

# Middle/Upper School Handbook

Berkshire Country Day School

*Where you belong.*

# THE MIDDLE/UPPER SCHOOL HANDBOOK (grades 4-9)

## PHILOSOPHY

In concert with the developmental growth of children this age, the Middle/Upper School division places increasingly high expectations on its students as the children progress through grades four to nine. Students are asked to work independently, to accept responsibility for organizing their studies both at school and at home, and to move around the BCD campus to their many different classes without teacher direction or supervision. Middle and Upper School students are growing people capable of tackling the demands of our rigorous academic program, yet at the same time faculty and administration members recognize that they must always be available to lend a helping hand and give guidance if necessary. This handbook is designed to provide students and parents of Middle and Upper School students all the necessary information about their division. Please take the time to read this handbook thoroughly and call the Associate Head of School with any questions. Also included at the end are Massachusetts State Laws and BCD Drug and Alcohol Policy that BCD students are required to follow.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

As a community, we place a very high value on honesty; academic honesty thus serves as the cornerstone of this philosophy. Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are major disciplinary offenses. Disciplinary measures for academic dishonesty include failing the assignment, failing the course, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion. Following a first offense of academic dishonesty, a student will receive a “3” in effort in the subject for the term. From an early age, teachers work with students to understand plagiarism.

## ARRIVAL

All Middle and Upper School Students should arrive in their homerooms by 8:00 to be ready for their morning meetings. Students who arrive at school between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a. m. should report to the designated supervised areas until they are dismissed to their homerooms. See the section titled “Lateness” below for further information.

## BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

BCD students are expected to be respectful and tolerant members of the community. The faculty and students take pride in the fact that we are a closely-knit, integrated community of diverse learners and teachers. We treat each other with civility and kindness while setting high standards of behavioral expectations for our students. Only in such an environment can we expect our students to meet their academic goals and potential successfully. Grades 4-9 Middle and Upper School students and their parents are asked to read together the section of this handbook that spells out clearly BCD's behavioral expectations, the **Code of Conduct**, major disciplinary offenses, and the discipline procedures. Grades 4 - 9 discuss in homerooms the *Middle and Upper School Handbook* during the first week of the school year. Following the class discussion, the Upper School students take an additional *Upper School Student Handbook Highlights* sheet home to discuss with a parent and both student and parent sign the cover page to indicate that the rules and procedures have been read and are acknowledged. The signed page is collected by the 7-9 homeroom teachers.

Should a behavioral infraction occur, Middle and Upper School parents will be kept well informed and will receive a discipline report. This written document is recorded by the Advisor or the teacher involved, and sent home. If a Middle or Upper School student receives three discipline reports in one term, a conference with parents may be requested. If a student commits a major disciplinary offense, a conference will be required with the Associate Head of School.

**Code of Conduct:** BCD strives to create an environment in which students can grow academically, physically, socially and spiritually. In order for BCD to fulfill its philosophy, it must be able to provide a community in which all students can feel emotionally and physically secure. It is within such a safe and supportive environment that children can take risks in the learning process and then meet with success. To make sure that BCD provides a safe haven for each and every student, a Code of Conduct exists to articulate clearly the school's expectations regarding the behavior of each student.

A basic goal of the BCD community is to foster and to develop in its students respect for the educational process and respect for themselves and others. The School emphasizes the importance of students taking responsibility for themselves and their actions. BCD is a community that thrives on its students' interdependence. The manner in which students choose to conduct themselves affects them directly and affects those around them and the entire school community. The School expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner harmonious with this goal.

Students are expected to follow and support the school rules. They should be polite, kind, considerate, and supportive of others in the school community, and they must respect the school's property and the property of others. Children are expected to treat each other with respect and tolerance. In keeping with BCD's school philosophy, bullying, teasing, unnecessary exclusion and other acts of unkindness are not tolerated. Students are required to adhere to the dress code.

Hats are not allowed to be worn in any school building. Students must not bring food into any classroom unless authorized by the teacher as part of a lesson. Chewing gum is not allowed on campus or at any school-related activity.

BCD is a Drug Free Zone. It is illegal for students, parents, faculty or staff to be in possession of, to distribute or use any illegal drugs or substances on the BCD campus. Use of tobacco, alcohol, or any other illegal substance in school or during any school-sponsored activity by a student will not be tolerated. It is important to also note that alcohol will not be served to parents or their friends at any school-sponsored event in which students are in attendance.

In order for BCD to meet its academic goals, the School must maintain an atmosphere supportive of the learning process. As a result, students are expected to be attentive and cooperative in the classroom. Each child is expected to participate in the learning process and not interfere with the learning of others. In addition, students must be on time for school and class and must be prepared for each day's lessons. Students must take ownership of their work.

A system of discipline is in place at BCD to assist teachers in upholding these goals. This system is designed to encourage and support positive behaviors, as well as to monitor and correct inappropriate behaviors. In this way, BCD is able to maintain an environment in which children learn in a spirit of inquiry and discovery, respect the rights and talents of others, and become informed citizens of the world.

**Discipline Procedures:** When it becomes necessary to address a student's inappropriate behavior, the following procedures will be followed:

- A student who behaves inappropriately is spoken to by his or her teacher and, if necessary, by his or her homeroom teacher or advisor. If deemed appropriate, the Associate Head of School or Head of School will also speak to the student.
- In the Middle and Upper Schools, a written notification, is recorded and a copy sent home to the parents to be discussed with the student if the behavior requires such parent communication. The signed copy should be returned to the Advisor within a week's time. In the Preschool Division and Lower School, the classroom teacher will determine whether or not the behavior merits a call home.
- Repeated misbehavior on the part of a student demands a conference with the parents to discuss the issue(s).
- Should incidents of a more serious nature (a major disciplinary offense) occur, parents will be notified immediately as such misbehaviors could result in suspension or expulsion.

- In any instance of misconduct by a student, the disciplinary procedure will depend on three factors: the severity of the offense, the past record of the individual, and the student's and parents' ability to work in good faith with the School.

BCD makes every effort to communicate with the parents and to work with the students so that they may find success as positive, caring and cooperative members of our community.

