening should be conducted, when possible, by an employee of the same sex of the student.
- Consistent scanning techniques shall be used for each student.
- BCN employees conducting the metal detector search should not make contact with the student's body with the wand, if used.

Prior to being scanned, a student will be asked to remove any metal objects (e.g., keys, phones, belt buckles, etc.) and set those objects aside. If during the screening of a student the detector is activated, the student shall be asked whether he or she has anything made of metal in the area scanned. If the article is removable (e.g., a set of keys), the student shall be asked to remove the article and the screening repeated. If the detector is again activated and the article cannot be removed (e.g., a belt buckle), the staff member shall visually confirm the student's explanation. If the activation cannot be explained or eliminated, then the student and his or her belongings shall be directed to a private area. An expanded search (i.e., a pat down of the student or inspection of a book-bag or purse – see Search policy) shall be conducted, if possible, by an employee of the same sex as the student. At least one other school employee shall be present during any search. The scope of the search should be focused on detecting a weapon.

The purpose of metal detector screenings is to deter the possession of weapons such as guns, knives, or other dangerous objects capable of inflicting bodily harm or injury. Screenings are not to be used for the purpose of searching students suspected of violation of other school policies and regulations. If during a screening contraband is incidentally discovered (such as tobacco or drugs), the possession of which is a violation of school policy or statute, the items shall be confiscated, and students will be subject to discipline.

BCN employees shall not conduct a strip search or arrange any clothing of an individual to permit a visual inspection of the underclothing, breast, buttocks, or genitalia.

Possession of a firearm, knife or other dangerous object shall subject students to disciplinary proceedings and/or arrest.

Reasonable Suspicion: When the school administration has reasonable suspicion to believe that weapons are in the possession of an identified student, the administration is authorized to use a mobile metal detector to search the student. "Individualized reasonable suspicion" means a belief based on the totality of the circumstances which, when taken together in the context of the school building or activity in which they occur, make the student or property searched more likely than a student or property selected at random to contain or possess evidence of a violation of state or federal law, a violation of school rule, or a condition that endangers the safety or health of the students or others.

Information provided by other persons may be considered by an administrator as a part of the administrator's individualized reasonable suspicion where the administrator has reason to believe the information is credible.

Random Checks: The building principal may decide to conduct a random metal detector check on all students before entering the school, or he or she may select a group of students to be checked at random on a neutral, nondiscriminatory basis. Metal detector checks of groups of individuals may not be used to single out a particular individual or category of individuals.

Notice: Before the initiation of the metal detector checks, school administration will explain the scanning process to students, emphasizing that the checks are intended to maintain safe schools.

Avoiding or Refusing Detection Process: If a student attempts to avoid a metal detector screening, it shall be considered sufficient cause to immediately search the person and their belongings. Anyone refusing to submit to the metal detection screening will be considered grounds for disciplinary action.

Students with Disabilities: BCN employees will be instructed to ensure that people with disabilities will be thoroughly screened while being sensitive to each person's condition. Service animals will be visually inspected.

Law Enforcement Involvement: The head of school or his or her designee will generally not use law enforcement officers to conduct metal detector screenings. Law enforcement officer involvement in metal detector screening procedures will be limited to:

- Sharing information regarding threats made against students, administrators, teachers, or the School that may require the school to conduct metal detector screenings, and
- Calling upon law enforcement in the event that a weapon is discovered or suspected based on a metal detector activation.

TO THE EXTENT THAT ANYTHING IN THIS POLICY COULD BE CONSTRUED TO CONFLICT WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS, THE APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS CONTROL.

Loss of or Damage to School Property

Students and their parents shall be responsible for the loss of or damage to school property due to students' acts or negligence. This responsibility applies in the matter of books, computers, and supplies of all kinds, as well as equipment, buildings and grounds. If school property is lost, stolen, or damaged as a result of irresponsible behavior, the guardian may be responsible for the full replacement cost, in addition to any applicable response outlined in the above code of conduct infractions.

