



Bison Online Student Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for being a part of Bison Online. Whether you are a full-time online student or are choosing to take one or two classes, we want your experience to be positive, rigorous, and help you to meet your future college and career readiness goals. Buffalo High School prides itself on creating exceptional relationships and developing students who are **KIND, PROUD, DRIVEN LEADERS**. At Bison Online, this is no exception. Whether synchronous or asynchronous our educators seek to get to know you as a learner so we can best support you on your academic journey.

Bison Online is a proud extension of Buffalo High School and we will work tirelessly to meet our mission of:

"In partnership with our families and community, Buffalo High School prepares each student for a successful future. In an academically rigorous and supportive environment, we prioritize learning, equity, and meaningful relationships. Together, we value student agency, growth, and connections."

Mark Mischke, Principal

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Notice: This handbook serves as an extension of the Buffalo High School handbook. More detailed information regarding BHS policies and procedures can be found in the document linked above. Where applicable, all Bison Online students are expected to abide by the information in this handbook and the BHS student handbook.

Academic Expectations

Bison Online Schedule:

- Asynchronous: No Specific Class Times
- Synchronous: Students will follow the same class schedule. Students are expected to be in their Google Meet, with their camera turned on at the start of the class period
- Online Advisory: All full-time online students are expected to view any Advisory materials that are shared with them through Google Classroom
- BASE: Virtual and In-person BASE meetings will be held on a scheduled basis. Students will be expected to attend any scheduled BASE sessions.
- Virtual Advisory and BASE will only be available to full-time online students. Part-time students will attend their regularly scheduled Advisory and attend in-person BASE.

Access to Buffalo High School

Students who are full-time online will not have access to Buffalo High School during the school day, except for specifically scheduled in-person meetings. Students coming to BHS for a scheduled meeting should arrive at Door #7 and check in with the greeter when they arrive.

Part-time online students will have access to BHS under the following expectations:

- Students whose online classes are contiguous with the beginning or end of the school day are expected to be off campus during their online periods. (For example: In-person Hours 1-3, Online Hours 4-5, students are expected to leave campus after Hour 3.)
- Students whose online classes are in the middle of the day will be expected to report to an assigned location within Buffalo High School. Students must be in that location by the end of passing time. (For example: In-person Hours 1-3, 5; Online Hour 4, students are expected to report to the assigned location for Hour 4.)
- Failure to follow these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Family Involvement

Learning at home requires specific effort by both the student and their family. To support your student when learning from home, it is necessary that students have a dedicated and functional space to study and complete work. This should include a clean and large enough workspace, comfortable seating, and a student friendly learning environment that will allow a student to focus and interact with others online without distraction.

Coursework

Multiple educational platforms may be utilized, but all classes will have a dedicated online location that will include course resources, calendars/timelines, and any learning or support resource. This platform will be communicated by the course instructor.

Asynchronous Learning Activities: The primary platform for asynchronous learning will be Edmentum Courseware. Students will be expected to engage in and complete assignments and activities through this platform. Assessments may be delivered in Edmentum Courseware or may be provided through Google Classroom. Students will have flexibility on when to complete assignments, but students must maintain a

pace to be on track for their courses. Asynchronous courses are NOT self-paced. Students will be expected to maintain a pace as prescribed by the instructor. Failure to do so will result in unexcused absences, reduced grade, and potential removal from the course.

Synchronous Learning Activities: Bison Online will use Google Meet as the primary video conferencing tool for synchronous learning. Students will be required to have their camera turned on at the beginning of every learning session to verify their attendance. Requirements for camera and microphone use beyond attendance will be determined by individual instructors. Synchronous instruction may include whole-class, small group, and 1:1 lesson activities.

Curriculum

Bison Online provides for both full-time (comprehensive) and part-time (supplemental) online learning. Students will be able to earn credits needed for graduation. Courses for Bison Online will align with Buffalo High School required and elective courses. When a required course is not available, a different online course will be identified by BHS to meet that requirement.

Course Registration

Students registering for Bison Online courses will do so during the regular registration process in January/February. If a student wants to register for a Bison Online course or make a schedule change, they should contact their dedicated school counselor. Please reach out to student services with any questions regarding registering for Bison Online.

Course Options and Requirements

Bison Online course options and requirements can be found at the [Bison Online Course Catalog](#). Some courses or prerequisites may differ between in-person and online classes. Please contact your school counselor with specific course requirements.

Course Drop/Withdrawal

Students in Bison Online are working towards a Buffalo High School diploma and will follow the same procedures for dropping or adding a course. Many staffing decisions are based on student enrollment and it is not possible for courses to be changed, except under the following circumstances:

- Students wanting to leave an online course to join an in-person or synchronous class must do so within the first 2 days of each term..
- Extenuating circumstances and administrative approval required for any later changes to courses.

Grading Practices

Bison Online is committed to implementing evidence based grading practices that align with the [Buffalo High School Assessment Framework](#). This includes:

- Grades that reflect student mastery of essential learning
- Grading practices should be mathematically accurate, bias-resistant, motivating for students, and support student growth.

