

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year at Arbutus Middle School!

We, the administration, faculty and staff of Arbutus Middle School, look forward to developing a positive working relationship with you!

This guide includes the answers to many frequently asked questions. We encourage you to keep this guide handy so that it can serve as a reference for you throughout the school year. Also, please frequently review our school website; read the monthly newsletter, which is available electronically on our school website; and listen to all ConnectEd calls.

In addition to your child's teachers, the following staff names may be of assistance to you:

- Principal Ms. Johnson
- Assistant Principal Mr. Atkins
 - Grade 7
 - Grade 6, 7, 8 – BLS/ALS Programs
- Assistant Principal Mr. Bayne
 - Grade 6
 - Grade 8
- Guidance Counselor, Grade 6 Mrs. Duncan
- Guidance Counselor, Grade 7 Ms. Gardner
- Guidance Counselor, Grade 8 Mrs. Rupp
- Administrative Secretary Mrs. Creek
- Guidance Secretary Mrs. DeBoy
- Main Office Secretary Mrs. Stilling
- Cafeteria Manager Mrs. Long
- Librarian Mr. Whitby
- School Nurse Mrs. Daniels, R.N.
- School Resource Officer..... Officer Sewell

Some important phone numbers you may need during the year include:

- AMS Main Office & Guidance Office410-887-1402/1404
- AMS Cafeteria410-887-1458
- AMS Homework<http://arbutusms.bcps.org>
- AMS Library410-887-1469

Note: The student agenda is our primary source of homework communication. Please monitor and enforce this expectation at home. The homework information on our website should only be used as a backup source of information.

We are sure this guide will provide useful information for you throughout the school year. Do not hesitate to call with other questions. We look forward to working with you this school year.

Sincerely,
Kendra Johnson, Principal
kjohnson3@bcps.org



Fast Facts

AMS School Colors : *Purple & White*

AMS Mascot : *Eagle*

AMS Motto : *“Home of Eagle PRIDE”*

Important Times

- 8:05 AM** AMS doors open for students. Prior to 8:05 AM, students will be expected to wait outside the building, unless it is raining or snowing. As such, students arriving before 8:05 AM should dress in a manner consistent with outdoor temperatures.
- 8:15 AM** Homeroom officially begins at 8:15 AM. Students who enter *homeroom* after 8:15 AM will be marked “Late” to class. Students who enter *the building* after 8:15 AM will be marked late to school. Students late to school must report to the Main Office to sign-in. All unexcused latenesses will result in a lunch detention.
- 2:48 PM** Regular dismissal time.
- 2:50 PM** All students should have exited the building OR be under the direct supervision of a teacher.
- 4:00 PM** The time students are expected to be picked up at the conclusion of after-school activities. Parents/guardians of students who are repeatedly picked up late will be contacted and the student will not be permitted to participate in after-school activities.

PTA Membership

The AMS PTA is a strong supporter of our school’s educational program. They raise funds that are used to provide:

- An Agenda for each student.
- Activity Buses for student transportation during our fall and spring activity sessions.
- Cultural events (ex. assembly programs for the students).
- Recognition items and events for students.

You are strongly encouraged to join the AMS PTA! Dues are \$6.00 per person, per year.

VISION

The Arbutus Middle School vision is to build upon the students’ foundation of integrity, responsibility, and respect.

Our Students

Arbutus Middle School students understand that they were created in a special manner. They value their life and the lives of those around them. Arbutus Middle School students are intentional about what they do and how they do it. Our students set high personal goals and are committed to academic success. Our students exemplify Preparedness, Responsibility, Integrity, Diligence, and Respect. They understand that learning is a life long journey. Our students are preparing for a technological society through hard work. As adults they will serve as community and world leaders. They will be compassionate and kind. The sky is the limit for Arbutus Eagles as they pursue excellence in every field of human endeavor.

Our Staff

Arbutus Middle School teachers maximize instructional time so that every minute of every period of every day is used for the betterment of the students. Our teachers plan and deliver quality instruction that is engaging, meaningful, and rigorous.

Every staff member within the school is responsible for every child within the school. As a result, respect within the school is reciprocal. Our staff is professional, kind and engaging. They respect differences while demanding the best from every student. Our staff will serve as role models to improve students’ mental and physical dispositions, modeling the way for students to become vital and active participants in our society.