TECHNOLOGY

Student usage in computing devices and Internet provided by school should demonstrate a high level of digital citizenship. Belmont Charter Network understands that having equitable access to the Internet is vital for learning but the misuse of it can negatively impact students academic, social and emotional growth. As such, computing devices and onsite Internet connection provided by the organization are equipped with CIPA compliant Internet content filters, however, Belmont Charter Network understands that students' family life also plays an important part in shaping students' appropriate use of technology. We strongly recommend students and family members to review Online Safety and Digital Well-Being Video lessons to safely navigate the online world.

Build Healthy Digital Habits
Avoid Online Scams
Understand Your Digital Footprint
Create and Safeguard Passwords
Identify Cyberbullying

Use of school computers and networks must be consistent with our goal of educating all students in methods that encourage creativity, support problem solving, and produce lifelong learners. The failure of any user to follow our computer and network usage policies may result in loss of privileges, disciplinary action, and/or appropriate legal action.

Acceptable Use

School networks and computers are provided to enhance the learning process and help staff and students succeed in meeting their educational objectives. Usage must comply with administrative policies and procedures, federal and Pennsylvania state law, and any additional regulations set forth by the Head of School or the behavior policy. The use of BCN's electronic network is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in the suspension or revocation of that privilege. Each individual is responsible for their own actions and activities while connected to the network. Usage that disrupts the proper and orderly operation of the school, threatens the integrity or efficient operation of BCN's electronic network, violates the rights of others, is illegal or for illegal purposes of any kind, or constitutes misconduct is unacceptable use.

Privacy

Any electronic communications or files created on, stored on, or sent to, from, or via the electronic network are considered school property. Consequently, users should not have any expectation of privacy with regard to such messages and files. Users should know that such messages and files can be recovered from the electronic network's backup system even after they have been deleted from a user's individual account.

Network Security

BCN equipment used by students may contain tracking and monitoring software that may provide BCN with information concerning the student's use of the technology including Internet activity, documents and files, and emails or other communications. BCN retains the right to enable the location tracking and image-taking function at any time, including if the technology equipment is lost, stolen, or not returned. BCN provides content filtering to help protect students from inappropriate content at all times while using BCN technology equipment. All contents are screened while students are in-school as well as outside of school. BCN uses third party services to filter or block inappropriate content. As a result, BCN is not responsible for any inappropriate content that may inadvertently or mistakenly pass through the third party content filter. Network security is a high priority. If any student observes a security problem on the network, they must notify the system administrator immediately. Students are expected to maintain the confidentiality of their account login information and password. Students are not allowed to use another individual's account without permission from that individual.

Personal Electronics

Students are not permitted to use cell phones, tablets, video game devices, or any other sort of personal electronic devices on school grounds during school hours, unless in situations explicitly communicated by the school. Students are solely responsible for personal electronic devices brought on campus. BCN is not responsible for the theft, damage, or loss of any electronic device, including devices that are confiscated by school staff. Students who need to make a phone call during the school day will be allowed to use the phone in the Main Office.

While students are encouraged to leave their cell phones and other electronics at home, we understand that some students may need their phone before or after school and will have it with them during the school day. All students are expected to follow their school-specific policy for personal electronics. Students who do not comply with their school's policy and choose

to use their phones or other electronics during the day may have devices confiscated and their families contacted by school staff. Additionally, the student may be subject to any other consequence as detailed in the code of conduct.

Issue and Return

BCN students could be assigned a device in the classroom (it could be a Chromebook or tablet computer) and could opt-in for the at-home chromebook program. Any devices assigned are intended to be used for academic purposes and school related communication only. Belmont Charter High School 9th through 12th grade students are expected to bring the Chromebooks to school fully charged every day. Belmont and Inquiry Charter students 8th grade or lower are expected to keep their issued chromebook and charger at home. There are adequate devices in each classroom during in-person learning for learning purposes. All Chromebooks will be collected when a student transfers out of BCN. If a Chromebook/device and accessories are not returned, the guardian will be held responsible for the full cost of the property not returned.

Repair and Damage

If BCN issued devices e.g. Chromebook is damaged, lost, or stolen, the student or parent/guardian should immediately notify the school administration. If a device is lost, stolen, or damaged as a result of irresponsible behavior, the guardian may be responsible for the full replacement cost. Further, the parent/guardian may be responsible for the full replacement cost of the device if any lost or damaged device is not reported to BCN personnel within three (3) calendar days of missing the device. In the event that BCN equipment is lost, stolen, or damaged, the device user will be assessed a fee for the repair or replacement of the device up to and including the full replacement cost of the device.

