



BELMONT ACADEMY

2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR

STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

Board Approved Revised 3/5/2018

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ABSENCES

Please refer to the Student Progression Plan for details.

ARRIVAL

Students may arrive no earlier than 7:00 AM and should report to their first classroom. The instructional day begins at 7:45 AM. Students need to learn the importance of regular school attendance. In addition, it is important that students report to school on time.

When bringing your student to school, please enter main entrance and proceed to the **south** entrance of the school building. Next, proceed cautiously around the loop and exit by way of the main exit.

ARTICLES BROUGHT TO SCHOOL

Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct for additional items not permissible.

No student, teacher, or parent is allowed to bring any animal, dead or alive, to school or school-sponsored activities without prior written permission of the school principal.

Students are not allowed to have alcohol, drugs, or tobacco (or facsimiles) in any form in their possession while on school property. Any student who brings a gun or knife or any other item intended as a weapon may be suspended or permanently withdrawn from school. (See Code of Student Conduct for details.) Toy guns are not allowed at school. Laser pointers are not allowed at school.

Toys, trading cards, expensive jewelry, radios, electronic games, beepers, CD/DVD or tape players, etc. are not allowed at school, and therefore should not be brought to school for any reason.

Chewing gum and hard candy should not be brought to school for any reason. Glass containers should not be brought to school for safety reasons.

Items lost or broken are not the responsibility of the school.

If a student has a cell phone, it should be turned off and kept in their book bag or locker until 3:15pm (please see Electronic Device section for additional information).

Articles of clothing, book bags, lunch boxes, as well as any other items, should be labeled with the child's first and last name. If your child loses something, please check with our lost and found.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

Please refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) policy for details.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct for details.

DISMISSAL / PICK UP

SAFETY IN THE PARKING LOT

When transporting students by automobile, please exercise extreme caution! Student drop off in the morning and pick up at dismissal time should take place at the south entrance to the main school building. Please have pick up number card visible on the front of dash during afternoon pick up. If you do not have a pick up card in your vehicle for a child you intend to take home, you may be asked to come inside and identify yourself. There will be someone to assist your child in and out of the vehicle. Never leave your car unattended if it is in a line of traffic or if your car is blocking traffic flow. We also request that you remain in your car and refrain from any cell phone use. Please caution your child not to run.

PICK UP

Students will be released only to a parent or guardian unless the school has been notified in writing that someone else has permission to pick up the child. Early dismissals are not allowed after 2:00 PM. Students must be picked up at designated pick-up area. Note: Inside pick up is discouraged, but if it becomes necessary, please park in the upper south parking lot, walk to the front desk and complete the sign-out form. This procedure also applies to any parent/guardian that has been a volunteer at school that day. The parent can never just walk out with their child.

Students must leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal unless enrolled in an extra-curricular school activity. Any student on campus after dismissal must have adult supervision.

Pick-up plans should be finalized before the student comes to school. However, should an emergency arise, the parent must provide instructions and approval in writing or an email to the front desk (frontdesk@belmontacademy.com) before 1:45 PM. If notified after this time we cannot guarantee that the student will receive the message.

Before releasing a student from school, the principal or his/her designee shall establish the identity and authority of any individual who seeks the release of a student from school. A student shall be released only to the parents or legal guardians or other person authorized by the parents or legal guardians on the student's information record (SIR) form. Parents or legal guardians shall provide a written notice to the school whenever an update to the student information file is needed. At the discretion of the principal, the guardians may be asked to physically sign the student out. Parents/legal guardians or other persons authorized by the parents/legal guardians to pick up a child must have a picture ID or pick up card to prove they have authority to remove the student from campus.

Parents or guardians should submit to school authority's copies of any legal documents which indicate who has legal access to the child and his/her records during school hours. In the absence of legal documentation, school officials will provide access only to those individuals whose names appear in the SIR form. . Even if we know you are a parent, but you do not have court specified rights to pick a child up at a time different from that specified, we will need to secure permission prior to release.

DRESS CODE

Please refer to the Dress Code Policy for details.

Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct for dress code violation consequences.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Any student leaving school prior to dismissal will have an early dismissal logged to his/her record. Early dismissal is defined as any time over one minute over one half of a school day. If a child leaves one minute before one half of a school day, the child is considered absent.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct for additional information.

The computers and/or electronic devices at Belmont are not to be used for any other purpose other than assigned classroom projects. The use of Belmont equipment for any other activity is prohibited. Such activities include, but are not limited to, computer games, internet/google searches, listening to music while engaged in studies or projects, or any other uses that may be considered entertainment.

Students may not use any personal electronic devices prior to 3:15pm or while on approved school trips (except for times when the students are in a theme park, on the bus, in the hotel, or as otherwise allowed by the administration). . Students may not use said devices while engaged in any academic, enrichment, or athletic activity without permission of the faculty or staff member in charge.

Cellular Telephone Policy

Students shall not use any cellular telephones prior to 3:15pm. Any student may bring cellular telephones onto school property; however, cellular telephones shall be kept in the student's book bag or locker or in an area designated by school officials for the storage of cellular telephones during school hours. Cellular telephones must be kept in an "off" mode during school hours. Any student who chooses to bring a cellular telephone to school shall do so at his or her own risk. School personnel shall not be responsible for damage, loss or theft of a student's cellular telephone while on school property.

Students may not possess any other type of electronic device, with the exception of calculators approved by the school, at any time. These items shall be subject to the rules of confiscation. The school shall not be responsible for any damage, theft or loss of any electronic device brought to the school property or at any school related function. The school shall not engage in any investigation for the return of lost or stolen items.

EMERGENCIES

Please be familiar with the Parent School Emergency Guide and the Emergency Response Guide for additional information.

Please keep Belmont up-to-date on **any changes of address or phone numbers** (home, cell or work) so parents can be reached quickly in case of emergency. An unexpected illness or accident may make this very important. It is essential that an emergency phone number be on file for each student. Should a parent address, telephone number, or place of work change, please notify the school immediately to be sure that the school has a quick way to reach you.

ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Please see the Admission and Registration Policy.

Other considerations in addition to the stated policy: Exceptional Student Education (ESE):

The Columbia County School District will have the responsibility of conducting the evaluation of students initially referred for placement within ESE.

If it is determined by an IEP (Individualized Education Program) committee that the needs of a student with disabilities cannot be met at Belmont, the school will work with the Columbia County School District to take steps to secure another placement for the student in accordance with federal and state mandates.

FAMILY RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

Please refer to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) policy for details.

FIELD TRIPS

Only children enrolled as students at Belmont Academy may be transported for field trips. Only students enrolled in the classroom whose teacher is sponsoring the trip may go on the trip.

A parent must give permission for a student to attend a field trip or guardian on the Belmont Academy-approved permission form by the deadline set by the teacher.

All chaperones must have a volunteer application on file and fill out required paperwork. If chaperones are driving all required insurance documentation, level two background checks, and required forms must be turned in prior.

Smoking or use of other tobacco products is not allowed on field trips or on school campus by adults or students.

All students must ride the approved bus to the field trip destination. They may not be transported to the destination by parents (unless approved driver, as noted above), guardians, friends, or others. A student who arrives late to school and misses the field trip bus will remain at school in another teacher's classroom. If you want to check your child out from the field trip destination, this must be requested in writing and approved three (3) days in advance by the principal.

Participating in field trips is a privilege. Students serve as representatives of the school; therefore, they may be excluded from participation in any field trip due to behavioral/conduct concerns or as outlined in Florida State Statutes 1003.31-1003.33. Any school suspension may negate attending a field trip.

Field trips which are an extension of classroom instruction and are designed for all students in a class or grade level to attend and are within the hours of one school day (7:40 AM – 3:00 PM) will not use student grades for eligibility.

Incentive field trips use criteria established by grade level teams, which may include behavior, tardies, grades and work habits. Students must meet the grade level established criteria to participate in incentive field trips.

Parental permission must be given for students to participate in field trips. The teacher will send permission slips and information about each field trip 2-4 weeks prior to each field trip. Money and permission slips must be turned in according to the teacher's instructions prior to the field trip or the student will not be permitted to take part in the field trip. Students are to wear school uniforms while on field trips, unless given prior permission by the principal.