All course assignments or activities will be designated as either formative (practice) or summative (performance). Grading for all Bison Online courses will be weighted in alignment with a comparative course at Buffalo High School. In alignment with the BHS Assessment Framework, all courses will have a minimum of 70% weight for summative work and 30% maximum weighting for formative work.

- Assignments within the formative category represent practice and therefore are typically time-bound so teachers can provide students with feedback prior to any summative assessment. Accordingly, these assignments may not be accepted in the grade book if they are completed outside of the assigned time frame (typically one week).
- Tasks or assessments within the summative category represent the student's demonstration of mastery of essential skills and knowledge. Therefore, students will be able to utilize re-takes or re-do's in alignment with in-person courses. Students will likely need to complete additional assignments in order to show they have engaged in additional practice prior to reassessment. Students that do not submit or complete summative assessments within the original timeline, will need to follow the course reassessment policy in order to complete their assessment.

Academic Integrity

Bison Online strives to establish high academic standards that help prepare all students for future academic and career success. In order to do so, a high level of academic integrity is required of students. Students must agree that work they submit is of their own doing. Submitting or copying another person's work is plagiarism and will not be allowed. Also, utilizing internet or artificial intelligence sources and not attributing them appropriately will not be allowed. Engaging in this behavior makes it impossible for teachers to assess and help students in their learning. Students engaged in academic dishonesty may be subject to the following disciplinary actions:

- Redo an assignment or retake an assessment following coaching or re-teaching of expectation and parent/guardian communication. Retake procedures or an alternative assignment may be utilized.
- Restricted technology procedures, including utilizing Google Meet when completing assessments to help ensure the integrity of student work.
- Requirement to take assessments or complete summative tasks in-person to ensure integrity of student work.
- Removal from Bison Online and return to in-person school.

Standardized Assessments

Full-time and part-time Bison Online students will have the same access to standardized assessments as in-person students. Standardized assessments, such as the MN Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) and ACT must be completed in-person. These assessments will take place at BHS and will be part of the building-wide assessment schedule.

Attendance Expectations

Regular attendance and participation in school is a necessary component for student success, regardless of a student being in-person or online. Bison Online has created the following policies and procedures to help ensure student success and follow the legal expectations of student compulsory attendance.

Asynchronous Attendance

Daily attendance is required by the State of MN and will be based on the following criteria. Students meeting the criteria listed below will be considered "present virtually".

- Students will report themselves "present" through the Infinite Campus virtual attendance system.
- Any student who is maintaining pace with a course by completing tasks assigned for the week, earning a passing grade, and attending any scheduled meetings will be considered present or absent based on their self-reporting.
- Students who are not meeting the above requirements, may be expected to complete tasks or connect with a teacher to demonstrate their attendance.

- Students who are not maintaining academic progress in the course or are not passing, and do not log in to a course each day, will be marked absent for each day they do not log in.

Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

Students who exhibit chronic absenteeism may be considered truant. Chronic absenteeism is the number one cause of underperformance in classes and student failure. Bison Online will use a number of strategies to limit student absence.

MN Residency Requirements

Online learning does provide a different level of flexibility for students to engage in their coursework, but the State of MN mandates that a student needs to physically reside within the state while accessing their education. Specifically, MN statute section 126C.05, subdivision 8 requires that any student who has been out of state for 15 consecutive days must be withdrawn from school and is no longer eligible for educational funding until he/she resumes physical residence in MN again. There are no exemptions to the rule for online education providers.

If you are planning to travel outside of MN on a trip that is less than 15 consecutive school days, your student is able to remain enrolled without issue. Students in these circumstances are encouraged to continue to actively engage in coursework during their travels if they are able to do so, and to request an excused absence for any days they are not able to participate asynchronously, if they cannot maintain the attendance expectations above.

If you are traveling outside of MN for a period of 15 consecutive school days or greater, please contact your school counselor to develop a plan for your return to school.

Student Support Services

Students within Bison Online will have access to student support services similar to in-person students at Buffalo High School. This includes access to Principal/Assistant Principal, School Counselor, Special Education Services, English Learner Services, and Student Interventions.

Principal/Assistant Principal

Administrative support for Bison Online will mirror in-person services at BHS. Students will continue to work with the principal and their assigned assistant principal.

<u>Last Name:</u>	<u>Assistant Principal:</u>	<u>Email:</u>	<u>Phone:</u>
A - Hd	Stephanie Ward	sward@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8104
He - K	Ed Cox	ecox@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8105
L - Sh	Kris Thompson	kthompson@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8102
Si - Z	Ed Cox	ecox@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8105

School Counselors

Bison Online students will continue to work with their school counselor. Students are assigned to school counselors by the first letters of their last name.