**Major Disciplinary Offenses:**

- An offense committed on campus or while on off-campus trips or events that are conducted under the sanction of the School, which is illegal or reflects negatively on the school.
- Interference with the rights of others, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, bullying, teasing, exclusion, lying, cheating, and stealing.
- Conduct that subverts the order and discipline of the school and compromises the integrity of others.
- Damage or abuse to any school property or personal property of others.
- Possession, use, or sale of drugs listed in the current Federal Controlled Substances Act.
- Possession or use of alcohol, any tobacco substance, or inhalants.
- Possession or use of firearms, explosive materials, fireworks, knives, or matches.
- Repeated use of obscene, profane, threatening, or intimidating written or verbal language.
- Repeated disruptive or uncooperative behavior.
- Violation of the school-wide Acceptable Computer Use Policy.
- Repeated situations involving academic dishonesty.

**Response to Major Disciplinary Offenses:** The Associate Head of School will immediately notify the Head of School and convene a meeting comprised of the faculty member(s) involved in the incident and the student's advisor to determine an appropriate response. The disciplinary procedure will depend on three factors: the severity of the offense; the past record of the individual; and the student's ability to work in good faith with the School.

A recommendation of the disciplinary response will be made to the Head of School. It is the Head of School who solely determines whether to accept or reject the recommendation.

**Conduct Grade:** In order to reinforce the development of good attitudes and behavior among our students, a conduct grade is included with the academic and effort grades on the reports, which families receive three times a year.

The conduct grades are as follows:

**S** (Satisfactory) is given to students whose conduct is satisfactory and whose behavior, with occasional reminders, is in accord with the Code of Conduct.

**N** (Needs Improvement) is given to students whose behavior requires frequent need of adult intervention to stay within the expectations of the Code of Conduct or who have committed a serious disciplinary infraction.

**U** (Unacceptable) is given to students whose behavior, despite constant adult intervention, demonstrates no reasonable improvement or who have committed one or more serious disciplinary infractions. This puts the student's continued enrollment at BCD in question.

All the teachers, coaches, and chaperones who are responsible for that student's academic, athletic, emotional and social well-being will determine the conduct grade for the student. Unlike the effort grades, which are given individually in each subject, the conduct grade is decided by a collective judgment of the faculty and reflects the student's attitude and behavior during the school day and during all school-sponsored activities.

A "U" conduct requires a meeting with the student, one of her/his parents, the student's advisor and a BCD administrator to develop an action plan to improve the student's behavior. An "N" conduct grade may require a meeting with the student, one of her/his parents, the student's advisor and a BCD administrator to develop an action plan to improve the student's behavior. Since a student's poor

attitude and behavior affect not only his or her own well-being but also the well-being of classmates, the name of any student with a conduct grade of N or U shall not be included on the Honor Roll no matter how high that student's academic average.

## **BUDDY PROGRAM**

The Director of Admission asks students during the year to act as "buddies" to visiting prospective students. Called "admission buddies," their responsibilities include representing BCD in an appropriate manner, making the visitor feel comfortable with students and faculty, and to create a safe and welcoming environment for the student.

During most of a visit, a student's guide is from his or her current grade that allows the prospective student a snapshot of a day in the life of a BCD student.

The Buddy program provides a welcoming environment to prospective students, as well as gives current BCD students an excellent opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

## **CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS**

The goal of after-school programs is three-fold: 1) to provide extended opportunities for our students to stay connected as a community, 2) to provide opportunities to experience and develop new skills and interests, and 3) to grow as individuals and as a group. In addition, whether through enrichment, extended care, theater, film or sports, programs aim to nurture our children in several areas. Faculty and staff are committed to fostering respect of self and others, developing a spirit of cooperation, group work and good sportsmanship as a team or ensemble. Emphasis is placed on the importance of individual commitment, as well as commitment to the larger group. Programs are designed to help students develop confidence, self-expression and leadership potential. The Co-Curricular, after-school programs reflect our mission and philosophy as an institution and complement our core academic day.

**BCD Stage and Film Ensemble:** The Stage and Film Ensemble at BCD allow students to become members of a team with a singular goal. The fun, excitement, and hard work involved in artistically challenging productions necessitates that each student play an integral role in the process, daring to contribute their own thoughts and ideas while placing a high value on the contributions of others. The rehearsal environment is safe and models both sound theatrical practices and positive group dynamics. The guiding principal of the ensemble is that everyone is "enough" from the moment they step onto the stage or into the film lab. The collaborative nature of the work demands that students discover both themselves and others. While reaching for a very high standard, each student must also feel free to answer his or her own questions in an honest manner and receive vigorous direction within a space of acceptance. The director presents a clear vision and is both proactive and highly energetic so that specific advances may arise out of each student's own tenacious exploration. In the end, this very personal work is made public in the form of a wide variety of high quality theater and film productions throughout the year.

### Level 1: Middle School Theater

Students in Grades 5 and 6 work on original and scripted material under gentle, knowledgeable instruction. The Level 1 ensemble works on challenging pieces of theater that draws on their own interests, ideas, and strengths. The focus is on the process - finding one's voice, respecting all ideas, and practicing theater fundamentals - as well as the product - proud presentation of the work to the school community. The Grade 6 production takes place in late fall with the Grade 5 show happening in late winter.

### Level 2: Upper School Winter Show

In the winter, Upper School students may audition for placement in Level 2 or Level 3 productions. The Level 2 production places students in a "black box" style show with a lesser time commitment than the Level 3 show. Performed in the Furey Hall music room, the actors have the opportunity to

hone their skills playing larger roles in a smaller production. These shows range in style and scope from year to year, but might include drama, one-act plays, comedy, Shakespeare, original work, or musical theater. The Level 2 experience is akin to a “Junior Varsity” team where intensity, scale, and time commitment are lessened while the level of quality being sought is still very high.

### Level 3: Upper School Fall and Winter Productions/Spring Film Project

Students involved in Level 3 theater productions will experience performing at our Winthrop Theater where they can take their passion and skill for performing to the next level.

*FALL:* We start the Level 3 season with a signature of the BCD theater ensemble, the 8th and 9th grade original production. Throughout rehearsals, students learn to use improvisation as a collaborative tool for generating material. With improvisation as a starting point, they engage in a process that grows into a full-scale original play. Permission of the Theater Director is required for participation in the fall production due to the fact that some improvisation experience is required.