Two items are important for field trips. Field Trip Authorization Forms must be filled out completely and signed and returned by the preset deadline for each field trip. The Authorization for Medical Treatment form is required to be filled out completely and notarized for out of county field trips. This will be completed once at the beginning of each year.

Once fees are paid for a field trip, the fees are non-refundable. Field trip costs are pre-determined based upon a certain number of participants who will share the total expense. The only consideration for a refund would be based upon a verifiable death in the family or an injury to the student that precludes them from field trip participation. Most fees are pre-paid and thus non-refundable.

A field trip is the classroom, regardless of location, and the teacher is in charge. No siblings shall attend a field trip with a parent or parent chaperone. This is a classroom control and liability issue. No cellular phones may be brought on any field trip by students. Only the teacher in charge may send or receive telephone calls during field trips. Chaperones may bring cell phones for personal use when not on duty for student contact. Students may not use chaperones' cell phones except in an emergency situation.

Children may not be checked out of any off-campus field trip without prior approval from the administration. This is not recommended due to teacher responsibility, instruction, confusion and liability. Students must attend school on the day of the field trip. Parents may not drive students directly to field trip venues.

GRADING SCALE

Please see Pupil Progression Plan for Details.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If a student or his/her parents feel they have a grievance or complaint, they should:

- 1) Seek to resolve the problem with the teacher first, if applicable.
- 2) If there no solution has been reached, meet with the School Administration.
- 3) You may take your concern to the Belmont Academy School Board, if additional resolution is required.

COMMUNICATION:

Communication is absolutely essential for success in any human endeavor. The administration and staff recognize this and will strive to facilitate open and frequent communications with parents at all times.

Please feel free to consult with the office regarding any problems or questions that concern your child. It is the desire of the administrators and the faculty to be of service to both parent and student, and every teacher welcomes a conference with any parent. We do urge, however, that such visits be made by making an appointment with the teacher at a convenient before or after-school hours, or during a teacher's planning time. Parents are

asked not to meet with a teacher before or after class unless a conference has been scheduled in advance.

It is extremely important that any change of address, telephone numbers, email addresses or other vital communications information or pick-up authority must be completed by the legal parent/guardian in person in the front office. BY STATE LAW, two new “proofs-of-address” must be provided for changes of address.

HOMEWORK POLICY

The purpose of homework is to develop study habits in children early on in their academic lives. It is also used to reinforce concepts that have been taught, or to work on projects that have been assigned. If a child does not understand his/her assignment after trying to do it at home, please send a note to the teacher indicating the problem.

Homework is given at the discretion of the teacher. Students should receive homework that reviews and reinforces what has already been taught in school. Please plan to set aside time each evening to supervise your child’s assigned homework, work on his/her spelling or math facts, and read with your child.

Teachers will coordinate in teams to balance homework loads. Certain projects, tests, etc., will demand differing loads.

Homework assignments may take less time one day and may take slightly more time on another day. A child who does not complete class work in class may have to complete this work in addition to homework.

Assignments must be completed on time and be properly written. The only acceptable excuse for incomplete homework is the student’s illness or a written note stating an emergency which prevented homework from being done. If a student fails to bring in homework, he/she should complete it for the following day. Teachers keep daily records of homework assignments which are used in determining quarterly grades. Always complete work, even if it is late.

Parents may help in the following ways:

- Show an interest in your child’s work
- Provide a place and time for quiet study.
- Assist in practicing with spelling words and number combinations.
- Encourage home reading and listen to your child read.
- Review the homework for neatness and completeness.
- Refrain from doing the work for your child.
- Discuss problems related to home study with your child’s teacher.

It is important to note that “home learning” is the responsibility of the parent as well as the student. Homework is an effective way for a parent to teach a child valuable time management skills. It is beneficial for parents give a start time for homework, and a stop time. Homework is an excellent tool that teaches a child to manage time-

HONOR ROLL REQUIREMENTS
Please see Pupil Progression Plan for Details.