In the event that the power adapter and/or cable are lost, stolen, or damaged, the device user will be responsible for a replacement fee up to and including the full replacement cost of the charger. Students who transfer out of or graduate from a BCN school must return all BCN technology, along with any other issued accessories, at the time they withdraw from the school. Any fees collected as part of this initiative will not be refunded. Students withdrawing from a school must return all BCN equipment to the school or pay the full replacement fee prior to the school releasing any official records (report cards, transcripts, etc.). Graduating seniors must return all BCN equipment to the school or pay the full replacement fee in order to receive their diploma or participate in commencement service.

Repair and Damage Fees

BCN chromebook and charger will be loaned to students with no initial charge to the family. However, a fee of up to $500.00 might incur for damaged, lost, or stolen Chromebook. The amount of fees are assessed depending on the extent of damage, multiple incidents, or negligence. Fee must be received prior to the issuance of a new device. A $20.00 fee must be received prior to the issuance of a replacement chromebook charger due to lost or physical damage.

Handling and Care of Student Devices

<u>For Devices Issued for Home Use</u>

Students should take the following measures to ensure proper handling of their devices:

- Keep the device in the school-issued case. <u>Keep devices and cases free of any writing, drawing, stickers, or labels that are not applied by BCN</u>.
- Use the device on a flat, stable surface.
- Do not place books on the device.
- Do not have food or drinks around the device.

- If cleaning is necessary, wipe surfaces with a clean, dry soft cloth.
- Avoid touching the screen with pens or pencils.
- Do not leave the device exposed to direct sunlight or near any heat or moisture sources for extended periods of time.
- It is the student's responsibility to recharge the device's battery so that it is fully charged by the start of the next school day.
- Students should not leave the device outside of their residence (e.g. in a vehicle unattended, anywhere outdoor, e.g. in a park)
-The device must be in its protective case and sleeve. Students should never remove the sticker or hard case from the Chromebook

For School Based Devices

School based devices are defined by their intended location of use. They are devices that are designated to stay inside the classroom on school grounds, under the classroom teacher's custodial and not to be taken out of the school building's physical boundary for any reason. Students should not remove these devices from the classroom and should hold the same level of care to these devices just like the devices assigned to them to use at home. If these devices are found outside of the classroom, students are expected to return to the location they were supposed to be at, as indicated by the label or engraving on the device.

Email Use Policy

All student Electronic Mail (email) are property of Belmont Charter Network (BCN). The primary purpose of the student electronic mail system is for students to communicate with school staff, outside resources related to school assignments, and fellow students to collaborate on school activities. Account usernames and password reset service of the student's account can be provided to parents on request so that they can monitor the account and communicate with teachers. The use of the BCN email system is a privilege. Communication through the email system should abide by the community's mode of acceptable behavior. Students are responsible for messages sent from their accounts. The student's email account will remain active after graduation. Students should not share their passwords. Messages posted on the email system cannot cause disruption to the school environment or normal and acceptable school operations. Electronic mail from the BCN system can be checked from home or from school computers, as long as it does not disrupt the operation of the classroom or school. The email system cannot be used to operate a personal business. The account may not be sold or otherwise reassigned. The account may be revoked if used inappropriately. Student email accounts will be terminated or suspended if the student is dismissed from BCN, or commits infractions outlined below:

1. Use the computer network(s)/computers for illegal, inappropriate or obscene purposes, or in support of such activities
2. Use the computer networks/computers to violate copyrights, institutional or third party copyrights, license agreements or other contracts
3. Use the computer networks in a manner that:
    a. intentionally disrupts network traffic or crashes the network;
    b. degrades or disrupts system performance;
    c. uses the computing resources of the school district for commercial purposes, financial gain, or fraud;
    d. steals data or other intellectual property;
    e. gains or seeks unauthorized access to the files of others or vandalizes the data of another person;
    f. gains or seeks unauthorized access to resources or entities;

g. forges electronic mail messages or uses an account owned by others;
h. invades privacy of others;
i. posts anonymous messages;
j. possesses any data which is a violation of this Policy; and/or
k. engages in other activities that do not advance the educational purposes for which computers are provided.