*WINTER:* In the winter, students cast in Level 3 will participate in a full-scale production at the Winthrop Theater. This “varsity-level” experience involves a large commitment of time, effort, responsibility, and independence on the part of the students. Complex staging, 3-dimensional characterizations, high-level group work, and heavy involvement in set construction, lighting, costumes, and props define this experience. As a result, students experience the thrill of telling a story on a larger scale and seeing their hard work turn into a shared community experience. All decisions about placement and casting reside with the Theater Director.

*SPRING:* Finally, there is a digital film production in the spring. Students set about producing a full-scale film project in our film lab. They learn about acting for film, camera work, continuity, editing, and more. All Upper School performances and screenings take place at the Winthrop Theater.

### Schedules/Calendars

In addition to the standard after-school rehearsals on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, all theater and film productions involve some amount of additional time for rehearsals or shooting days as productions near. To help families and students plan ahead, rehearsal and performance calendars are distributed during the first week of each production. Parents are asked to review the dates and sign a form committing the students to the schedule and indicating any conflicts. This is to ensure that nobody is caught off-guard when crunch time hits. Ensemble members are expected to be at rehearsal every day unless they are ill. We ask that parents try not to plan appointments for students on rehearsal days. In the event that an appointment is unavoidable, we ask for a few days notice.

### Parent Volunteers

The Theater and Film Program is supported by a wonderful team of parent volunteers. Making cast dinners, providing props and costumes support, baking for the concessions stand, taking tickets, and building sets are just some of the ways parents make a huge impact and share an experience with their children. Without this support, the program would fail to function! To get involved as a volunteer, please contact our parent producer, Lisa Butler at 413-496-9727 or [lbutler@berkshire.rr.com](mailto:lbutler@berkshire.rr.com).

### BCD S.A.F.E. Productions:

#### Level 1:

- Late Fall: 6th Grade Show - Short original or scripted piece
- Late Winter: 5th Grade Show - Short original or adapted piece

#### Level 2:

- \*Winter: 7th & 8th Grade Show - Small-scale scripted play

#### Level 3:

- Fall: 8th & 9th Grade Show - Creation of an Original Play (*Limit: 12 Students*)
- \*Winter: 7th - 9th Grade Show - Full-scale scripted production
- Spring: 8th & 9th Grade Digital Film Production -Short film screened at BCD's Drew Bridges Upper School Film Festival (*Limit: 12 Students*)

\*An audition is held just before Thanksgiving to determine placement in Level 2 or Level 3 for the winter. While most 7th graders will be placed in Level 2, a few may be allowed to move straight into Level 3 depending on skill, experience, and needs of the productions. All casting and placement decisions reside solely with the theater director.

Limits of Participation for Level 2 and 3:

*7th Graders* may only participate in the winter theater season.

*8th Graders* may participate in any two seasons of theater provided they meet the BCD P.E. requirements (stated below.) In certain cases, 8th graders may petition to do all three seasons of theater and will be considered based on longstanding interest, proven commitment to the ensemble, and a demonstrated passion for performing.

*9th Graders* may do all three seasons of theater provided they meet the BCD P.E. requirements (stated below.)

Physical Education Requirements for Theater Participants

Students are expected to complete at least two seasons of physical education during the year. This requirement can be fulfilled in the following ways:

- A BCD Sports Team
- A BCD P.E. Class (offered winter and spring)
- An Off-Campus Alternative Sport (See Sports section of the handbook for details)

Students wishing to participate in more than one after school theater/film production may do so provided they fulfill these requirements. Students must speak to the Theater Director or the Athletic Director for more information.

**Sports:** The foundation of the after-school sports program is the belief that every student should have an opportunity to participate in organized team sports at BCD. Among the many things that can be learned from team sports are physical conditioning, sportsmanship, cooperation, social interaction, dependence on others, and a shared-experience. This last point is particularly important at a small school and is a major reason for having only one sport each season through the ninth grade. Perhaps the most compelling reason for having team sports is that the peak time for physical skill and coordination development in a person's life is from ten to thirteen years old. Being on a team provides a means for this development through the skill and time requirements. It also provides a reason to want to excel so that the individual may be an asset to the team. Another reason to have team sports at the elementary level is that this may be the only opportunity for a student to be on a team due to the far more competitive demands of high school and college sports. Finally, a basic tenet of the BCD sports experience is that students are encouraged not to give up and quit. After a number of years of practice and play, even students who never felt that they had any particular ability find themselves playing well as well as truly enjoying being on the team and in the sport.

Thus, at BCD after-school sports are required for all students in Grades 4 through 9. Middle School students are required to participate in fall and spring sports. Upper School students are required to participate in at least two seasons of sports. For Eighth and Ninth graders participating in theater or film, options may include participation in P.E. classes, school sports teams or alternative sports activities outside of school. You may contact the athletic director for more details. We find it particularly important for students in Grades 7 through 9 to be involved in after-school sports as no physical education classes are scheduled for these grades within the school day.

The most difficult problem with a required competitive sports program is striking a balance between participation and competition. Achieving a perfect blend of the two is virtually impossible even though this is what the program tries to accomplish. It is the school's belief that all children should

have an opportunity to play team sports, so BCD tries to create enough teams at varying levels to meet the needs of all of its students.

The emphasis of our fall Farm Team Soccer for Grade 4 and some Grade 5 students is on learning skills and consequently we have limited interscholastic games at this level. On the JV and Varsity teams in lacrosse, basketball, and soccer, game time depends upon attitude, attendance, and effort. The level of skill also begins to be a consideration, but to a much lesser extent than attitude, attendance, and effort with regard to playing time. BCD has a "cut" system for the Varsity teams and playing time is at the coaches' discretion.

In the Middle School (4-6), a physical education program is offered during the school day. This program provides each child with a fitness program in addition to an introduction to a wide variety of game and sport activities.

The Friday Ski Program is available to all students in Kindergarten through Grade 9. All levels of skiing are taught from beginner to race team. School closes early on Friday during the months of January and February so students can be transported to Butternut or Bousquet and have a 1-1/2 hour lesson and 1-1/2 hour free ski time.

When Sports Are Not Played Due To Weather: All students participating in sports must remain at school on those occasions when weather forces cancellation of sports practice and or a game. All participants will attend a study hall, team meetings, and/or games in the gym. The possibility always exists that the weather may improve, in which case teams will take to the fields. Attendance is taken daily.

