

BMS Handbook Changes for 2026/2027

General: Updated all 25.26 dates to 26.27, updated staff names as needed, updated food prices, updated calendars, and added MSBA #'s/school board policies as needed. Will update page numbers and Index page once these changes are approved.

Page 8: Remove Whole Section:

APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

~~Applications for Educational Benefits~~ are sent out to the district residents in August. Applications **MUST** be completed and returned **EACH YEAR** to determine eligibility. **Please return these applications as soon as possible to the food service office at 502 Minnesota Ave. N.W.** Benefits of the program cannot be given to the students until applications have been reviewed for eligibility. If you do not receive an application, please secure one from any of the schools' offices. Application for Educational Benefits can be made at any time of the school year, if the need arises. Applying for the program is important. Schools receive funding for educational programs based directly on the number of students who qualify for free or reduced price meals. These funds are used to provide additional educational support and opportunities for students in every school.

Page 8: Under APPOINTMENTS (DENTIST/ORTHODONTIC/DOCTOR'S) and MESSAGES

Removed section – incorporating under ATTENDANCE section:

APPOINTMENTS (DENTIST/ORTHODONTIC/DOCTOR'S) and MESSAGES

~~Only Parents/Guardians listed in our Student Database are allowed to pick up children from school. If other arrangements need to be made, a note or phone call from the parent/guardian is required. Students will be called to the office once the parent/guardian arrives to sign them out. Students may not leave the school building during the regular school day on their own.~~

~~Any change of plans by parents that must be communicated to their son/daughter, should be made to the Attendance Office prior to 3:00 P.M.~~

Page 8: Under ATTENDANCE

Updated Whole Section:

ATTENDANCE

~~Students are to be in school except in cases of emergency or for reasons stated below. All students must follow our School District's Attendance Policy. Open-enrolled students could be at risk of losing open enrollment status if the policy is not followed. See page 8-11 below. Parents need to call the school one week prior to a vacation. If possible, course work may be given to students prior to their vacation. Students have two days for every day gone to make-up work (ex. gone five days = ten days to complete work).~~

~~These are the only reasons for being absent from school:~~

- ~~1. Personal illness – The school may require the certificate of a doctor if it is deemed advisable.~~
- ~~2. Illness in the family – All schoolwork should be kept current.~~
- ~~3. Quarantine in the home – This is limited to the length of quarantine set by the proper health official.~~
- ~~4. Observance of a religious holiday.~~
- ~~5. Funerals.~~
- ~~6. Any other reason must be excused by the school PRIOR to the absence.~~

Attendance Key

- ~~• TARDY – a student will be considered tardy to class if he/she is *less* than 7 minutes late.~~
- ~~• UNEXCUSED – Absent without being excused.~~
- ~~• TRUANT – any unexcused absence i.e. skipping without legal cause.~~
- ~~• KEY to attendance codes: W=unexcused, N=nurse, I=behavior intervention room, O=office or meeting w/support staff (excused), D=dismissed, E=excused, L=tardy, S=out of school suspension, A=absence excused, E=extra-curricular, H=homebound, T=truancy~~

Attendance for Out-of-Town Athletic Events/After School Events and Activities

~~— No student is allowed to travel the day of an away tournament or attend an after school event without attending school at least half of the school day the day of the event. Special permission can be granted at the discretion of a building principal or BHS Activities Director.~~

~~— **Procedures for missing school**~~

- ~~1. Students should remind their parent or guardian to contact the attendance office (333-3215 ext # 52004) prior to, the day of, or no later than 10:00 A.M. the day after the absence. When possible, schedule appointments during non-school hours to avoid missing class.~~
- ~~2. A parent or guardian should write an excuse giving student name, the date, the dates of absences, the reason for the absence and his/her signature.~~
- ~~3. To receive an **ADMIT SLIP** to class, turn in note to the Attendance Office on the first day back. If you forget it the first day, it must be given to the attendance secretary within 2 days of the absence.~~

~~— **Unexcused Absences**~~

- ~~1. If a student does not have parent verification of an absence, the student will receive an unexcused admit to class.~~

Replaced with:

ATTENDANCE

Students are to be in school except in cases of emergency or for the reasons stated below. All students must follow our School District's Attendance Policy. Open enrolled students could be at risk of losing open enrollment status if the policy is not followed.

The only reasons for being absent from school are:

1. Personal illness
2. Illness in the Family
3. Observance of a religious holiday
4. Funerals
5. Family emergencies
6. Any other reason must be excused by the school PRIOR to absence.

Classifications for "Excused" and "Unexcused" absences will exist for the purpose of tracking truancies and for safety reasons. Excused absences will be any absence excused by the parent/guardian with a lawful reason (see above) ahead of time, the day of the absence, or up until 10:00 am the following day. Unexcused absences will be any absence in which the parent/guardian does not contact the school, does not contact the school within the designated time frame, does not provide requested/required documentation, or in which a student is refusing to attend school. Contact can be made via phone, email or with a note, however a phone call or email is preferred.