Students must report any unusual activities, such as "spam" communications, obscene email, attempts by anyone to lure them into inappropriate or dangerous behaviors, and the like, to the school's technology contact for action. Students are prohibited from forwarding emails that do not serve academic or educational purposes. Students will not identify their home telephone numbers or home addresses in any email correspondence. Electronic mail sent or received by the system is not confidential.

The administration reserves the right to retrieve the contents of user mailboxes, such as to find lost messages, to conduct internal investigations, to comply with investigations of wrongful acts, or to recover from system failure. System administrators may create filters to scan for and eliminate viruses and large graphic files that are unrelated to BCN's operation.

When issues arise, BCN will deal directly with the student, school administration, and/or parents/guardians. Improper use of the system will result in discipline and possible revocation of the student's email account. Illegal activities on the system will be referred to law enforcement authorities for appropriate legal action. The BCN Technology Department is responsible for ensuring the efficient use of the electronic mail system. The interpretation of appropriate use and future revisions of this guideline are the responsibility of the CEO and Heads of School. If necessary, BCN, at its discretion, may close the accounts at any time. Any updates or changes to this electronic mail agreement by the Board or administration will be in effect.

NOTIFICATIONS OF RIGHTS, POLICIES & PROCEDURES

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001/Pennsylvania's Education for students and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 requires all youth experiencing homelessness to have educational access, attendance and success in school. McKinney-Vento also provides funding to states to support statewide homelessness initiatives. Pennsylvania's Education for Students and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program works to ensure homeless students are provided with a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other students in the state. Please contact your school's Family Support Specialist if your family may be experiencing housing insecurity.

<u>McKinney-Vento Act: Definition of Homelessness</u>

An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including students and youth who are: Sharing housing, living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds, living in emergency or transitional housing, abandoned or runaways, awaiting foster care, living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, and migratory students who qualify as homeless because they are living in the circumstances described above.

McKinney-Vento Act: Enrollment

Public School must immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness even when lacking: Proof of residency, guardianship, birth certificates, school records, or other documents, medical records, including immunization records, and required dress code items, including uniforms.

McKinney-Vento Act: Support

Homeless students who move have the right to remain in their school of origin (i.e. the school the student attended when permanently housed or in which the student was last enrolled, which includes preschools) if that is in the student's best interest. If it is in the student's best interest to change schools, homeless students must be immediately enrolled in a new school, even if they do not have the records normally required for enrollment. Transportation must be provided to or from a student's school of origin at the request of a guardian, or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local liaison. Homeless students must have access to all programs and services to which they are eligible, including special education services, preschool, school nutrition programs, language assistance for ELL students, Title I programs, career, and technical education, gifted and talented programs, magnet schools, charter schools, summer learning, online learning, before and after school care, etc.Unaccompanied youth must be accorded specific protections, including immediate enrollment in school without proof of guardianship.Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth have a right to dispute an eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision.

Students In Child Welfare

In accordance with the Every student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, the Philadelphia Department of Human Services (DHS), and local education agencies (LEAs), including Inquiry and Belmont Charter School, must work together to support educational stability for students and youth placed in out-of-home care. Philadelphia DHS and LEAs must collaborate to ensure that students and youth placed in out-of-home care are able to remain in their school of origin (current school) unless it is not in their best interest to do so.

Every time a student or youth is placed in out-of-home care, or their placement location is changed, Philadelphia DHS and LEAs will internally consult about possible factors indicating it is not in the best interest of the student to remain in their school of origin. When these factors exist, there must be a joint determination by the LEA and DHS to change their school placement. Philadelphia DHS and the LEA will then work together to comply with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), including working collaboratively to establish a transportation plan.

Photography & Video Permission

From time to time, photographs or videos may be taken of students for BCN public relations publications, professional development of staff, or other school-related purposes. Additionally, students' school-related work may be displayed in a school building in conjunction with displays of other students' work. These photographs, videos, and school-related work (which are not considered student records) will be used/displayed in a manner designed to ensure that confidential information about the student's educational program will not be revealed. Parents/guardians provide consent in the enrollment and re-enrollment packets. Guardians who had provided consent in this packet and currently object to the use of their student's photograph, the videotaping of their student for our professional development program, the posting of their student's name or image on our district website, and/or the display of their student's work by the district in any manner should contact the head of school.