INSTRUCTIONAL BOOKS, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Students need to realize that books and materials are expensive and that they should be cared for properly. Students should learn to cover all books that are issued to them. A brown grocery bag makes an excellent book cover. Books must not be written in or on. Charges will be made for damaged or lost books and/or materials based upon replacement costs. Students must learn to be responsible for the care of personal and school materials.

Students will be expected to provide all basic supplies such as paper, pencils, crayons, rulers, scissors, markers, glue etc. Any additional supply needs will be posted on the Belmont Academy website by the classroom teacher.

LEGAL NAME

All students will be enrolled by their legal name that appears on their birth certificate. The legal name of the student must be used on all official school documents until the name is changed by court action.

LOCKERS

Lockers are a privilege and not a right. The locks and lockers are Belmont property and subject to search and inspection. Students may use magnets to affix items to the **inside** of the locker. **NO DRY ERASE OR PERMANENT MARKERS, TAPE, PAINTS ETC.**, may be used to cause damage of any type to the locker. There will be a \$10 minimum charge for damage to the locker. Students will be charged for any damage to lockers as determined by the administration. No illegal substances, weapons, pagers or other items identified as against school policy shall be kept in lockers. Lockers may be inspected at any time during the year.

LOST AND FOUND

Throughout the school year, items which have been lost are placed in the entryway to the cafeteria. Many of our problems would be solved if clothing and personal belongings were labeled with the student’s name. Any time a student loses an item, he/she may go to the cafeteria to claim it. There are many items lost and never claimed each year. These items are donated on a regular basis to various charitable institutions. Please have your child’s first and last name on all personal property, such as lunch boxes, sweaters, raincoats, etc.

MEALS

Please see Lunch Policy.

All students must bring a sack lunch from home or order lunch from Bell's Catering. Below is a summary of guidelines for both lunchroom helpers and students that will help maintain order in our lunch pavilion:

Teachers' Aides and Lunchroom Helpers:

- All aides stay with their class
- Rowdy behavior in bathrooms is unacceptable
- Remind kids to eat sandwich/main food before dessert
- Aides to keep accurate count of their class
- Aides are to always maintain order at lunch
- Make sure your students have food
- Watch for bullying
- Watch for any child that is continually alone

Students:

- Eat with your class (K-5)
- Stay in your chair
- Clean up your own trash
- Push in your chair when finished
- Walk at all times
- No sharing food allowed, mainly for dietary/allergy reasons
- Wait as a class to be dismissed
- Middle school and high school have separate eating areas.
- **Lunch Visitor Policy:** Please be mindful of student confidentiality. If you take a picture in the cafeteria, you must ensure that no other students are visible in the frame.
- Due to limited space at the Visitor Table, we ask that you enjoy lunch with your child only; please don't invite friends to join. School-aged siblings/children are not permitted to visit during the school lunch hours.

NURSE PROCEDURES

Additional information is found on the Nurse's Page on our website.

Medications: The administering or dispensing of any medicines (including non-prescription medication) to students by employees of Belmont Academy without specific written authorization by the parents and physician of the student is forbidden. If it is absolutely necessary that the child take any medication while he/she is in school, the parent must sign an authorization form and have the form completed by their physician. Please obtain this form in the school office. The medication will be kept in the nurse's office and will be administered by nurse or properly trained office personnel. A parent may also choose to check in at the front desk, go to the nurse's office and administer medication.

Illness: The importance of regular attendance cannot be over-emphasized, but students should not be sent to school when they are ill. If a student becomes ill during the school day, and it appears they would be best cared for at home, the parent will be contacted. There are very limited facilities in the school, making it impossible to keep sick students for long periods of time. The nurse must be notified of any student's chronic illness (i.e. asthma, diabetes, heart conditions or seizures). This heightens awareness in case of an emergency.

Injury: The procedures listed below will be followed for an injured student:

1. Teachers will send the student to the nurse if the injury is minor.
2. Teachers will notify the office and the nurse, if the student is unable to be moved.
3. Trained, authorized personnel will administer first aid.
4. The parent(s) will be called and the injury described. For a minor injury the parent will make the decision about removing the student from the school. Emergency contact persons will be called if the parent cannot be reached.
5. 911 will be called for critical injuries that require the type of care that the nurse or other school personnel cannot provide. The parent or emergency contact will be notified.
6. An accident report will be completed and filed for accidents.