Game Days: Parents must pick up athletes playing in games, either at home or away. For "away" games, the BCD bus will make a return stop in Great Barrington or Pittsfield (depending on where the game is played). Parents, of course, are welcome to go to the host school to watch the game and pick up their children. Your support and understanding is greatly appreciated when games are canceled at the last minute or postponed.

Game Cancellation: If the cancellation of a game due to weather or unforeseen factors is made, parents will be notified during the day through the school web site, which will post the cancellation as soon as notified.

Directions to Away Games: See the BCD website.

Game Schedules: Full schedules, complete with parent pick-up times at BCD, are printed early in each sports season and available on MyBCD. Games are also listed on the calendar with the necessary revisions.

Placement on Varsity Teams: Placement on Varsity teams is on a voluntary try-out basis. In order to promote team spirit and develop the cohesiveness of the teams, those playing at the Varsity level must **1)** attend all games; **2)** be at practice Mondays, Tuesday, and Thursdays (although some games may be scheduled on Wednesdays and Fridays); and **3)** participate fully in the program. A student trying out for Varsity Teams in soccer, basketball, or lacrosse must be in the seventh grade, eighth grade, or ninth grade.

Equipment, Uniforms and Apparel: All BCD interscholastic teams wear uniforms when competing with other schools. These uniforms are issued to team members. Athletes must have sweatpants and sweatshirts for cold weather wear. All athletes are expected to wear shorts and shirts for practice.

Everyone must have cleats (for both soccer and lacrosse). (Note: A pair of indoor sneakers is a necessity for use in the gym.)  
All soccer players are required to wear shin guards.

Players on all teams who wear corrective glasses must have plastic or safety-glass lenses, must secure their glasses with appropriate elastic holders (worn between the ear pieces and around the back of the

head), and must have unbreakable frames. Players whose glasses are breakable must wear protective goggles or obtain sports glasses.

*All lacrosse players are required to wear mouth guards. All soccer players with braces are required to wear mouth guards, supplied by either their orthodontists or by BCD. While not required for other soccer players, mouth guards certainly are recommended and are available at BCD. All lacrosse participants must purchase their own lacrosse stick (team discounts are available through BCD). Boys must also purchase gloves (these are optional for girls). Lacrosse helmets are provided by the school for boys and protective eyewear for girls.*

**Enrichment:** During the second trimester, a variety of after-school enrichment options are offered to our Middle School Students (grades 4-6). These offerings may include art, music, science and film. These classes run from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. These programs are offered at an additional cost. Information for these programs is published in late fall.

## **DANCES**

Throughout the school year, grades 7 - 9 students sponsor dances chaperoned by faculty. Specific behavioral expectations and rules are spelled out to all students before the first dance to ensure healthy and safe evenings for all. Students are expected to follow the Code of Conduct and to heed chaperone requests. Students must ask chaperones prior to the dance for permission to bring a guest(s). All guests must be introduced to the chaperones and the guest is the responsibility of the student. Students must be picked up promptly.

## **DRESS CODE**

All Middle and Upper School students are asked to adhere to the dress code. Students who are out of dress code repeatedly will receive an “N” in conduct for the term.

- Boys and girls may wear respectable jeans or non-athletic pants (no sweatpants) and non-athletic shorts worn no shorter than the length of the student’s longest fingertip with a one centimeter allowance as his/her arm hangs at his/her side.
- Pants must be worn at one’s waist.
- Girls may wear a dress or skirt with the same length rule as for shorts (listed above).
- Collared shirts, polo shirts, sweatshirts or T-shirts that cover one’s shoulders may all be worn. Shirts may display tasteful designs or logos. The design may not include words or pictures that refer to alcohol, drugs, violence or sex.
- Students may not wear camouflage clothing; halter tops, cut-offs, athletic pants or shorts (as stated in item one), nor Gothic clothing (all-black clothes with black make-up). Undergarments may not be worn as outside clothing or be seen. Shoulders must be covered.
- Clothes may not have holes and must be worn so that underwear and midriff are covered.
- Footgear must be flat and cover the toes due to safety concerns resulting from our rural environment, playground activity and the type of work conducted in our science labs and shop classrooms.
- Girls are allowed to wear make-up if it is sparingly applied and natural in color.
- Only ear piercing is permitted and, in accordance with Massachusetts’s interscholastic athletic rules, the earrings must be removed before playing sports. Any permanent or temporary tattoos must be covered.
- Hair, if dyed, must be a natural color.
- Students should not wear jackets, hats or hoods indoors unless there is a problem with the heating system. Students also should not go outdoors without coats and hats in sub-zero weather.
- A student not dressed in compliance with the Dress Code will be given one warning and may be asked to make adjustments that day (turn a shirt inside out, borrow more appropriate attire, etc.) If on the first offense, however, the clothing or make-up represents more than an oversight (i.e., large holes, Gothic clothing or make-up, offensive language), the student will

be sent to the Main Office where he/she will remain until a parent or guardian is called and appropriate clothing is delivered.

- If a student receives a subsequent Dress Code warning, he/she will be sent to the office where he/she will remain until a parent or guardian is called and appropriate clothing is delivered. Continuous infractions will result in disciplinary action and an “N” in conduct.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES (cell phones, music players, games, laptop computers...)**

To promote an environment conducive to learning and a sense of community, students are not permitted to use cell phones, digital cameras, music players (iPods, Discman, MP3...) or games (Gameboy, Laptop computers...) during the school day and during after-school programs. The School is not responsible for the loss of students' personal property. For safekeeping, these devices must be checked in with a homeroom teacher upon arrival to school in the morning and will be confiscated if seen after this period. Should a device be confiscated, disciplinary responses will include a warning, a pink slip, or a detention including a parent conference with the Associate Head of School.

For those students who have educational testing on file which indicates that the use of a laptop is necessary for class work as well as for any student who has suffered an injury and cannot write by hand. After obtaining permission to use a laptop at school from Mr. Frantz or Mrs. Dockery Perkins, and with the approval of a teacher, laptops may be checked out of the lock-box for educational purposes. Laptops may not be used during recess unless they are used alongside a teacher for educational purposes. Otherwise, the laptop will be confiscated and the student may lose his/her privilege to use the laptop.