Student Abuse Reporting Policy Summary

All BCN employees are mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to report suspected student abuse. They are required to make a report when they have reason to suspect that a student is being physically abused, emotionally abused, neglected, or sexually abused. When teachers suspect student abuse, they are required to notify the Commonwealth's Childline, either via telephone or online. Following the report, staff members are strongly recommended to notify the school social worker or BCN staff member responsible for following up on student abuse reports. After a call to childline is made, the school social worker may choose to alert the parents/guardians that a report was made or may choose to not alert them, depending on the circumstances. There is no law requiring parental notification of reports of suspected student abuse. All school staff members are mandated to keep confidential any discussions regarding suspected student abuse; however, the school social worker may share some information with staff members on a need-to-know basis only if this information will benefit the student, the employees, and the institution. Contact: School Social Worker Information: Guardians may contact their student's school to request additional information regarding BCN's student abuse reporting procedure.

Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment Summary

Guardians can refuse to have their student participate in certain types of surveys and physical examinations. BCN lets guardians know when their students are scheduled to participate in surveys or physical examinations. To request that their student opt out of surveys or non-emergency physical exams, guardians must contact the Head of School. Federal law affords BCN students and their guardians certain rights regarding their participation in surveys, the collection and use of student information for marketing purposes, and participation in certain physical exams.

Parents' and Students' Privacy Rights to Student Information and Education Records Summary

BCN usually has to seek permission in order to release student records. However, there are times when BCN is allowed to release student records without students' or guardians' permission. Guardians who do not want the release of their student's records must contact the Head of School. BCN is generally required to obtain guardians' permission or consent before we may release any information from the student's education record. Under federal law, a student receives this right when the student reaches the age of eighteen (18). This includes access to a student's records by others, as well as the right to deny guardians access to their records. However, information from a student's education record may be released, without consent, to certain parties, including the military, school officials, and state and local authorities. Additionally, BCN can release the following directory information, without consent: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, BCN must inform students prior to the release of directory information and allow students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information pertaining to them.

Pupil Privacy Rights

Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information Summary: BCN protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information. Guardians are allowed to review their student's permanent records or other educational records upon request.

Teacher Qualifications Summary

Guardians have the right to know the qualifications of the teachers instructing their students. Guardians have the right to request the following information about each of their student's classroom teachers: whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subject they teach; whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances; the teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced

degrees, and the field of discipline for the certification or degree; and whether paraprofessionals provide services to their student and, if so, their qualifications. Contact: Director of Human Resources

Title I: Parental Involvement Policy Summary

Title I is a federal program designed to provide a high-quality education to all students. One goal of Title I is to increase parental involvement within schools. BCN provides a variety of activities and venues for parents/guardians to become involved in the school. Examples of parental involvement activities include, but are not limited to, the following list. Back to School Night (held in September) School Carnivals or Block Party – Schools host events for families at the beginning of the school year. Parent Association Meetings – The Parent Association provides parents/guardians with the opportunity to support their school by planning and raising funds for student celebrations, academic support, and community pride-related activities. Parent Teacher Conferences – Twice a year, parents/guardians meet with their students' teachers to review report cards and discuss their studentren's academic progress.

TITLE IX Notice and Complaint Procedure Summary

BCN complies with Title IX regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs and activities. All questions regarding Title IX and its implementation within BCN Schools may be referred to BCN's Title IX Coordinator, Kat Schoemaker, kat.schoemaker@belmontcharternetwork.org.

Student Expression Policy

Under the interpretation of Title IX and its regulations by the Department of Justice and the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights, when a student or a student's parent or guardian, as appropriate, notifies the school administration that the student will assert a gender identity that differs from previous representations or records, the school will begin treating the student consistent with the student's gender identity. "Gender identity" is a person's deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender, regardless of the gender they were assigned at birth. One's gender identity can be the same or different from the gender assigned at birth.

<u>Privacy</u>

Information about a student's transgender status, legal name, or sex assigned at birth constitutes personally identifiable information ("PII") under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). School personnel should not permit the nonconsensual disclosure of PII, such as a student's birth name or sex assigned at birth. Any records kept with this information will be kept confidential by the school.

