

Elisabeth M. Bennet Academy

“Where Every Student Matters”

2017-2018 Parent-Student Handbook



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL, Mr. Joseph J. Chella

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year at Bennet Academy! We are thrilled to begin a new school year and to get to know all of you personally!! It was great meeting with you during our orientations last May. Now, it is your mission to put into practice those goals you have outlined for yourselves and those expectations we have of you in this very special school. Get excited to meet new students and be immersed in a team approach to education. For the first time in your educational career, you will experience the power of learning from a different teacher for each subject area. You will surely enjoy the benefits of a team of teachers collaborating for your specific growth and development.

At first, the four adjoining buildings which comprise Bennet Academy will seem huge. In addition, this school year we have Waddell Elementary housed in the newly renovated Cheney Building. However, before too long like the students in years before, you will come to enjoy this complex as an adventure in opportunities and success. You'll never want to leave. We ask that you seek out activities to broaden your horizons. Learn to play an instrument or join a club or program. Take full advantage of an array of activities which Bennet Academy proudly offers. You will not be disappointed. Most importantly, do your best, try your hardest, and we are certain that you, too, will become a Bennet Academy S.T.A.R.S. student!

This Parent/Student Handbook is published each year to provide students and parents with information about our school. Your academic, social and emotional development is based on a safe, proactive, academically-challenging environment, one we strive for at Bennet Academy, and so should you. Let's have a great year together!

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Chella

Joseph J. Chella, Principal

About Bennet

Elisabeth M. Bennet was principal of the school from 1915-1951, a period of 36 years. During this time, she established a school library, promoted a manual training program, and established the first recreation center, and she was among the first to use audio-visual aids such as movie projectors. Through unselfish devotion to thousands of Manchester school children, Ms. Bennet dedicated her life to the service of others. The Manchester Board of Education chose to honor the memory of Ms. Bennet by naming the school after her.

MISSION STATEMENT

At Bennet Academy we believe that...

All students can and must learn at high levels of achievement. It is our job to create an environment in our classrooms that results in this high level of performance. We are confident that with our support and help, students can master challenging academic material, and we expect them to do so. We are prepared to work collaboratively with colleagues, students, and parents to achieve this growth.



**Elisabeth M. Bennet Academy
1151 Main Street
Manchester, CT 06040
860-647-3571
Fax: 860-647-3577**

School Hours: 8:20 A.M. – 2:45 P.M.

**First Bell: 7:55 A.M. (students may enter Caf. for breakfast or wait in Cone Gym)
Second Bell: 8:10 A.M. (students are dismissed from Caf or Cone Gym to Homeroom)
Homeroom Bell/Start of School: 8:20 A.M.
School Colors: Burgundy and Gray**

Bennet Academy Pledge



- ❖ **I will strive to be a Bennet Academy leader.**
- ❖ **I will act in such a way that I will be proud of myself, and others will be proud of me, too.**
- ❖ **I came to school to learn, and I will learn.**
- ❖ **I understand that I am responsible for my own actions.**
- ❖ **I will have a great day!**

Parents – please note that your child received pertinent school information in the student agenda/planner distributed during the first week of school. The information in this packet is more comprehensive and parent-directed. Therefore, you will see a duplication of specific information in both documents.

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[Link To MPS Expected Behavior Matrix](#)

ABSENCES

Please call the school attendance telephone line **before 8:10 a.m.** on the day your child is absent. There is a recording set up to receive your calls 24 hours a day, so you may call at any time. Please give your child's full name, homeroom teacher, and reason for your child's absence. The number to call is 860-647-3583. Upon return to school, your child should bring a note to explain the absence.

ABSENT HOMEWORK & MAKE-UP WORK

Students who are absent from school for any reason are required to make up work missed. Ordinarily, all work should be made up within a timely week. For an absence of less than three (3) days, students should see their teachers for missed work upon their return to school. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to obtain and complete make-up work. A **twenty-four hour** notice, at least, is required for work. Make-up work can be picked up in the main office.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

We maintain high expectations for each student. In order to fulfill these expectations, students will be required to complete all assignments on time for full credit. We expect student work to be done neatly and to reflect the child's best efforts. If assignments are carelessly or improperly done, children will be required to do them over. **It is the responsibility of each child to work toward meeting these standards.** While parents are expected to oversee homework completion, the child should do the actual work. Homework is an important part of our academic program. The quality of homework should meet the same standards as class work. Work that is not completed on time will have to be made up in a timely manner. Reasonable allowances are made in the event of absence.

ACADEMIC TEAMS

Students are scheduled onto one of five, four-teacher teams at Bennet Academy. Each team teacher teaches a "specialized" area (i.e. Math, Science, Language Arts, or Social Studies). Therefore, all incoming fifth grade students from nine elementary schools in the district are spread out to be part of one of the five teams. The teams are referred to by a name representing a current or past leader, one that is reflected in our rich diversity. Know that this team name will be identifiable by parents when they call the main office (i.e. "I'm looking to get a hold of a teacher on Team Escalanté..."). This is directly linked to our leadership theme, diversity initiatives, and *Peer Leadership Program*. Each team of teachers meets on a regular basis in a Professional Learning Community format to plan instruction, analyze data and to enhance teaching modalities in all classes. Time is also available for parent/guardian/teacher meetings. Students should feel proud and honored to be a member of any one of these teams due to the high caliber instruction offered by our Bennet Academy teachers!

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

A variety of after school programming is planned for Bennet Academy. These activities will vary from year to year, but mostly likely will include Peer Leadership Councils, musical groups, clubs and so much more. It is our goal to keep students after school hours so they are immersed in a full assortment of valuable and exciting opportunities which will hopefully propel them to seek such activities out as they transition to the middle school and beyond.