<u>Last Name:</u>	<u>School Counselor:</u>	<u>Email:</u>	<u>Phone:</u>
A - F	Mark Jones	mjones@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8107
G - K	Shanlee Maher	smaher@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8054
L - Rn	Christina Cox	ccox@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8075
Ro - Z	Jennifer Blair	jblair@bhmschools.org	(763)682-8139

Special Education Services

Students receiving Special Education services will have their services reviewed when engaging in Bison Online courses. Students that are full-time online students will have their IEP reviewed for any potential adjustments to ensure the student is well-supported in the online environment.

Delivery of Special Education Services

After reviewing a student's IEP, multiple options may be made available to meet a student's needs. These options may include:

- Modifications and accommodations to asynchronous online instruction
- Synchronous service minutes through meeting with case manager or small group classes
- In-person instruction for small group classes or time with case manager
- Synchronous, virtual meetings with a social worker

Student Intervention and Support

Students needing temporary or ongoing intervention and support will have access to similar support as in-person Buffalo High School students. These may include: assigned BASE (virtual or in-person), Check-in/Check-out, Peer Coaching, Extended Day.

Students needing a higher level of support or younger students may be required to take an online learning skills course to help teach and support them in order to be successful in online learning.

In addition to these available supports, students who are struggling academically in the asynchronous online environment will follow the following intervention steps:

- **Step 1:** All students who take 4-5 classes online will have a Bison Online intake meeting to discuss the unique opportunities and challenges of online learning. This meeting will focus on the most effective strategies needed for students' success and how to avoid potential pitfalls.
- **Step 2:** At 4 weeks, any students who are failing multiple classes or not making reasonable progress on all of their classes are required to have an academic support meeting, with school staff and a parent or guardian. The goal of this meeting is to address any challenges the student is having in the online environment and to develop an academic support plan for the student and family.
- **Step 3:** At 8 weeks, any student who is continuing to fail multiple classes or not making reasonable progress on all of their classes will be required to attend an in-person academic support meeting, with school staff and a parent or guardian. The goal of this meeting is to review the academic support plan, identify any necessary in-person interventions that may need to be added, and review a plan for the student returning to in-person school if he/she continues to not have academic success.

- **Step 4:** At the end of the trimester, any student who is failing two or more classes will have a review of their access to Bison Online for the following trimester. Adjustments may include academic probation that can limit class choices or add required synchronous supports, and a return to full-time or part-time in-person instruction at BHS.

* Extreme academic struggles or disengagement may lead to an acceleration of these steps. Also, students that are at-risk of not graduating on time may need additional interventions.

Communications

In a remote environment, regular and intentional communication by all parties is a key to student success. Greater responsibility will be given to students and families to ensure all communications are received and responded to in a timely and effective manner.

Alerts and Announcements

Bison online will use similar channels to BHS in order to communicate with families. Also, families should pay attention to general communication from BHS, as it may impact full-time Bison Online students. In addition to school-wide communication, individual teachers will engage in regular communication. The primary form of teacher announcements will be through email. It is important that both students and families are monitoring their email to stay up to date.

Communication During the School Day

Regular communication will be important to a student's success in an online setting. Typical communication expectations include:

- Regular monitoring of email or related messaging used in the course.
- Students reply within the school day if possible and at most within 24 hours.
- Teachers' replies will typically be given during the teacher dedicated "online" time. All Bison Online teachers are teaching in-person classes throughout the day and may not be available for immediate response.
- If a video conference or phone call is required, effort will be made to schedule this session ahead of time when possible.

Questions or Concerns

Step 1 – Contact the appropriate staff member: The first step in resolving a concern is to discuss it with the staff member(s) most closely involved. Most likely this is your child's classroom teacher. Almost all questions or concerns are resolved at this level.

Step 2 – Contact a school counselor or assistant principal: If the question or concern cannot be answered or resolved by contacting the class instructor, please communicate with the student's assigned school counselor or assistant principal.

Step 3 – Contact the principal: If your question or concern remains unresolved, contact the building principal. He provides building-wide oversight and support, and should be able to work with you to explain any necessary processes or procedures.

Weather Related Closures

In the event of an emergency change to the daily schedule or closure due to weather, Bison Online will following these adjustments

- In the event of a late start or early closure, students are welcome to continue working on their coursework, but teachers may not be available for communication
- In the event of a closure, students can continue working on their coursework, but are NOT expected to report their attendance. Teaching staff may not be available for communication.
- Adjustments to due dates or course pacing will not automatically occur. If individual teachers adjust due dates, they will notify students. In the event of extenuating circumstances and adjustments are needed across all of Bison Online, communication will be made from administration.

Student Behavior and Digital Citizenship

All students at BHS and Bison Online are expected to act with a high standard of integrity towards themselves, others, and school property. Bison Online students are expected to meet the guidelines described in the BHS Student Handbook.

Students working online will be held to a high standard when it comes to digital citizenship. Students utilizing a district owned device must adhere to the District's Chromecare policies. A student's ability to manage themselves and engage in positive online behavior is necessary for their success. Failure to adhere to these expectations can result in disciplinary action, including removal from Bison Online.