Computer labs and laptop carts (multiple computers) are monitored by faculty and used throughout the Middle and Upper School curricula.

Cell phones and music players, however, may not be used at any point during the academic day. Students may use school telephones to contact a parent or guardian. All personal cell phones, music players and laptops will be returned to students during dismissal. If they are seen in use during the academic day, they will be confiscated and the student may lose his/her privilege to bring the device to school.

At the discretion of the supervising faculty member(s), the use of electronic devices may be permitted during study halls, field trips, and away games.

### **FACULTY ADVISING**

Each Middle and Upper School student is assigned a member of the faculty who is responsible for monitoring his/her academic, athletic, social and emotional development at school. The advisor will meet regularly with his or her advisees as well as their teachers. The advisor is your child's advocate at BCD, and each parent is encouraged to call or email the advisor with questions or concerns. Advisors will return calls and emails as soon as possible.

### **GRADES, EXAMS, REPORT CARDS, AND CONFERENCES**

A grading system (A - F) is introduced in the Middle School, and effort grades are also introduced and recorded. Effort Grades are an important indicator of a child's work at school and parents are urged to value them with the same consideration as the letter marks. Report cards are sent home three times a year (in December, March and June). Midway through a marking period, interim reports may be sent home to keep parents informed if a child's work has slipped significantly.

<b>Letter</b>	<b>GPA range</b>	<b>Effort Grades</b>
A+	4.33 and up	1=Superior
A	4.00 - 4.32	2=Good
A-	3.67 - 3.99	3=Needs Improvement

B+	3.33 – 3.66	4=Unacceptable
B	3.00 – 3.32	
B-	2.67 – 2.99	
C+	2.33 – 2.66	
C	2.00 – 2.32	
C-	1.67 – 1.99	
D+	1.33 – 1.66	
D	1.00 – 1.32	
D-	0.67 – 0.99	
F	0.00 – 0.66	

**Honor and High Honor Rolls:** The BCD Honor Roll recognizes academic achievement. A student who demonstrates high academic achievement (maintains a GPA of 3.33) is placed on the Honor Roll. A student who demonstrates superior academic achievement (maintains a GPA of 3.8) is placed on the High Honor Roll.

In the calculations of the Honor Roll, classes meeting at least four times per week are weighted at 100%, those meeting two times per week- 50% and those that meet once per week- 25%.

To receive Honors, or High Honors, a student must receive an “S” mark or better for conduct.

To receive Honors, or High Honors, a student must have no effort mark of “3” or “4.”

Students in grades 7 - 9 are required to take end-of-the-year exams in major subject areas. Time is devoted in the spring to review and prepare for exams. Exams count up to 20% of a student’s final grade for the year. If a student fails an exam with a grade lower than 40%, the grade will be calculated as 40% in order to prevent a poor exam performance from devastating a good year’s effort.

A parent/teacher conference is scheduled once a year (in December), but parents may contact a teacher to arrange a meeting at any time. Middle and Upper School faculty members are available for a phone call at school or at home.

***Parents are asked not to abuse this calling privilege and to call before 8:30 p.m.***

Since a significant portion of BCD’s mission is to support the academic achievement of each student while nourishing each student’s well-rounded development, a decision may be made to grade a student on a scale different from the standard outlined above. If a child is struggling in a class to such a degree that most assignments would earn D’s despite sincere and conscientious efforts on the part of the student and the low marks are judged detrimental to the child’s self-esteem and ability to make academic progress, a team including subject teacher(s), advisor, and Associate Head of School will put forth a proposal to the Academic Affairs Committee which may approve to enact a Pass/Fail grading system. A student’s academic plan will be evaluated including the need for academic testing and tutorial support in order to achieve success in the subject(s) as well as to assess continued success at BCD.

**Academic Support:** The student’s advisor is the direct link between home and school. Advisors and teachers hold regular meetings to discuss students’ academic progress. In addition to contact with parents throughout the term, an advisor’s comment will be included with grade reports at the end of each trimester if the student receives an “N” or “U” in conduct. Should a student experience academic difficulties, he or she is responsible to seek appropriate help yet the advisor and teacher will work together and make specific recommendations to address the issues at hand. Strategies may include tutorial support and follow-up conferences.

Should a student continue to struggle academically (i.e. receive two grades in a trimester at or below C- or a single F, two or more effort marks reflecting “Needs Improvement” (3) or “Unsatisfactory” (4) work, or any year-end failing grade) a meeting, set up by his or her advisor, to discuss the reasons for the academic problems and to develop a plan. The student, his or her advisor, the appropriate subject teacher(s), the school psychologist and the Associate Head of School will design and implement a

strategy to support the student and to assist him or her in the process of regaining solid academic standing. The student is expected to meet regularly with each teacher in whose course a low grade was received.

In the event that a student's performance does not improve, a more extensive evaluation of the cause for the problems will be undertaken. Some combination of social or motivational issues, personal or family problems, and the obvious academic weakness in a given area may have created the poor performance. The Associate Head of School and the school psychologist (as indicated) will attend the evaluative meeting, along with the advisor, the student and parents, and the teacher(s). The goal of this meeting is to develop and implement a more extensive plan to address the student's academic difficulties. Minutes of the meeting will be included in the student's file. Meetings outside of class with the teacher and tutoring will likely be prescribed.

*A student who suffers recurrent and unaddressed academic may lead to the decision that a student cannot flourish at BCD and therefore be asked to leave BCD.*

**Failure of a course:** In all cases involving a failing year-end grade in a course, it is expected that the student, teacher of the course involved, parent, advisor, Associate Head of School, the appropriate Department chair, and if warranted, the school counselor, will meet at the close of the academic year to discuss the details surrounding the failure and the options for redress.

Options for receiving academic credit for a failed class may include retaking the course during the summer through an approved program, retaking the course during the subsequent academic year, or if department prerequisites allow, taking a different course in the same subject matter the subsequent academic year. If a student fails two or more courses in one academic year, his/her ability to remain in the school will be in jeopardy. Finally, a written summary of this meeting will be placed in the student file for future reference.