Lice Policy: A student who is found to have pediculosis (live head lice) and/or nits will be excluded from school and school buses until cleared. A determination must be made by approved Belmont personnel that the student is no longer contagious before they are allowed to return to school or to ride a school bus. Upon returning to school after treatment, parents will be required to accompany the student to school for clearance.

A student sent home for having live head lice and/or nits will be granted two (2) full days of excused absences for corrective measures. In the event a student has had lice and/or nits more than twice during any school year, all absences after the second day will be considered unexcused.

PHONE CALLS AND MESSAGES

Students will be allowed to use the telephone in case of emergency. Telephone messages will not be delivered to students except in emergency situations. All transportation arrangements or changes in routine should be made before school begins for the day.

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RIGHT OF STUDENT DISMISSAL AND/OR PERMANENT DISMISSAL

FS 228.056 10(a) 7 identifies the charter school's authority to develop and implement admission procedures and dismissal procedures. The charter contract between the Columbia County School District and Belmont Academy, Inc. affords the charter school the right of permanent dismissal.

Please refer to the Belmont Academy Code of Student Conduct for details.

STUDENT PROGRESSION
Please refer to the Pupil Progress Plan for details.

SCHOOL HOURS

7:00 School is unlocked, and office and switchboard opens 7:00-7:40 Students arrive and report to their first classroom 7:45 School day officially begins and tardy bell rings 2:45 School day ends.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

Parents are responsible for any damage their child does to school property (furniture, building, etc). The student must pay for lost or damaged textbooks or library books. Students should take care to keep all books clean, dry, and out of reach of younger children and pets.

SEVERE WEATHER INFORMATION

Belmont Academy will follow the Belmont Academy Emergency Response Guide in case of severe weather emergencies. Parents should watch their email and Facebook accounts for information about school closings. There will also be at least 10 fire drills per year at Belmont Academy so that our children will be adequately prepared for any emergency.

SPECIAL SAFETY SYSTEM

If you visit the school, you must enter through the front door and check in with the front office staff, even if you are just dropping off lunch for your child at the cafeteria. If this is your first visit to the school, please have your driver's license with you so that the front office staff can scan your license through the security system. Upon each visit, a visitor's badge will be printed for you and you must wear the badge at all times while on campus.

STUDENT GIFTS

Please do not send or bring gifts such as balloons, flowers, birthday cakes, etc., to students. Office space is very limited and we do not have the staff to deliver these. If you send these, they will be held in the front office for pick up until the end of the day.

STUDENT RECORDS

Belmont Academy rules and procedures for maintaining student records shall be consistent with Florida Statutes, State Board of Education rules, and federal laws relating to the “No Child Left Behind Act” (NCLB), the “Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act” (HIPAA), “Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act” (FERPA) and “Privacy Rights of Parents and Students” (PRPS). The Board of Directors shall be responsible for interpreting this rule and the school principal shall be responsible for controlling and supervising student records, following all rules on student records, and interpreting rules on student records to the school staff, students, and the community.

Reporting of student data-base information shall comply with these safeguards.

- (a) Data reported to the Florida Department of Education shall not disclose a student’s name or identity unless required by Florida Statutes;
- (b) Data shall not be stored in a single file or released in such a manner that a complete student profile can be reported unless specified by Florida Statutes; and,
- (c) Data shall be protected from unauthorized use at all times.

STUDENTS’ RIGHTS

See Code of Student Conduct for additional information.

Students have the right to feel safe from threats and bodily harm. Disruptive behaviors are never acceptable, and when they occur, they will result in time out, exclusion from participation in class activities, detention, suspension, or recommendation for permanent dismissal (see Code of Student Conduct for details).

Parents who have a conflict with a student other than their own child are requested to speak to the Administration. At no time may parents approach the student directly.

All students and employees will be treated with respect. Slurs, innuendoes, hostile treatment, violence or other verbal or physical conduct against a student or employee will NOT be tolerated.