Our Parents

Arbutus Middle School Parents are critical members of the educational process. They are communicative, participatory and supportive of their child’s learning. They monitor and take an active interest in their child’s progress by monitoring homework, notebooks, agenda books, interim reports, and report cards.

All Arbutus Middle School parents are PTA members. One hundred percent of our parents volunteer within the school or community. All parents attend Back to School night and attend conference nights when needed. Arbutus Middle School parents are respectful of staff members’ established classroom expectations and routines.

Education is of monumental importance to our parents. They demand rigorous and valuable instruction that will prepare their children to be productive and influential members of society. Our parents support the educational process by raising their children to be respectful, insightful, reflective, inquisitive, and kind.

Our Community

Arbutus Middle School is the pride and joy of the community. Effective and open communication is evident between parents, teachers, administrators, students, and community members. People are respected and valued regardless of race, gender, culture, or academic ability level. Arbutus Middle School is a school community where students and staff feel safe. Students attend Arbutus Middle School to pursue the American Dream of academic excellence.

DRESS EXPECTATION

The BCPS Student Handbook states, “All students have the responsibility to dress correctly to help set the proper standard of school and social behavior.” There is considerable evidence to indicate a close relationship between student dress and student behavior. Appropriate clothing for school is essential to support an atmosphere conducive to learning. Arbutus Middle students are expected to show good judgment as well as respect for self and school in their choice of clothing.

The following guidelines are presented for health and safety reasons:

- Some classes, such as science and physical education, may have specific clothing restrictions. All students will be required to follow specific classroom expectations related to safety.
- Students should not wear skin-tight clothing, see-through shirts, bare back shirts, spaghetti straps shirts, tank tops (unless the strap is at least three fingers wide), strapless shirts, or shirts that expose skin between the bottom of the shirt and the top of the pants/shorts/skirt. Undergarments should not be visible at any time.
- Shorts and skirts must be of appropriate length. The “appropriate length” of shorts or skirts is **beyond** finger tips when the student’s arms are extended straight down the side (Note: tights or shorts underneath garments does not negate this dress expectation).
- Pajamas and/or slippers may not be worn to school.
- Physical education uniforms should be worn only in physical education classes.
- Students may not wear coats, jackets, or heavy/bulky sweatshirts during the school day. Coats worn on the way to school should be put in lockers and not worn during the school day. Students should dress in accordance with the season.
- Non-religious head coverings, including hats, scarves, and bandanas, may not be worn during the school day and should remain in your locker during the school day. Sweatbands and bandanas as headbands may not be worn during the school day.
- Heavy chains and studded or spiked jewelry are not allowed. While these items may be fashionable, possessing these is deemed a category III offense and students may be subject to expulsion. Please review the student handbook.
- Clothing, jewelry, and accessories which depict alcohol, drug, tobacco, cult-related images, profanity, or symbols related to sex or violence are prohibited.

**APPROPRIATE DRESS IS APPLICABLE FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS
AND RECOGNITION ASSEMBLIES!**

Student Agenda

Our PTA provides each student with an agenda. The agenda should be used for goal setting, recording daily assignments, and as a hall pass. Since the agenda is used as a record of the year, students are expected to keep all the pages intact. Students may not alter, fold, tear out, or destroy pages. Parents/guardians should review the agenda regularly. Lost agendas should be replaced immediately. Replacement agendas can be purchased in the school store or in the front office for \$6.00. Or, parents may purchase a comparable agenda from an outside vendor.

School Attendance

The State of Maryland sets the standard for school attendance at 96% for excellent (absent 1 – 7 days during the school year) and 94% for satisfactory (absent no more than 12 days for the school year). Students who miss more than 3 days a quarter will not be eligible to participate in before school and after school activities. Students must be in school in order to achieve!

When Your Child Is Absent

State law requires us to maintain a record of attendance, including notes, for each student. When your child is absent from school, send a note on the day of his/her return to school explaining the absence.

- The absence note should include your child’s name, date (s) absent, reason for absence & your signature.
- If your child is absent for 3 consecutive days, please provide a doctor’s note explaining the extended absence.
- *Lawful* reasons for absence and lateness include: Illness, death in family, court summons, religious holiday, and suspension.
- If your child does not bring in a note explaining the absence, the absence will be coded as *Unlawful*.

Vacations

According to BCPS guidelines, vacations will be coded as “Unlawful” absences; therefore, teachers are not required to provide make-up assignments. Students may receive zeros for missed class work and homework during the time of unlawful absences. Vacations during the school year will have a detrimental impact on your child’s grades.