AFTER SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

All arrangements for after school activities must be made ahead of time, at home, to ensure that parent(s) are fully aware of where their children are. The school will not release a child or allow him/her to go to an alternate destination without written parental permission. There is a late bus for students involved in after school activities which leaves at 4:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Bennet Academy School Uniform Expectations, 2017-2018

All students attending Bennet Academy will be required to wear and follow an approved school uniform dress code. The designated uniform dress shall be as follows:

1) Tops:

Short or long sleeved collared (polo) shirts in approved colors (blue, black, maroon, grey), or you can choose to purchase uniform logo shirts from Novel Tees in Manchester.

2) No Hoodies

All optional clothing choices must have our school administration's approval. Only approved Bennet/district shirts can be worn under an approved top garment (colored fleece).

- a) Students are only allowed to wear approved optional clothing on special days designated by administration.
- b) Items purchased through the Athletic Department, Clubs or other Student Organizations are NOT part of the approved school uniform.
- c) No jackets or winter coats worn during school hours.
- d) Students will be allowed to wear non-uniform apparel that represents a school sponsored group only on days approved by the administration.

3) Bottoms:

- a) For boys and girls: casual or dress pants sized to fit the student in solid colors of navy blue, black, or tan khaki. **No denim/jeans will be allowed.** All pants must be worn at the top of the hips and students are expected to wear a belt.
- b) For girls: skirts or *shorts* that are not more than 3" above the knee, sized to fit the student in solid navy blue, black or tan khaki may be worn. Capri-type pants in navy blue, black, or tan khaki may also be worn.
- c) Tight fitting skirts, pants, tight fitting shorts or tight fitting Capri-type pants are not permitted.
- d) Solid navy blue, black, or tan khaki shorts may be worn but must be appropriately sized. Shorts that are too short (3" or more above the knee) are not permitted.
- e) No leggings or yoga pants

4) ID badges: ID's with a lanyard are considered to be part of the uniform and **must be worn at all times.** Replacement ID's may be purchased for \$5 in the main office.

5) Footwear: Footwear must have a rubber or other non-marking sole. Open toed shoes, moccasins, slippers, flip-flops, sandals, slides, light up shoes, spiked and platform footwear or other athletic-type footwear are not allowed.

6) Dress Down/Dress up Days/Special Recognition: The principal or his/her designee may allow for special occasions or to recognize academic, athletic, or special events, activities and achievements by allowing exceptions to the daily uniform requirements, i.e. a special fundraising activity or honor roll, athletic contests, etc.

7) Field Trips: Students are required to comply with the school uniform dress code on field trips unless otherwise determined by the principal or his/her designee.

8) Accessories: Distracting, detracting, oversized, offensive jewelry, garments and belt buckles are not permitted. **Only a lanyard with a valid, current school I.D. should be visible around the neck and over the school shirt.**

- 9) **Religious and Health Accommodations:** Where the bona fide religious beliefs or health needs of a student conflict with the school attire policy, the schools will provide reasonable accommodation. Any student desiring accommodation shall notify their school principal in writing of the requested accommodation and the factual basis for the request. Approved coverings worn as part of the student's bona fide religious practices or beliefs shall not be prohibited under this policy.

Compliance: Students are expected to enter and exit the building wearing the approved school uniform. In all matters relating to student compliance with the dress code, the school principal and his/her designee shall have the final determination on whether a student is keeping with the expectations of the school uniform-dress policy. School administrators and teachers are encouraged to use positive reinforcement to obtain compliance. However, when a student fails to comply with the uniform-dress expectations, administrative intervention(s) and/or appropriate disciplinary consequences may be imposed.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL

The first day of school, **WEDNESDAY, September 6**, will be a full day. Beginning at **7:55 a.m. through 8:10 a.m.**, students will choose between entering the cafeteria for breakfast or enter through the Courtyard to the Cone Gym. Staff will be posted outside, as they typically are, to help direct students. After breakfast, those students in the cafeteria will be dismissed to the Cone Gym. Staff, again, will be present to assist in this process. Once in the Cone Gym, students should look for teachers who will be holding signs identifying themselves and their specific teams. **Parents planning to drive their student should do so by dropping off in the back of the building; entering from School Street and exiting on Wells Street. Buses will drop off on School Street.**

ATTENDANCE

One of the goals of Bennet Academy is to help students have a successful educational experience and to prepare them for 7th grade. In order to do this, regular daily attendance is necessary. Frequent absences and tardies affect children's skill development and may lead to poor grades.

As part of the Bennet Academy attendance procedure, we send an informational letter to the parents of a student who is consistently late. Letters are also sent for students who have been consistently tardy. If the student continues to miss school and come in late then the parent/guardian will be invited to a meeting of the Bennet Attendance Board where an attendance improvement plan for that student will be created. Failure to follow the plan will result in a referral to the Manchester Attendance Board.

All absences should be reported to the attendance line at 860-647-3583. Medical absences lasting more than three days should be reported to the school nurse at 860-647-3582. Medical documentation may be requested at that time.

ATTENDANCE AT AFTERSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Various after school activities are held throughout the year. These activities may be sponsored by the PTA or the Bennet staff. If a student is absent from school on the day of an activity, he/she may not attend the after school activity. Also, in-school suspensions or through our social probation process, students may be prohibited from afterschool activities. The behavior policies that govern the school day also govern after school activities.

BICYCLE RIDERS

Students may ride bicycles to school. Students are to use a bike lock and chain to secure their bicycle to the bicycle rack. The school cannot assume responsibility for any bicycle brought to school. Students who ride bicycles to school should not arrive before 8:00 a.m. **Bicycle riders should walk their bikes on school grounds.** Students who ride in an unsafe manner or ignore safety rules including wearing an appropriate bicycle helmet, will not be allowed to ride their bicycles to school. **State law requires students 14 and under to wear an approved bicycle helmet.** Please be sure to help us protect your child from serious and preventable injuries.

BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Bennet Academy participates in a breakfast program. Meals are served every school day from 7:55 a.m. - 8:10 a.m. in the school cafeteria. The cost for a breakfast is \$1.00. If participating in the breakfast program, students must obey the cafeteria rules established for all students during lunch. Any violation in these rules may result in loss of breakfast program participation for a pre-determined length of time.

BUS TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

All bus students must take their assigned bus home. Only children assigned to a bus are allowed bus transportation. For safety purposes, the bus driver is in charge of all students while they are on the bus. Students are expected to follow the driver's instructions at all times. Riding the bus to school is a privilege, and in order to ensure safety for all children and drivers, the guidelines stated in this page must be observed.

Parents, administrators, teachers and drivers have an important role to play as well, and it is vitally important that everyone involved communicate any bus issues so that they can be resolved quickly.

STUDENTS RIDING THE BUS WILL:

- Speak politely to the bus driver at all times.
- Find the next available seat.
- Remain seated for the entire time on the bus, keeping their feet out of the aisles.
- Keep all personal belongings inside their backpacks. Musical instruments and backpacks should be kept on their laps or stored under the seats.
- Refrain from shouting to other children on the bus.
- Refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.
- Tell the bus driver or the teacher if there is a problem on the bus.

CARE OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

We should all take pride in our "second home." Bennet Academy has been treated with respect and admiration by all our previous students. Students are entrusted with valuable property such as books, laboratory equipment, furniture, and the state-of-the-art technology that is all part of our building.

Students must refrain from gum and gum chewing as it will invariably be found on floors, in bathrooms, under desks, etc. We all have a responsibility to keep our daytime home in pristine condition for this year and generations to come.

CELLULAR TELEPHONES AND OTHER PORTABLE ELECTRONICS

Students may possess any electronic communication devices that have not been expressly prohibited. This includes cellular telephones, Blackberries, computers with modems, personal digital assistants, radios, walkie-talkies, walkman, MP3 players, CD players, their accessories (e.g. ear phones/buds) or other similar electronic devices; **but may only use such devices pursuant to the following restrictions:**

- During the school day, electronic communication devices must be turned off so that they are incapable of being used.
- During the school day, electronic communication devices must be stored out of sight in lockers, back-packs, bags, purses or pockets. Electronic communication devices that are not stored out of sight during the school day are subject to confiscation, unless specific permission for use has been given by the Principal or the Principal's designee.
- Before or after the school day and on weekends, students may use electronic communication devices on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities off school grounds except when there is a reasonable expectation of quiet attentiveness, when use of the device would cause any disruption, compromise law, order and safety or when so directed by the school administrator, staff member or sponsor.

Possession of electronic communication devices by students is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by this BOE Policy. Failure to abide by this policy or other misuse of this privilege shall result in confiscation of the electronic communication device and may result in further disciplinary action. A student who possesses an electronic communication device is responsible for its care. The Board is not responsible for preventing theft, loss, damage or vandalism to electronic communication devices brought onto its property. In addition, school staff may confiscate an electronic communication device brought to school or to a school sponsored activity based on a reasonable belief the student has used the device in a manner that violates this policy, any other school policy or state or federal law.



Possession of electronic communication devices by students is a privilege. Failure to abide by this policy or other misuse of this privilege shall result in confiscation of the electronic communication device and may result in further disciplinary action. The student who possesses an electronic communication device is responsible for its care. The Board is not responsible for preventing theft, loss, damage, or vandalism to electronic communication devices brought onto its property. In addition, school staff may confiscate an electronic communication device brought to school or to a school sponsored activity based on a reasonable belief the student has used the device in a manner that violates this policy, any other school policy or state or federal law.

Steps Necessary for Confiscating an Electronic Device from a Student:

1. Student is asked to turn off device and place it in his/her backpack or locker;
2. A student who does not follow these directives or has been seen with the device on several occasions must forfeit the device to an adult;
3. Team teacher should contact the parent/guardian of the child to remind the parent of our policy and possible consequences if behavior is repeated;

4. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE STAFF MEMBER TAKE AND/OR HOLD THE DEVICE FROM THE STUDENT**; the student should be asked to place the device in a plastic ziplock bag or brown envelope and the student's name and team is immediately written on the sealed container. ALSO, the student signs off on the envelope (signs his/her name upon return as well);
5. The receptacle with the device is brought to the main office by an adult to be secured by office personnel or appropriate school person;
6. Administration is alerted to the electronic device and a parent is then notified immediately. The device is NOT returned to the child unless specified to do so at the end of a school day by the student's parent/guardian. **Pickup of all electronic devices will be only at 2:30 p.m. daily in the main office.** Students must come down with a pass from the teacher with the student's full name on the pass.
7. School administrators reserve the right to have the adult who confiscated the device or team teacher to contact the student's parent;
8. Multiple offenses with misuse of an electronic device must be brought to the attention of a building administrator and an office consequence is given to the student.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please notify the office as soon as possible whenever there is a change of address or phone number. The information will be recorded on our data system so that we will be able to contact parents as quickly as possible in the event of an injury or illness. Proof of residency must be shown upon change of address. **Failure to do so may result in your child not being permitted to continue in attendance at Bennet Academy** (BOE Policy 5125.1) Thank you!