Sexual harassment of any type against a student or employee will NOT be tolerated.

TARDY POLICY

Classroom doors will close at 7:45. The school’s main clock is the official time. If the student is tardy, the student must be signed into the computer by the office staff and given a tardy slip.

The parent is responsible for completing a Parental Excusal Form for any tardies.

Each student is responsible for regular and punctual class attendance. For class periods throughout the day, students must be inside the classroom by the end of the ringing of the tardy bell in order not to be considered tardy. The teacher will determine if a tardy is excused or unexcused.

TELEPHONE

The school has a business telephone to help transact the business of the school and the lines must be kept open. Students may not use the telephone except for emergencies.

We CANNOT deliver a personal message to an individual student or teacher without interrupting the instructional program. Please do not ask the office staff to deliver messages to students or teachers except in an emergency.

TRANSPORTATION

All parents are responsible for providing safe transportation of their child to and from Belmont Academy, including designating other authorized drivers or carpools. Belmont is not responsible or liable for transportation of school children.

VISITORS

We are pleased to have parents visit our school during the time students are present. However, arrangements for such visitations should be made at least one day in advance with the teacher or administration. Drop-in visits are discouraged as they interrupt normal activities.

When arriving on campus, please park in the main parking lot on the north side of the building. ALL VISITORS (INCLUDING PARENTS) MUST REPORT TO THE OFFICE. For the safety and protection of all students, visitors (including parents) must sign in and out with the office, state whom they are visiting, state the purpose of the visit, and obtain a pass before proceeding to a classroom. This is Florida State Law. Cooperation will enable the school to provide a safe and orderly learning environment for all students.

All visitors will be required to wear a visitor's badge. This is for the safety of all our children. No student visitors are allowed in classes without express consent of principal.

Visitors, INCLUDING PARENTS, are NOT permitted to go to their child's class unannounced during school hours because this disrupts normal routine and instruction.

VOLUNTEER HOURS AND RULES

Section 1002.33(10)(e)5.,F.S., states that a "charter school may limit the enrollment process only to target the following student populations: ...students who meet reasonable academic, artistic, or other eligibility standards established by the charter school and included in the charter school application and charter or, in the case of existing charter schools, standards that are consistent with the school's mission and purpose." Consequently, if a charter school includes the parent volunteer requirement in its application and charter, or if the requirement is consistent with the mission and purpose in an existing charter school, the parent volunteer contract is enforceable under Florida law. Failure of a

parent or parents to uphold or fulfill their responsibilities under that contract would be sufficient grounds for that charter school to deny admission to the child the following year. The volunteer requirement can only be reduced in the case of hardship. Hardship requests are evaluated by the Principal on a case by case basis upon completion of a Volunteer Hours Hardship Request Form (requested from the front desk) being submitted. If upon final tabulation household volunteer hours (annually) are:

- 20 or less: Student(s) priority seats are no longer reserved for the following school year.
- Between 20-50: Meet with Principal on an improvement plan, possible probation.

Families also will be a key component in the learning and academic achievement process. Belmont parents are required to contribute 50 hours/semester of school-related community service (per household). Some volunteer items will be offered a minimum value such as time spent on traffic (minimum of 1 hour recorded; lunch room help (minimum of 2 hours recorded); and any/all volunteer time worked during the months of April and May will be credited at 1.5 times (time and one/half). Please see the Belmont Academy website for specific volunteering opportunities and details.

What does not count?

- Parent-teacher conferences
- Reading to child at home
- Homework help
- Attendance or Disciplinary issues

Under NO circumstances may any volunteer contact other parents or individuals for non-supportive, negative or derogatory communication. If there is a concern, it must first be addressed with the teacher(s) at the appropriate time. If not satisfied after this communication the parent shall contact the principal. Failure to follow these procedures can constitute loss of privilege to volunteer in classes. Parents are required to log the volunteer hours via computer. These hours are recorded daily, so be sure to log in every time you work.

UPDATES TO THE STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

Periodically the Belmont Academy School Board may approve changes to the Student and Parent Handbook. The latest revision will be available at the Belmont Academy web-site.