Payment for School-Related Activities

To save the school hundreds of dollars, we **no longer accept personal checks**. Payment should be made in cash, money order, or check issued cashier's check. We regret any inconvenience.

Making Up Work When Absent

According to BCPS policy, "Class work will constitute no less than 50% of the total grade. Students missing as much as 20% of the class time are subject to a failing grade in class work."

Your child will be required to make up all work missed due to absence from school. It is your child's responsibility to get the missed work from the teachers. (Each teacher has a system for absentee work. Your child should know and follow the process for each class. Because it is difficult to make up some work that may be missed, such as a lab or video assignment, the teacher may elect to give an alternate assignment of some type.) Teachers are not required to provide any make-up assignments for unlawful absences.

When your child will be out of school for 3 days or longer, please make arrangements to pick up the missed assignments so that your child can work on them at home. To arrange to pick up your child's work, call Mrs. Deboy, Guidance Secretary, at 410-887-1404. Teachers will send the work to the office where it will be available to be picked up after school on the day *following* your call to Mrs. DeBoy.

Your child's grades will suffer if he/she fails to get and/or make up the work missed while absent. Students will have five school days from the date of return to collect, complete, and return missed work from excused absences.

Special Circumstances

If Your Child Is Late to School

If your child is late arriving at school, he/she is required to report directly to the office. Students are expected to be accompanied into the building by a parent or legal guardian. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary consequences for the student. The rationale for this expectation is to ensure that the parent and/or legal guardian is aware of the lateness and to demonstrate to the student that the parent and/or legal guardian is a partner with the school as it pertains to promptness and excellent attendance. The office will then issue a late slip which will admit the student to class. Unexcused lateness (a Category I

Miscellaneous (Continued)-

- Flowers, balloons, cake, cupcakes, etc. may not be delivered or brought to school for distribution to students.
- Please do not distribute flyers to students. All flyers must first be approved by BCPS and then reviewed by an administrator to determine if the flyers may be distributed on school grounds.
 - For obvious equity reasons, parents and/or guardians are asked not to bring fast food lunches for students.
 - All bicycles should be stored in racks located just outside the rear entrance to the building. Bicycles should be locked.
 - Skateboards may not be ridden or used on school property before, during, or after school when students are present (7:30 AM - 4:30 PM). Anyone violating this rule is endangering the safety of others and will have the skateboard taken to the office. Students are not permitted to bring skateboards on any school bus.
 - No permanent markers or white-out liquids are allowed.
 - Take-home textbooks will not be issued to students who have not returned text books from the 2007-2008 school year or paid the fee for a replacement textbook.
 - It is critical that information on the student's emergency card is kept current throughout the school year! Parents/guardians should send any updated phone numbers and contact information in a written & signed note with their child, to be delivered to the front office.
 - Arbutus Middle has a School Store available to students from 8:05 AM until 8:15 AM each school day in the front lobby. The School Store sells a variety of school supplies, including paper, pens, and pencils. This is a good resource for being sure you child always has needed supplies.
 - **Please review the AMS/BCPS handbook with your child.**

Visitation Expectation-

We wholeheartedly welcome our AMS parents and/or legal guardians at all times into our school community. We respectfully request, however, that the following professional courtesies are extended:

- Please do not travel to a teacher's classroom to converse unless you have previously scheduled an appointment. We want to ensure teachers have ample time to prepare for student learning.
- Please provide 24 hours notice prior to "seating in" on classroom instruction. You may arrange a time with your child's grade level administrator.

Drug and Alcohol Policy – Students who use, possess, or distribute alcohol or drugs on school property, buses, or at school affairs will be expelled from the regular school program. The policy is reproduced in its entirety in the *BCPS Student Behavior Handbook*.

Gum, Candy, & Food - Chewing gum is not permitted. Students may not eat or distribute candy or other food, except during lunch in the cafeteria. Students may not bring candy, gum, or food to sell to others. Food may not be delivered from outside vendors without teacher permission. Water, juice, and snack machines are for student use **after** school only. All infractions will be addressed following progressive discipline practices. The first offense will amount to an after school detention.

Hall Passes - The *Student Agenda* will also serve as a hall pass. Anytime it necessary for a student to leave the class (to use the lavatory, report to the Health Suite, get a drink, get something from a locker, etc.), the teacher will sign the agenda. Within the hall, students are expected to carry the signed agenda as a pass and be prepared to show it upon request. Any student who does not have his/her agenda may be denied permission to leave class.