**Summer Remediation:** Students earning a year-end grade below C- in a major academic course should expect to do summer work to address weak areas of performance. The teacher may recommend options for remediation, including but not limited to one of the following: summer work with a tutor or in a program, repeating the course, or tutoring during the subsequent academic year. The advisor, student, teacher and Associate Head of School then will meet to discuss options for meeting the student's needs. BCD makes an effort to develop a list of tutors and summer programs to help families to arrange for follow-up remediation. The actual arrangements for summer work are the responsibility of the family to set up.

In addition to summer work, a student may be asked to retake the BCD year-end exam or a school-approved facsimile. Students must demonstrate some improvement, as determined by the department, on a case-by-case basis. Some students may be recommended for ongoing tutoring while school is in session. In all cases, the tutor, student, teacher and advisor must be in close contact to ensure that the appropriate assistance is being given.

## **GROUP PROJECTS**

Student group projects are frequently assigned in Middle and Upper School in order to provide opportunities to learn valuable teamwork and decision-making skills and to enhance the learning process. Students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Researchers report that students working in small groups tend to learn better and retain material longer than when they work on their own. Group work is often conducted during class time, and periodically group projects are assigned that require students to work at home. While very positive social and learning outcomes usually result from collaborative projects, there are often initial struggles and occasionally there are disasters. Teachers will set specific guidelines and grading procedures to help frame each project, structure the students' approach to the learning task, and clarify expectations regarding the process and the outcomes. If project work is done at home, parents need to become involved in scheduling appropriate work times and providing transportation. Parents are encouraged to try to allow the

students to direct their learning as much as possible and to help mediate issues rather than to step into managerial roles. If, however, a significant breakdown occurs, please call the teacher who assigned the project during calling hours to seek advice about how to proceed. The Middle and Upper School faculty members need and appreciate parent support in this important form of student learning.

## **HELP SESSIONS**

The Middle and Upper School faculty schedule special academic help sessions on a regular basis each week. The schedule is posted in the homeroom for student reference. If a student has fallen behind or needs to make up a quiz or test, a teacher will request that he or she attend a help session. These sessions are open to all students and occur at the end of lunch Mondays through Thursdays, or during a study hall.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework expectations increase each year through the Middle and Upper School grades. Students are asked to record all assignments in their assignment planners. The faculty develops homework schedules. The number of assignments for each evening is kept to a manageable level. To this end, a master test calendar is generated each month and displayed for faculty and students.

Homework must be completed on time and to the best of the student's ability. Fourth graders should expect to work between 30 and 45 minutes nightly. Fifth and sixth graders have approximately 1-1/2 hours of work at home. Seventh and Eighth graders should expect to work a minimum of two hours nightly, and ninth graders, two to three hours nightly.

Homework is a crucial piece of the BCD experience. Faculty, students and parents work in partnership to enhance our classrooms' curricula by means of daily homework and long-range projects throughout the year. A student's academic success depends on whether s/he takes responsibility for the completion of homework in a timely manner. Each teacher develops his/her own homework guidelines, including whether late work will be accepted, receive partial or full credit, or receive no credit. These guidelines will be distributed to the students at the beginning of the school year, handed out to the parents at Back-to-School Night and posted online on BCD's website.

**\*\*Please note that some of the Arts Block offerings require homework. Students are advised of this during the registration process as the advisor, student and parents discuss the best and most manageable placement for the upper school student.**

**Extended absences and making up homework:** Cases involving extended absences due to illness or other personal crisis will be addressed on an individual basis by the teacher(s), an administrator, and the family. A case in which a student demonstrates recurrent problems completing homework across several subject areas may indicate a larger learning issue. In these situations the family will be asked to meet with the school psychologist who may recommend educational testing so that the School may best serve the student's needs.

**Unexcused Absences and Late Work:** The Upper School Division considers an unexcused absence a serious offense. A student missing school with an unexcused absence will be required to make up all work assigned during the absence within one week of his/her return to school. It is the student's responsibility to determine the scope of all assignments by consulting with a classmate. If extra work is required to catch the student up, the school will try to assist the family in finding a tutor, yet the family will be responsible to pay the tutoring fee. Work completed late due to an unexcused absence will be subject to a grade reduction determined by the teacher or department. It is possible that a student will not be allowed to take a quiz or test for credit when it is missed due to an unexcused absence resulting in a zero for the assignment.

**Homework policy for vacations and religious holy days:** A maximum of a one night's homework assignment may be given over a school vacation and/or during a long weekend. No major project may be assigned for students to work on during a school vacation or to be due immediately following the break.

In the case of a religious holiday occurring on a school day, students observing that religious occasion are allowed the rest of the week and the weekend to catch up on work missed. Teachers will not require students observing a religious holiday to take a test or turn in a paper the day after the observance. Students should make arrangements, outside of class, with their teacher to further discuss and clarify any deadlines for work due.

## **OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIPS**

An important part of the Middle and Upper School experience is the program of overnight trips planned for the fifth through ninth grades. In the fall, 5th grade students head to Wakefield, Rhode Island for a weeklong scientific study of a specific ecosystem. This hands-on learning experience provides the foundation for the fifth grade science program and helps the class become a cohesive unit early in the year.

The 6th grade students head off campus in the fall to the Hulbert Outdoor Education School in Vermont. During their week away, they will survive a 15 mile hike up one of Vermont's highest peaks, engineer their way through the challenging ropes course, and enjoy of a multitude of cooperative game activities. Team building exercises enhance group dynamics which helps get the year off to a solid start for this age group.

In the spring of 7th grade, students head off on a weeklong trip to Washington D.C. The class spends a day in Baltimore on the way down to DC, and a day on the battlefield at Gettysburg on the return trip. This experience is coordinated by the Arts and History Departments and buttresses their learning in both these areas of study.

The 8th grade also heads off in the spring for a week to the Everglades National Park in Florida. The students study specific ecosystems that provide a hands-on experience tying in with their eighth grade science course.

The 9th grade begins its year with a class retreat during the first week of school. During this time, the class sets goals for the year and works on team-building and builds leadership skills to be prepared to lead the school as an excellent senior class. Later in the year, the class experiences a full-immersion a French-speaking country as well as a Spanish-speaking country. In past years the trip has headed to France and Spain. The trip is tied directly to the French and Spanish curricula in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year.

## **PARTIES & BIRTHDAYS**

Please refer to the *Parties* section of this **Handbook** for BCD's policy regarding birthday celebrations.