School personnel should not disclose information that may reveal a student's transgender status or gender non-conforming presentation to others unless legally required to do so or the student has authorized such disclosure, or, in the determination of school officials, it becomes necessary to protect the transgender student's safety. Before making such a disclosure, a school administrator shall make reasonable efforts to inform the transgender student or his/her Parents of the decision to disclose, the reason(s) for disclosure, and provide the student with the opportunity and resources they may need to make the disclosure themselves. Transgender and gender non-conforming students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity and expression openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much private information they share.

When contacting the parent or guardian of a transgender or gender non-conforming student, school personnel should use the student's legal name and the pronoun corresponding to the student's gender assigned at birth unless the student, parent, or guardian has specified otherwise. Wherever possible, gender neutral language will be used in written communication.

Under FERPA, schools may designate certain information from a student's education record as "directory information," and disclose that information without student or parent consent, if disclosure would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Directory information may include a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. School officials may not designate students' sex, including transgender status, as "directory information," and shall allow eligible students or parents a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose a student's directory information.

Official Records

The school is required to maintain educational records on behalf of its students ("official record") which includes a student's legal name and sex assigned at birth. However, the school is not required to use a student's legal name and sex assigned at birth on other school records or documents. The school will change a student's record to reflect a change in legal name or legal gender upon receipt of documentation that such change has been made pursuant to a court order.

Students will be treated consistent with their gender identity even if their education records or identification documents indicate a different sex.

Parents (or students over age 18) may seek to amend their education records pursuant to FERPA to make them consistent with the student's gender identity. Under FERPA, schools must consider the request of an eligible student or parent to amend information in the student's education records that is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's privacy rights. Requests will be considered and structured in a manner consistent with FERPA and Title IX; if the school does not elect to amend the record at the student or parent's request, it will inform the student and parent of the student's right to a hearing.

The intentional or persistent refusal to respect a student's gender identity (for example, intentionally referring to the student by a name or pronoun that does not correspond to the student's gender identity) is a violation of this policy and may be a violation of Title IX regulations. BCN commits to regularly conducting training for all staff members on their responsibilities under the uniform policy of nondiscrimination set forth in applicable laws and this regulation.

Gender-Segregated Activities

To the extent possible, the school should reduce or eliminate the practice of segregating students by gender. In situations where students are segregated by gender, such as for selected health education classes, students should be able to choose and be included in the group that corresponds to their gender identity.

Student Information Systems

The school shall modify its student information system, as necessary, to prevent disclosure of confidential information and ensure that school personnel use a student's preferred name and pronouns consistent with the student's gender identity. The official permanent record will be stored in a secure location, separate from other student records in order to protect student privacy.

Restroom and Locker Room Accessibility

BCN schools may provide separate restroom and locker room facilities on the basis of sex but will permit transgender students access to the facilities that are consistent with their gender identify.

Any student who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of the underlying reason, will be provided access to a single user restroom. However, no transgender student shall be required to use facilities inconsistent with their gender identify or to use individual-user facilities when other students are not required to do so.

Physical Education Classes & Intramural Sports

Transgender and gender non-conforming students shall be permitted to participate in physical education classes and intramural sports in a manner consistent with their gender identity. Students who express discomfort over participation in an activity will be provided with an alternate activity.

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to excuse any student from following necessary or customary protocols for obtaining parental consent for athletic participation, including permission slips, consent forms and waivers. All staff will adhere to this policy when advising transgender students about the process for obtaining such parental consent.

Interscholastic Competitive Sports Teams

Transgender and gender non-conforming students shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletics in a manner consistent with their gender identity and in compliance with the applicable regulations of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA).

Dress Code

Transgender and gender non-conforming students have the right to dress in a manner consistent with their gender identity or gender expression. In general, the school may not adopt dress codes that restrict students' clothing or appearance on the basis of gender. See your child's school-specific handbook addendum for the uniform expectations.

Discrimination/Harassment

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that transgender and gender non-conforming students have a safe school environment. This includes ensuring that any incident of discrimination, harassment, or violence is given immediate attention, including investigating the incident, taking appropriate corrective action, and providing students and staff with appropriate resources.

Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived transgender status or gender nonconformity are to be handled in the same manner as other sex-based discrimination or harassment complaints.