Miscellaneous -

- Students are not permitted to carry cigarettes, matches, or lighters while at school, on school buses, or at school-sponsored activities.
- Students may not bring items that cause disruption to school. These items include, but are not limited to, such items as: radios, laser pointers, water pistols, trading cards, toys, stink bombs, poppers, etc.
- Bringing personal items, such portable CD players, iPods, or MP3 players, is discouraged. If a student chooses to bring a portable CD player, iPod, or MP3 player to school, it may not be used in the school building. (Headphones may **not** be on the student's head or around the neck.) Personal items must be kept secured in the student's hall locker. The school will not be liable for lost or stolen property, which includes but is not limited to, jewelry, cell phones, and digital cameras.
- Students are not permitted to write notes, pass notes, and/or read notes in school. Any notes being written, passed, or read will be taken.

offense in the *BCPS Student Behavior Handbook*) and chronic lateness will result in appropriate interventions from your child's homeroom teacher and/or administrator.

If You Need Your Child to Be Dismissed Early

If you need your child to be dismissed early, write a note and instruct your child to bring the note to the office before 8:15 AM. The note should contain the reason for the request, state a specific dismissal time, identify who will be picking up the student, include the daytime telephone number where the parent/guardian can be reached, and must be signed by the parent/guardian. Your child will be given an "Early Dismissal Pass" that will allow him/her to return to the office at the approved dismissal time.

Picking Up Your Child For an Early Dismissal

The person who is picking your child up must come into the main office and show photo ID. **Students will not be dismissed to leave with anyone other than the parent/guardian unless that person is identified in a note which has been signed by the parent/ guardian.**

In a School-Identified Emergency

Carefully select the "Emergency Contacts" that you identify on your child's *Emergency Card*. If you cannot be reached in a school-identified emergency situation, these are the individuals we will contact and the only individuals to whom we will release your child. For weather and other emergencies identified by the Baltimore County Police and/or Fire Department, we will consult the emergency form enclosed in your summer mailing.

Telephone Calls

During the school day, students are required to get a pass to the office in order to get permission to use the telephone. Telephone use is \$0.50 per call. Students should only request to use the telephone for emergency situations.

Calls with messages for students should be kept to an absolute minimum and only used in emergency situations! After-school and transportation arrangements should be made **before your child leaves for school.**

We strongly discourage requests from parents/guardians to speak with a student. These calls will be directed to an administrator or guidance counselor (as soon as one is available) who will listen to the reason for the request and who will then either take a message or make arrangements to comply with your request.

Rules & Regulations

Bus Riders – Students are required to carry the BCPS bus pass and show it to the driver upon request. A student who does not have the required bus pass may be denied permission to ride the bus. If your child loses the BCPS bus pass, a new one can be purchased (for \$0.50) from the Guidance Office. Bus passes are not transferable. Students will be notified, during the afternoon announcements, of any bus that will be “late” that day. Students who are assigned to ride a “late bus” are required to report to the cafeteria by 2:55pm to sit in the supervised area and wait for the bus to arrive. Students who act in disruptive, dangerous, and/or insubordinate ways will not be permitted to ride the bus.

Cell Phones— Students are not permitted to use the cell phones or other electronic/wireless communication devices while inside the building. All said devices must be stored, turned OFF (*not on Vibrate or Silent*), and be non-visible **at all times while in the school building**. Text-messaging is not permitted! Phones that ring or are seen in the hands of students will be confiscated and secured in the office safe. Students who have the phones taken for any reason **must have a parent or legal guardian pick up the phone**. Students are encouraged to leave cell phones at home unless absolutely necessary. The phones must be stored in a locker, purse, pants pocket, etc. for the entire time the student is in the building. As indicated in the BCPS Student Handbook, the school is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal property. Additionally, cell phones should be turned off while students are on the bus.

AMS Mission

Arbutus Middle School embraces the challenge of ensuring success for all. We strive to involve the entire school community in creating opportunities for all students to experience academic, personal, civic, social, and vocational growth. We enthusiastically work together to provide a visibly safe, disciplined, inviting, and nurturing, yet challenging, environment where teachers can successfully teach and students can learn to think creatively and critically - all empowered by P.R.I.D.E.

(I am Prepared. I am Responsible. I have Integrity.
I am Diligent. I give and Earn Respect)