CONTACTS AT BENNET

It is confusing at times to decide who to contact when an issue(s) arises with your child. With regard to a peer problem or an academic dilemma, who should you contact at the school to help with the matter? Well, your first and best recourse is always with the classroom teacher. Our Social Worker, Mrs. Cavanna and Psychologist, Mrs. Lauer are always available to help. Our Guidance Dept. is also available to assist. Perhaps, one of the main office secretaries can help guide you: Ms. Gauvin, or Ms. Britnell. Ms. Cutaia, our school nurse, many times work in concert with families in need, beyond the medical realm. It is strongly recommended that you go to and through the appropriate channels to communicate a concern before contacting the Assistant Principal or Principal. This invariably creates a smoother and more manageable dialogue and collaboration for both school and family. Naturally, if the circumstance is extreme and unusual, please do not hesitate to contact our Assistant Principal or Mr. Chella, Principal. If your child's bus is late to or from school or, in your purview, it is bus-related issue, please call Barbara Walz in transportation at 860-647-3476. Lastly, if a lunch payment or food problem emergencies you can always call Nick Aldi, at 860-647-3461. It is important to all of us that we remedy any problem as soon as possible so our kids will continue to have a positive sixth grade experience. Remember, we are family here at Bennet Academy, "Where Every Student Matters".

DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

The school day runs from 8:10 a.m.-2:45 p.m. However, we encourage students to become involved in one of the myriad of after school activities. A late bus is available for student use. The late bus departs Bennet Academy at 4:00 p.m., **Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays.**

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

The *Bennet Academy* discipline procedures, PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Support), are strategically linked to our S.T.A.R.S.' program. Such rules and logical consequences are implemented to ensure the safety, welfare, and respectful treatment of every student and staff member. It is our goal to maintain a positive atmosphere that supports learning. It is our expectation that every student will comply with school rules and regulations, which are based on the Manchester Board of Education's policies. ***Communication to parents with regard to behavioral consequences many times arrives home in the form of a Bennet Referral Form, CTC Worksheet, or a S.T.A.R.S.' Worksheet. This means the initiation of a mandatory "talk" as well as the parents and school working as a team amidst the discussion.***

Bennet Academy also commits itself to *Restorative Practices*, which is a philosophy and system wide process that works to change the school culture rather than only responding to student behavior. Restorative Practice students and teachers are empowered to constructively resolve their conflicts. It allows the teacher to express to the student why their behavior is unacceptable, lets the student take responsibility for that behavior, and provides an avenue for both student and teacher to develop a clearly outlined agreement to ensure the behavior does not happen again.

DETENTIONS

Detentions may be scheduled any day of the week after school. The administration/teachers/staff will monitor all office detentions. **After school detention will be held in designated classrooms from 2:50 to 4:00 p.m. (but no later than 4:10 p.m.).**

Parents will be contacted to discuss the reported incident and be informed of the after school detention. For after school detentions, contacts will be attempted at home and/or at work. When parents are not available, a message will be left requesting the parent to contact the staff in order to discuss the incident and the intervention.

NOTE

- Detention supersedes all extra-curricular activities.
- A discipline form will be used to record referrals for behavioral offenses. This form will be completed by the staff member who witnessed the incident or was involved with the offending student.

CALMING CENTER

A Classroom Calming Center is a quiet area of the room equipped with soft furnishings and soothing materials to help a student de-escalate when upset. Classroom Calming Center is also where students can go, to briefly cope with a frustrating task or over stimulating activity. The goal is to help promote self-calming strategies and to give the student a "time away" so that his/her behavior does not escalate any further. The Calming Center should be a safe place where a student can go to calm themselves using pre-taught strategies for a short amount of time.

EARLY DISMISSAL

If it is **absolutely necessary** to pick up your child from school before the regular dismissal time, please send a note to your child's teacher explaining why and at what time you will come for him/her.

Arrangements should be made for the parent or guardian to pick up the child in the school office. All parents/guardians **must have their ID** to pick up their student. If someone other than a parent or guardian picks up your child, a note of identification from the parent or guardian should accompany the person appearing in the school office. The person picking the student up must sign the student out.

FIRE DRILLS, EVACUATION DRILLS, LOCKDOWN DRILLS AND SEVERE WEATHER PROCEDURES

Fire drills will be held monthly from September through June. Two will be held in September. Posted in each teacher's room is a schematic of the building indicating the route for evacuating the building. When an alarm occurs, the primary responsibility of a teacher is for the children in his/her room. All children not present are the responsibility of the office, media center, or custodial personnel. All children are instructed on the proper behavior during a drill. Any other incident of building evacuation will be affected in the same manner as a fire drill. The notification of such an evacuation will be made by means of the intercom system. In addition to the schematic of the fire drill an evacuation route is posted in your child's classroom/work area. A Lockdown Drill and Evacuation Drill are held during the school year with the assistance of the Manchester Police Department. Staff has been trained to secure the building and move students to safe spaces during emergency situations. To prepare our students for these drills,

each classroom teacher discusses the activity with their class. We always explain the reason and procedures to our students as well.

HALLWAY NAMES

At Bennet Academy, hallways have been assigned names that are poignant and personal. The following titles names adorn the specific hallways at Bennet Academy:

- *Respect Road*
- *Teachers Turnpike*
- *STARS Street*
- *WORFS Way*
- *Bully-Free Boulevard*
- *Leadership Lane*
- *Bears Boardwalk*
- *Franklin Freeway*
- *Bennet Boulevard*
- *Reading Road*
- *Winners Walkway*
- *Recreation Road*
- *Technology Track*
- *Armstrong Alley*

Each of these “street names” has a relevance to the culture and expectations that are part of our school.