## **PHYSICAL INTIMACY**

Public display of affection can be alienating to other members of a group, especially the School's younger students. Recurrent breaches of public decorum will be referred to the Associate Head of School and may result in disciplinary action.

## **RECESS/BREAK**

After lunch each day for twenty minutes and for ten minutes in the middle of the morning, Middle and Upper School students are given a recess period. During this unstructured time they are limited to:

- Designated fields supervised by faculty members;
- Classrooms for help sessions;
- Their homerooms if a supervising faculty member is present;
- Fitzpatrick Hall on Middle and Upper School recess days;

Students are not allowed in or on the ponds without adult permission, nor are they allowed in any non-designated area. Physical contact sports/games (i.e., tackle football, rugby, kill-the carrier) are not permitted during recess/break.

## **STUDY HALL EXPECTATION**

A study hall period is incorporated into the 6-9 grade schedules. When attending a study hall, a student is expected to work diligently on class assignments or bring a book to read, and to work silently. The library and computer rooms may be available to a limited number of students during some study hall periods. If a student needs to use a computer to complete his/her homework assignment during study hall, the supervising teacher must receive a note from the subject teacher.

## **TARDINESS**

All Middle and Upper School students should arrive in their homerooms by 8:00 a.m. School success begins with prompt attendance in morning homeroom. The fifteen-minute homeroom period from 8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. is critical to student success. During this time, students get their materials for their first two classes and listen to important academic, athletic, extracurricular, community service, and scheduling announcements. Students who miss the homeroom morning meeting are negatively impacted. Furthermore, students who arrive repeatedly late to school do not learn promptness, an important habit to develop.

In order to help our students perform to the best of their abilities and to encourage promptness, the Middle School homeroom teachers and administration have developed the following protocols and consequences for arriving late to homeroom.

- Children who will arrive in their homerooms after 8:00 must report to the upstairs office in Albright Hall to receive a late pass that they will present to a homeroom teacher. (Students who travel on busses that arrive late do not need to obtain a pass.)
- If a child is late and has a note from her/his driver to present to the office that provides a reasonable excuse, the lateness will be considered excused. If there is no note with a reasonable excuse, the lateness will be considered unexcused. (There is no need to provide a note if poor road conditions are the obvious excuse.)
  - Examples of excused lateness: poor road conditions, doctor appointment, religious observance, illness, family emergency, pulled over by a police officer on the way to BCD.
  - Examples of unexcused lateness: woke up late, stopped to get a doughnut, needed to walk the dog, sibling couldn't decide what to wear, having a bad-hair day.
- Three or more unexcused late arrivals may result in a consequence such as missed recesses or a conference with the parent(s) and student. A *"clean slate"* is started each term.

Repeated late arrivals or early departures result in missed academic class time and take away from critical learning experiences that can only take place in the classroom. Missed class time adversely affects student learning, and teachers are not expected to spend time catching up nor meeting with students who have missed repeated portions of their classes due to unexcused reasons. (Although doctors' visits fall into the category of excused absences, please try to make appointments on vacation days or after or before school hours if at all possible.).

The student must provide his/her teacher with an appointment note (forms provided in homerooms) to the teachers of the classes s/he will miss 24 hours prior. Repeated missed class time may result in one of the following consequences to be decided by the subject teacher, the student's advisor and an administrator:

- Required tutoring.
- Required summer work.

Class attendance is necessary in order to participate in after-school sports, games, and extra-curricular activities. In order to participate in these after-school programs, a student must attend six out of the eight periods of the school day unless special permission is obtained from the Associate Head of School.

### **ST. STEPHEN'S TABLE**

Students in grades 7 - 9 are offered the opportunity to participate in the operation of St Stephen's Table, a service that provides dinners to needy members of the Pittsfield community. Student volunteers spend approximately one Thursday evening per month helping with this program. Upon arriving at St. Stephen's Parish House at 4:45 pm, their tasks include; helping with last-minute food preparation, supplying counters with cups, serving dinners, packing take-out dinners, emptying trash cans, and dining room clean-up.

Faculty supervisors oversee the students' participation at St. Stephen's Table, a program that is an important part of BCD's overall community service program. It is valuable to both the student participants and the members of the community it serves.

In addition to St. Stephen's Table, Upper School students have opportunities to be involved in many other service learning activities that are organized on campus by students and faculty.

### **STUDENT COUNCIL**

The BCD Student Council is composed of six members: two students from the 7th, 8th, and 9th grade homerooms. A faculty member works directly with the Student Council and facilitates its meetings. The purpose of the Student Council is to help make BCD a caring, cooperative learning community by:

- Fostering an environment that is based on respect and responsibility.
- Being helpful to all BCD students, teachers, staff members and visitors.
- Promoting outreach projects at BCD and in the greater community.
- Listening to fellow students and representing the student body in matters that relate to student life
- Enhancing school spirit
- Running all Middle and Upper School monthly morning meetings
- Sponsoring the *Penguin Awards*

### **VISITORS**

The Middle and Upper School faculty invites and welcomes former BCD students to visit school during a lunch/recess period. The faculty has found that hosting students for longer time periods creates a student energy that may disrupt the learning process.

***Parents are welcome on campus but must check into the front office upon their arrival.***

We strive to provide a comfortable yet serious learning environment for all of our students, and thus ask parents to refrain from roaming the campus and interrupting classes during the academic day.

## COMPUTER POLICY

**Introduction:** Using computers and technology allows you to participate in a variety of activities that support learning. Unfortunately, with open access to websites and people around the world, students might gain access to information that may not be appropriate. Berkshire Country Day School has taken measures to prevent such access to inappropriate information through the use of a firewall. However, BCD cannot control all information available on the Internet. The School shall not be held liable for inappropriate access or exposure to inappropriate materials resulting from student Internet use. The School trusts its students to know what is appropriate and inappropriate, however, to clarify; the School feels that any non-educational use is clearly inappropriate. The following guidelines are intended to help students use technology appropriately. Failure to adhere to the acceptable use policy will result in disciplinary action and/or the loss of technology use privileges. Depending on the infraction, disciplinary responses may include a written notification, and in egregious cases, including the violation of major school rules, dismissal from school as well as possible legal referral.