Numbers to Call:

Main phone line: (218) 333-3215, Option 1 and then Option 1

Main phone line with extension: (218) 333-3215 Ext. 52004

This phone line is message only right away in the mornings

Student Dismissal During the School Day and After School Messages

- Only parents/guardians listed in our Student Database are allowed to pick up children from school. If other arrangements need to be made, a note or phone call from the parent/guardian is required.
- Parents/guardians must sign their student out in the Attendance Office when picking them up during the school day. If a student is not signed out by an approved adult, the student will be considered unexcused for the remainder of the day.
- Students should stay in their classroom until the Attendance Office or Health Office calls them out.
- Students will not be called out prior to an authorized adult arriving in the office to sign them out.
- Parents/guardians are not able to release their student via phone, it must be done in person.
- Students who leave the school or classroom without permission or against direction from staff will be considered unexcused the remainder of the day and appropriate action will be taken.
- Any after school change of plans that need to be communicated with their student should be made to the attendance office prior to 3:00pm. This ensures enough time to deliver the message to your student before school is dismissed for the day.

Attendance Key

A – Excused Absence, E – Extra Curricular, D - Dismissal, H – Home Bound, I – Behavior Intervention/1004, IL – Ill, L – Late/Tardy, N – Nurse, O – Office, S – Suspended, T – Treatment, W – Unexcused Absence

Tardies:

Teachers will mark a student tardy if the student is not in the classroom at the start time of each class period. A student who is more than 7 minutes late to class will be counted absent/unexcused for that class. If a student is late to school, it shall be the parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of and the reason for the tardiness. Tardies to classes during the day are unable to be excused by a parent/guardian, no exceptions.

Attendance and Participation in Co-Curriculars

We believe in the positive benefit of participating in co-curricular activities. Participation in these activities is encouraged. Participation comes with additional responsibilities, some of which are related to attendance.

1. A student may not participate in any activity or program on the day that a student has missed more than half of his/her classes. This includes games, home and travel games.
2. Under certain circumstances, a student may participate in activities after having missed more than a half day, if they provide a written excuse from a physician. Other circumstances need to have prior approval from the Athletics Director.
3. If a student serves in-school suspension or lunch-detention, they may not participate in any activity or program, and must leave school grounds immediately after dismissal, either via bus or pick-up.
4. On any day a student is suspended, or dismissed by administration, they may not participate in any co-curricular program.
5. Any classes missed due to school sponsored co-curricular activities do not count toward the student's attendance record. Rather, they are recorded as "E - extra-curricular."

Make-up Work

Whether a student's absence is excused or unexcused, the student is required to make up all assignments as deemed appropriate. Students will be given two days for each day missed to make up the work. It is considered the student's responsibility for collecting their missing work from their teachers. This can be done prior to a planned absence, during the absence via email, or once they return from the absence in person.

Attendance Notifications Procedures

To excuse a student for an absence, the student's parent/guardian must notify the Attendance Office stating the reason for the absence. Students may not be excused for more than 6 school days at a time. After 15 consecutive days of absence, the student will be dropped from enrollment per state statute. The responsibility will then fall to the parent/guardian to contact the district office to re-enroll the student prior to the student returning to school.

Procedures for Communicating with Parents Regarding Excessive Absenteeism

1. The school will attempt to contact parents to report any Unexcused absences. This includes all students who were unexcused from *any number* of classes during the day.
2. After the 5th absence in a quarter an Attendance Referral Notice will be mailed to the parents/guardians to express concern regarding the student's attendance. This will be mailed regardless of if the absences are excused, unexcused, or a combination of both.
3. After a student's 7th unexcused absence, the student will be considered "continuing truant." A letter will be mailed home via certified mail. If these types of absences continue, the student may be referred to our Attendance Support Program.
4. After a student's 15th excused absence in the school year, they are considered "chronically absent." A letter will be mailed home informing the parents/guardian that the school will be requiring a dr. note to be provided for any future absence to be considered excused. Parents are still encouraged to call and inform the school of any future absences; The attendance record will reflect "unexcused" unless the school is provided a dr. note.

Page 15: Under DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Updated wording:

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Information about students will be handled according to SBR 700-60-01 MSBA 515. Copies of this policy are available ~~in the Middle School Office~~ **online through the district website**. Certain information has been classified as directory, or public information. If you do not want this information disclosed you must notify us.

Page 16: Under DROPPING/ADDING CLASSES

Updated wording:

DROPPING/ADDING CLASSES

Students may not add or drop classes after the first 3 days of each quarter.

For term 1, students will be able to change classes, if possible, for the first two days of school.

Students may not add or drop a class once a new term has started. Dropping Band or Orchestra requires parental approval.

Page 17: Under EXTRA CURRICULAR

Updated wording:

~~Reference Extra-Curricular Accountability Policy: SBR 700-30-6 MSBA _____ for more information.~~

Bemidji Middle School Activities follow MSHSL Eligibility rules.

Page 25: Under UNPAID FEES/BOOK FINES – END OF YEAR

Updated wording:

UNPAID FEES/BOOK FINES - END OF YEAR

~~Normally end of the year report cards will be mailed from the middle school. However, in some cases students have fees and book fines that have not been paid. Parents may pay their sons/daughters fees/fines at the same time they pick up their child's report card.~~

Fine letters for missing textbooks, missing library books, unpaid fees, and other borrowed materials will be mailed out at the end of the school year. Over the summer, fine payments and/or returned items can be dropped off on the drop box cart in the main entrance vestibule. If items are returned in good condition no fine will be assessed.