HEALTH/MEDICATION

Children are not given any medication at school without proper authorization by the doctor. Please contact the school nurse if you need authorization forms. **NO CHILD MAY BRING MEDICATION OF ANY KIND TO SCHOOL AT ANY TIME.** An adult is required to bring the medication to the nurse. This includes non-prescription medications such as aspirin, Tylenol, etc. If the doctor recommends use of an inhaler, we ask that you provide one, which can be kept in the nurse’s office during the school year. **If you have any questions regarding medication, please call the nurse at 860-647-3582.**

Students should be sent to school unless they have a fever, are vomiting, or your doctor has said they should be home. If you are not sure of whether to send your child, feel free to contact the nurse. If a child has a fever, he/she may not return to school until his/her temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours. Any child who arrives at school ill, or who becomes ill during the school day will be sent home.

Should your child have any health-related dietary restrictions, please share that information with our nurse, especially if your child has food allergies of any kind.

Healthy children learn better! Parents, staff and children, working together, can create a healthy school environment, in which all children can do their best. One of our goals is to teach children about healthy food choices and the importance of regular exercise. Adequate sleep is as important as good eating habits. Eating breakfast, in particular, really does make a big difference in how well children are able to concentrate in school. We also strive to assist them in learning to make responsible decisions.

BENNET STUDENT IDENTIFICATION BADGES

Bennet Academy students are required to wear their personalized student identification badges. Student safety and well-being are of paramount concern to Bennet Academy. Identification badges have been issued to all faculty/staff to assure that school officials are aware of adults on campus and their purpose. Similar ID badges are also required of all students. The student ID badges provide an effective and secure means of identifying students for various purposes: student safety, behavior management, meal service,

library borrowing, and also serve as a classroom nametag. Students shall wear and display their ID badge in a visible location (e.g. on a lanyard worn around their neck or other similar location readily visible/accessible). Students shall be provided the initial ID badge at no cost. Students with damaged, altered, defaced, or lost ID badges shall purchase a replacement ID badge. **A replacement fee of \$5.00 shall be assessed for each occurrence of a lost/damaged ID badge.**

Students Failure to Wear their Personal ID Badge:

- Verbal Reminder – student will be asked to display his/her badge around the neck area and in complete visibility;
- Repeated Offense – student’s parent will be notified of the situation;
- Repeated Offenses - student may be administered an after school detention;
- Reoccurring Offenses – student may be administered an in-school suspension due to the issue seen as insubordination.

LOCKERS

Each student will be assigned a locker and offered a combination lock to borrow. However, locks and lockers remain the property of the Board of Education and are assigned to students temporarily for school purposes only. Students will be billed \$5.00 for a lost or damaged lock borrowed from the school. The school reserves the right to examine lockers at any time and also reserves the right to remove any lock. **Students are responsible for their own property.** Students should not bring large amounts of money or other valuables to school. Students will be asked to clean out lockers on a regular basis and homeroom teachers will check to make sure this is done.

LOITERING

School has definitive start and end times. It is imperative that students are at school everyday during regular school hours. They should arrive on time and exit consistently at the end of the school day. However, it can be problematic, disconcerting and even unsafe when students remain at school, unsupervised, before and after regular school hours. When a student is allowed to “hang around” or loiter at school during these times, often improprieties invariably follow. So, please, especially after school dismisses, students should proceed to their designated buses or start their trek home.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles of clothing and personal belongings are often misplaced by students. If name labels are sewn into garments or marked with an indelible ink pen, children and teachers will be able to easily identify the owners. If an item of value is lost, such as glasses or jewelry, please inquire at the school office. Found clothing items are put in bins outside of the cafeteria doors. Please have your child check these boxes if they have lost a hat, coat, sweater or any item of clothing. Unclaimed items from the lost and found program will be donated to a local charity after each trimester.

LUNCH PROGRAM

The goal of the Manchester School Lunch Program is to provide students with attractive, wholesome, nutritious, reasonably priced meals. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is governed by the federal (United States Department of Agriculture) and state (Department of Education) regulations, and all menus must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

All meals are prepared on site at Bennet Academy. Chef Salads, bagel-yogurt plates, and deli sandwiches are available daily in addition to the planned hot lunch. Also at Bennet Academy, a second hot lunch alternate and a variety of al la carte items are available. To promote healthy choices, students are offered a variety of fresh fruit, canned fruit, 100% fruit juice, a vegetable choice, milk, and fresh baby carrots on a daily basis. These items are intended to supplement and not replace meal choices, and we encourage students to choose from the many lunch choices available.

The School Lunch Program has a computerized debit system. Students can either pay cash for their meals at the end of the serving line or deduct payment from an established lunch account. The system allows the student to enter his or her student ID# to access their account. Money is deducted from the account. Cashiers will have pre-printed envelopes available to be used when making advanced payments. All balances as of June 30, 2016, will be carried over to the next school year. Prices for the 2017-18 school year are: Lunch \$2.50 or \$.50 for just milk if you are bringing a lunch from home. **If you have any questions about the School Lunch Program, please feel free to contact the food service office at 860-647-3462.**

MEAN-SPIRITED BEHAVIOR VERSUS BULLYING



Connecticut's legal definition of **bullying** reads: *...any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate, or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school-sponsored activity, or on a school bus.* In other words the bullying must be a repeated event by the same student(s) and occur on school grounds, or at a school-related activity, or a school vehicle... Essentially, bullying entails an imbalance in strength between the bullies and the victim, what experts call an asymmetric power relationship.

Because the term *bullying* has become generalized, overused, and a “catch-all” term for almost any negative behavior directed at another individual, the State of Connecticut has recently embraced the phrase *mean-spirited behaviors* this school year to define inappropriate behaviors aimed at another student or group. Initially, whenever a student is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more other students, the perpetrator is exhibiting mean behavior.

However, we all know what **mean** looks, feels and sounds like. And keeping with the tenor of the times, almost everything masquerades as *bullying* behavior. And, despite the legal definition, **true bullying is about abuse of power.** Therefore, when dealing with most situations in schools and at this age, the definition of *mean-spirited* is anything that compromises and hurts another, no matter how seemingly small. That is why discovering and genuinely recognizing and addressing the mean-spirited behavior is a more logical, definable and appropriate thing to do in practice rather than waiting until and invariably labeling incidents as real and/or true *bullying* – the statutory definition or merely an abuse of power.