**User Agreement:** The use of school technology resources must be in support of education, research, and the educational goals and objectives of Berkshire Country Day School. Students are personally responsible for this provision at all times when using technology on school premises. The use of the school network or technology resources must comply with rules appropriate to that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any United States statute is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. While some students may use their personal e-mail to communicate with peers and teachers, computers used on school property, e-mail addresses, and/or web pages may not be used for commercial, non-profit, political, personal or religious purposes, or any other non-educational use. If you have any questions about these rules call the Technology Department Head Maureen Tumenas or the Associate Heads of School to clarify specifics.

**Technology Acceptable Use Policy:** All students in Grades 1 – 9 must read, sign and abide by this policy statement. A parent’s signature is required to ensure that the student understands the rules regarding technology use.

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or on a school playground. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The student (or any guest on campus) is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources. The students are advised never to access, keep, or send anything that they would not want their parents or teachers to see.

**21st Century Learning:** As we strive to meet the needs of students in the 21st century, new tools, new ways of connecting and learning appear on a daily basis. BCD will be incorporating use of Web 2.0 tools in the computer curriculum, as well as through integration into core subject classes. The Upper School students will have a Ning, a learning network, to use in classes. Students throughout the school may use online tools, such as blogs, wikis and podcasts to both showcase their work and to connect with others. In all cases, student safety and privacy is a vital concern. Students will use only first names, last initials on their work, student photos or avatars may be used, as long as full names are not associated with them. Students will post writing, videos, images and recordings to the Internet. Student work will be licensed through Creative Commons and their intellectual property rights will be maintained. At times, students will be communicating with other classes throughout the world, teachers, mentors and experts.

### **The Rules:**

Privacy - Network storage areas may be treated like school cubbies. Network administrators may review communications to maintain system integrity and to insure that students are using the system responsibly. Students should not attempt to access information stored by others.

Downloads - Students should never download or install any commercial software, shareware, or freeware onto network drives or disks.

Inappropriate materials or language - Profane, abusive or impolite language should not be used to communicate nor should materials be accessed which are not in line with the rules of school behavior. A good rule to follow is never view, send, or access materials which you would not want your teachers and parents to see. Should students encounter such material by accident, they should report it their teacher immediately.

**Student Guidelines:** These are guidelines to follow to prevent the loss of network privileges at school.

- Students are not allowed in the computer labs or other classrooms with Internet access without a teacher present.
- Do not use the printers without permission.
- Food and drink are not allowed in the computer labs.
- Do not use a computer to harm other people or their work.
- Do not damage the computer or the network in any way.
- Do not install any software, shareware, or freeware.
- Do not violate copyright laws.

\* Please be aware that the inappropriate use of electronic information resources is a violation of school rules, and may be in violation of local, state, and federal laws and that you can be prosecuted for violating those laws.

## MASSACHUSETTS LAWS

**Prohibiting the Purchase of Alcohol by Minors:** Any person under twenty-one years of age who purchases or attempts to purchase alcoholic beverages or alcohol, or makes arrangements with any person to purchase or in any way procure such beverages, or who willfully misrepresents his age, or in any way alters, defaces or otherwise falsifies his identification offered as proof of age, with the intent of purchasing alcoholic beverages, either for his own use or for the use of any other person shall be punished by a fine of three hundred dollars and whoever knowingly makes a false statement as to the age of a person who is under twenty-one years of age in order to procure a sale or delivery of such beverages or alcohol so such person under twenty-one years of age, either for the use of the person under twenty-one years of age or for the use of some other person, and whoever induces a person under twenty-one years of age to make a false statement as to his age in order to procure a sale or delivery of such beverages or alcohol to such person under twenty-one years of age, shall be punished by a fine of three hundred dollars.

**Prohibiting the Use of Tobacco in the Public Schools:** It shall be unlawful for any student, enrolled in either primary or secondary public schools in the commonwealth, to use tobacco products of any type on school grounds during normal school hours.

### **An Act Prohibiting the Practice of Hazing:**

**Section 17.** Whoever is a principle organizer or participant in the crime of hazing as defined herein shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars or by imprisonment in a house of correction for not more than one hundred days, or by both such fine and imprisonment. The term "hazing" as used in this section and in sections eighteen and nineteen, shall mean any conduct or method of initiation into any student organization, whether on public or private property, which willfully and recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student or other person. Such conduct shall include whipping, beating, branding, forced calisthenics, exposure to the weather, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or other substance, or any other brutal treatment or forced activity which is likely to adversely affect the physical health or safety of any such student or other person, or which subjects such student or other person to extreme mental stress, including extended deprivation of sleep or rest or extended isolation.

**Section 18.** Whosoever knows that another person is the victim of hazing as defined in section seventeen and is at the scene of such crime shall, to the extent that such person can do so without danger or peril to himself or others, report such crime to an appropriate law enforcement official as soon as reasonable practicable. A fine of not more than five hundred dollars shall punish whoever fails to report such crime.

**Section 19.** Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall issue to every group or organization under its authority or operating on or in conjunction with its campus or school, and to every member, plebe, pledge or applicant for membership in such group or organization, a copy of this section and sections seventeen and eighteen. An officer of each such group or organization, and each individual receiving a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen shall sign an acknowledgment stating that such group, organization or individual has received a copy of said sections seventeen and eighteen.

Each secondary school and each public and private school or college shall file, at least annually, a report with the regents of higher education and in the case of secondary school, the board of education, certifying that such institution has complied with the provisions of this section and also certifying that said school has adopted a disciplinary policy with regards to the organizers and participants of hazing. The board of regents and in the case of secondary school, the board of education, shall promulgate regulations governing the content and frequency of such reports, and shall, forthwith report to the attorney general any institution, which fails to make such report.

**Controlled Substance Act:** Any person engaging in controlled substances violations while in or on, or within one thousand feet of the real property comprising a public or private accredited preschool,

accredited Headstart facility, elementary, vocational, or secondary school whether or not in session, or within one hundred feet of a public park or playground shall be punished by a term of imprisonment in the state prison for not less than two and one-half nor more than fifteen years or by imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not less than two nor more than two and one-half years. No sentence imposed under the provisions of Chapter 94C and Section 32J shall be for less than a mandatory term of imprisonment of two years. Lack of knowledge of school boundaries shall not be a defense to any person who violates the provisions of Chapter 94C and Section 32J.