At Bennet Academy, we take any type of *mean-spiritedness* (taunting, teasing, harassment, unwelcome/uncomfortable interactions, etc.) very seriously. Mr. Chella, Principal and Mrs. Thompson, Assistant Principal, meet with all the academic teams of students regularly to discuss the S.T.A.R.S. program, but also to talk to students about unwelcome and unwarranted actions which are, at their very core, *mean* and intended to annoy, hurt, and/or defame. Our discussions with our students focus on the fact that they need to make good decisions. Hurting someone can be accomplished through mere words not just physical aggression. The message is clear. First incident may merely be a verbal warning. If the inappropriate behavior continues, it will lead to a severe consequence and possibly police action. **There is no place for Mean-Spirited Behavior at Bennet Academy!**

MONEY IN SCHOOL

Other than money for lunch, breakfast and/or items from the school store, there is no reason for students to bring money to school on a daily basis. You may pre-pay for meals by sending in a check or money order made out to the *School Lunch Program*, or you may access EZschoolpay.com to pay via on-line, or students may pay cash daily as they purchase their meals.

Checks or money orders for field trips should be made out to Bennet Academy. If you have any questions at any time, contact the teacher or office. **We strongly discourage children from having any large amounts of cash at any time. Money can be easily lost or stolen and we cannot be responsible for cash sent with children.**

NURSE

We have a school nurse on duty, full time at Bennet Academy. Her hours are from 7:45 a.m.-3:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. Never hesitate to call our nurse with ANY medical questions or queries with regard to your child and his/her care at the school.

LOST BOOKS

In the event that the book is lost, payment should be made as soon as possible. Students are given overdue notices on a bi-weekly basis allowing adequate time for returns. Parents/guardians will receive a reimbursement for any materials returned that had been previously marked as lost and paid.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/COMMUNICATIONS

Education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school. Parents/guardians are urged to encourage their children to put a high priority on education and to make the most of the educational opportunities available. Parents/guardians should become familiar with all of the child's school activities and with the district's academic programs, including special programs. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences, participation in PTA, attendance at Manchester Board of Education meetings, and being a school volunteer are strongly encouraged.

PEER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AND COUNCILS

The *Peer Leadership Program* was conceived to invoke student involvement, holistically, so they feel part of the educational process rather than dictated to by adults. Thus, a myriad of councils are established to have students learn, apply, and demonstrate their leadership skills according to their own comfort zones and personal expertise. The councils which will meet regularly and employ specific skills to various aspects of school life for students include, but are not limited to: *Peer Mediation Council, Peer Orientation Council, Pride Patrol, Principal's Advisory Council, School Beautification Council, Cultural Diversity Council, Peer Tutoring Council, and Special Project's Council*. All the councils are facilitated to by a teacher/staff member in the building. A particular council and subsequent name may be substituted for a different council depending on the needs of students and expertise of staff members. This program interfaces directly with the names of academic teams as well as Bennet Academy's holistic theme promoted leadership as a necessary life skill.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION & SUPPORT (PBIS)

Bennet Academy PBIS Program is our school-wide behavior plan. It is based upon PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Support) which is a proactive system approach for creating and maintaining a safe and effective learning environment in schools. Our emphasis is upon teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors at our school. All staff members, including our bus drivers, are encouraged to award STARS coupons and awards to recognize students who are displaying *scholarly, truthful, aware, respectful, and/or safe* behaviors. Students receiving a STARS coupon enter it into a raffle for prizes. STARS awards can also be revealed through a STARS Certificate and recognition. This program is highlighted later on in this handbook. However, when a student misbehaves, the focus is on re-teaching and corrective intervention strategies. Misbehaviors are categorized by level of seriousness. *Minor*

offenses (rules violations, disruptive/offensive behaviors) are handled by the classroom teacher. *Major* offenses (serious safety concerns) are referred to an administrator for related consequences.

PROHIBITED ITEMS

Students may not bring skateboards, roller blades, scooters, toys, laser pointers, electronic games or other electronic gear, radios, games, cell phones, pagers or trading cards to school. Again, as stated earlier in this handbook, gum and candy are not allowed in school. This is not a complete list and other items may be excluded from school, at the discretion of staff members. Students will be given a warning upon the first violation of this rule. Continued violations will result in school staff removing the item(s) from the student's possession. **It is each student's responsibility to ensure the safety of his or her own personal belongings. If something has a significant monetary or personal value, the item should not be brought to school.**

REGROUPING STUDENTS

The benefit of a teaming approach to instruction is team collaboration and continued team support for all students whom are members of that particular team. Parents should be aware that during the course of the school year, team teachers may decide to redistribute the student composition of home base classrooms or specific disciplines in order to give some students an exposure to different teaching modalities as well as positively affect team esprit and camaraderie. Our intention has always been to provide the best possible academic and social learning opportunities for each child. Regrouping students on the same team also provides them the opportunity to sample novel populations for homeroom at the beginning of each day. In addition, it is an attempt to prepare students for the numerous changes at middle school and help them in adapting to different character traits amongst their peers.

SAFE SCHOOL CLIMATE COMMITTEE

In response to both legislative and moral imperatives, all stakeholders at Bennet Academy will be invited to analyze the frequency of bullying and the general school climate of the school. A process is in place by which both acts of bullying and the general climate of the school are continually assessed and discussed. Additionally, an education and a response plan was created to create a proactive environment and a protocol that addresses incidents as they arise. The intermingling of "cyberbullying" and the resultant actions of students in school are also part of the work of this committee.

The bill establishes a hierarchy of people within schools and school districts and makes them responsible for developing and implementing the safe school climate plans, biennial school climate assessments, and the bill's reporting requirements.

Safe School Climate Coordinator

Starting with the 2012-13 school year, the bill requires each school superintendent to appoint a safe school climate coordinator from existing school staff.

Safe School Climate Specialist

Starting with the 2012-13 school year, the bill requires each school principal to serve, or designate someone to serve, as the safe school climate specialist for the school. Specialists must (1) investigate bullying reports according to the district's safe school climate plan; (2) collect and maintain records of the school's bullying reports and investigations; and (3) be the primary person responsible for preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying reports in the school. Bennet Academy's *Safe School Climate Specialist* is Cheri Cavanna, School Social Worker.

Safe School Climate Committee

Starting with the 2012-13 school year, the bill requires each school to have at least one committee that is responsible for fostering a safe school climate and addressing school bullying.

The committee must include at least one parent of a school student, appointed by the principal.

The committee must:

1. receive copies of completed bullying investigation reports;
2. identify and address bullying patterns;
3. review and amend school bullying policies;

4. review the district plan and make recommendations to the district coordinator based on issues at the school;
5. educate students, parents, and others about bullying;
6. collaborate with the district coordinator to collect data on bullying; and
7. perform other related duties as the principal determines.

The bill excludes parent members from the first two activities and from any other committee activities that may compromise student confidentiality.

SCHOOL RULES

Assembly Rules



- Enter and exit quietly
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- Always respect the speaker, performer, and guests on stage.
- Never “boo” or call out during an assembly or production.
- Be positive and show RESPECT to the speaker/performer and one another.
- Practice good listening skills.
- Be a kind and supportive audience.

Hallway Rules



- *WORFS* – Walk On Right For Safety.
- No running.
- Use lockers at designated team times only.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- No loud talking or noises. Use inside classroom voice.
- Practice respect for all wall displays.

Lavatory Rules



- Use this area respectfully and respect others privacy.
- Keep this area clean and free of litter.
- Act appropriately and use the lavatory materials appropriately.
- No loud, boisterous, or destructive behavior allowed.
- Return to class promptly.

Lunch Room Rules



- Students WALK to their assigned seat and await the direction of a Lunch Aide to line up for lunch.
- Talk to friends at your table only.
- Sit in assigned seats when enjoying lunch and always use good table manners.
- Buy desserts when you go through the lunch line.
- Raise your hand to get permission from the aides to leave your seat. Discarding trash is ONLY allowed at the end of the lunch wave when teacher arrives for dismissal.
- Clean up your table when directed and join your class line.
- Listen to directions to quiet down so that you can return to class with a teacher or other adult.

(A CTC may be administered by a Lunch Aide for any cafeteria infraction – failure to return the CTC form may result in an office referral.)

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHED-BASED INTERVENTION (S.R.B.I.)

Federal laws have issued clear expectations for schools regarding their obligations to educate diverse groups of students well. This legislation includes the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). These revisions encourage the implementation of research-based interventions that facilitate success in the general education setting for a broad range of students. The basic principles underlying this initiative hold considerable promise for helping Connecticut schools to improve education for all students and address the large disparities in performance within the state. In summation, S.R.B.I is systematic approach to meeting both the academic and behavioral needs of at-risk students.

S.T.A.R.S. AWARD

This program is designed to recognize students who consciously or habitually “perform a random act of kindness,” and it may go unnoticed or is regarded as “expected” behavior. Many times students surprise us and “step up to the plate” on occasion, demonstrating kindness, sensitivity, or a sense of unusual forthrightness. Though these isolated acts may not be worthy of a “Student of the Month” honor or go beyond verbal praise, the *Qualities of Leadership* program attempts to establish a proactive initiative which invariably affects a students self-worth, self-esteem, and self-responsibility in a subtle but poignant way.

S.T.A.R.S. PROGRAM



Bennet Academy is aligned with the district-wide *Positive Behavior Intervention & Support* program. This proactive systemic approach for creating and maintaining a safe and effective learning environment in our school is embedded into the life of our school. The new **S.T.A.R.S.** program aims at proactive initiatives that can help set the stage for reducing behavior problems by students and thereby aiding continuous, uninterrupted classroom instruction. Being consistent and maintaining open channels of communication will provide the avenue for a positive school climate with clear and reasonable expectations for all. If we work as a team (parents/teachers/students) we will achieve more and win more than lose. The expectations for all students is to “live amongst the stars” at Bennet Academy. **Please note that a separate S.T.A.R.S. Packet: Guideline for Student Conduct is distributed separately so that the parent/guardian and student can focus their specific attention on expectations for responsible decorum enforced at Bennet Academy.**

Bennet Academy **Bennet S.T.A.R.S. Program** ***(Scholar, Truthful, Aware, Respectful, Safe)***

What are *STARS* made of at Bennet Academy?

As a **SCHOLAR** you are always:

- ✓ Prepared for class
- ✓ On task and working your hardest
- ✓ Following directions of an adult

As a **TRUTHFUL** person you are always:

- ✓ Practicing honesty
- ✓ Respecting the possessions of others

As an **AWARE** person you are always:

- ✓ Using an indoor voice
- ✓ Using kind and caring words
- ✓ Interacting with others in a caring manner
- ✓ Keeping your hands, feet, and objects to yourself

As a **RESPECTFUL** person you are always:

- ✓ Responding appropriately to all adults
- ✓ Making good decisions when responding to adults
- ✓ Treating all property with respect
- ✓ Using appropriate language

As a **SAFE** person you are always:

- ✓ Behaving appropriately in the lavatory
- ✓ Walking quietly in the halls
- ✓ Following the bus rules at all times
- ✓ Following all the posted rules for inside and outside of the building



STUDENT AWARDS and RECOGNITIONS

All students at Bennet Academy have the opportunity to receive a variety of awards throughout the year at Awards Assemblies including overall performance (Honors), subject area performance, citizenship and others. We also acknowledge our **Student of the Month** and **Student Spotlight** students each month. Mr. Chella cooks these students breakfast each month. Moreover, we continually celebrate our **S.T.A.R.S.** award winners and **Pillars of Character** winners throughout the school year. A Bennet Game Room has been added to recognize **S.T.A.R.S.** award winners. These are just some of the many ways we celebrate student effort and successes.

STUDENT SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES

At times, it is necessary for the administration to take extra measures to ensure the safety of our students and employees. The administration may do this periodically with no advanced notice. Some of these measures include using police directed sniffer dogs, and the use of breathalyzers and metal detector wands. These measures are simply additional administrative tools to ensure safety and compliance with the law in our schools without intruding into the legitimate privacy interests of students. Connecticut and federal laws, and Board policy #5145.2 (Search and Seizure) allow school administrators to implement any of these procedures.

STUDENT SUCCESS PLANS

The *Student Success Plan* (SSP) is an individualized student driven plan that will be developed to address every student's needs and interests to help every student stay connected in school and to achieve postsecondary educational and career goals. The SSP will begin in the 6th grade and continue through high school to provide the student support and assistance in setting goals for social, emotional, physical and academic growth, meeting rigorous high school expectations, and exploring postsecondary education and career interests. The *Student Success Plan* and supporting structures such as student portfolios and academic/personal records should be electronic and portable following the student from school to school and district to district.

Core Components of Effective Student Success Plans:

(Aligned with *Connecticut Secondary School Reform Plan and Connecticut Comprehensive School Counseling Program Guide*). An effective *Student Success Plan* is built around three core components: **Academic Development, Career Development, and Social, Emotional and Physical Development.**

SUPPORT TEAM

We, at Bennet Academy, believe that all children can be successful learners. We work together to provide the best educational environment for each child. When teachers encounter a student who is experiencing difficulty, they seek the help of their colleagues. This is done through the Support Team. The Support Team meets frequently with an agenda and schedule for student discussion. The purpose of this team is not to implement a special education intervention. Rather, it is another positive, productive, and data-driven method to insure student success whenever, wherever needed!

Who is on the Support Team?

- **Administration**
- **Classroom Teachers**
- **Special Education Professionals**
- **Guidance Counselor and/or Social Worker**
- **ESL Tutor (when applicable)**

What classroom concerns might trigger an intervention of additional assistance?

- Academic difficulties
- Difficulties adjusting to the school environment
- Incomplete assignments
- Inappropriate behavior
- Multiple absences and/or tardies
- Speech/language difficulties

SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

There are 70 state-of-art video recording cameras throughout the building and along the perimeter of the school. These are intended for the safety and well-being of all our students and staff at Bennet Academy. These cameras are our eyes to keeping intruders out and students safe. The technology also has the capability of recording students' behavior during the course of a typical school day. So, please remember, at all times – you're on candid camera!

TARDINESS

When a student is tardy to school/class, the day begins on the wrong note. When a student is tardy often, it is problematic for that child, his/her teacher, and even other students.

Others may see the child who is late as:

- ALWAYS late.
- Not ready, unsure
- Disorganized
- Confused
- Needing extra time to settle down to work
- Frustrated, tired
- The one who holds up the rest of the class while directions need to be repeated

The child who is late may feel:

- Behind, always trying to catch up
- Embarrassed
- A sense of failure, frustration
- Unprepared
- Fearful, anxious, alone

- Separate from the rest of the class
- A sense of failure
- Powerless

At Bennet Academy all students should be to school on time (no later than 8:10 a.m.). There really is not excuse for making a habit out of being tardy. Students who consistently arrive late to school will be held accountable with the following responses:

- **3** unexcused tardies – this courtesy letter is being sent home to outline our policy and next steps, after school detention;
- **6** unexcused tardies – team will assign afterschool detention, Parent mtg, student contract;
- **9** unexcused tardies – frequent letter, refer to administration.
-

TELEPHONE USE POLICY

Students may use the school telephone for “emergencies” only. An example of an “emergency” would be if a child leaves his/her glasses at home and needs them to do their schoolwork. Students may not use the school telephone to call home to ask if they can go to a friend’s house after school or to ask a parent to bring items such as sneakers, musical instruments, homework or their lunch.

TEXTBOOK CARE AND OBLIGATIONS

Students are responsible for the care of books and supplies entrusted to their use. They will be assessed damage to textbooks, equipment or materials. In accordance with state law, the school reserves the right to withhold grades, transcripts, or report cards until the student pays for or returns the textbooks, library books or other educational materials.

VISITOR SIGN IN & SIGN OUT POLICY

All individuals must sign in at the office when visiting Bennet Academy. Visitors and volunteer badges will be provided when individuals sign in at the front desk. For safety and security reasons these must be worn at all times.

This policy is aimed at maximizing instructional time and student safety. If you need to deliver something or pick your child up during school hours, the school secretaries will assist you by contacting the classroom teacher.

WHO SHOULD I ASK ???

Teachers: Questions or concerns about your child's progress should be directed first to your child's teacher. You may e-mail or send a note to school with your child, or call the Office and request that the teacher return your call. If you have serious concerns, please do not wait until conference time; contact your child's teacher as soon as possible.

Principal: Parents are always welcome to bring general questions about the school and school policies to the Principal.

Asst. Principal: Behavioral and discipline issues and questions which may arise.

PTA Officers: Questions about PTA-sponsored programs should be made to PTA officers.