

**ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

STUDENT HANDBOOK

This planner belongs to:

Name	
Address	
City	
State	
Zip Code	
Phone	
Student #	

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WELCOME

The staff at Bell Middle School welcomes all new and returning students to the 2008-2009 school year. At Bell, our commitment is to offer a rigorous and enriched education for all students. We believe that each student has the ability to achieve at high levels and that it is our responsibility to provide a challenging curriculum in a safe and nurturing environment. We pledge to work in partnership with you and your parents to make your experience at Bell a most positive one.

You are encouraged to join and become actively involved in the many clubs and after school activities we provide. These opportunities include classes, clubs, events, Associated Student Government, and other special activities. Your participation will enrich your educational experience, provide you with an opportunity to make new friends, and contribute to our Bell school spirit.

Students and staff have carefully prepared the policies and procedures contained in this planner. It is expected that you will read them carefully and follow them as they are presented to help you experience a rewarding and successful year!

We look forward to a great year ahead!

STUDENT PLANNER

You are expected to have this planner with you at all times. In addition, you must also wear your Bell Middle School lanyard and Student Identification Card around your neck. If lost or stolen, you must replace the planner, the student identification card, or lanyard within five days. These organizational and safety items are critical because the planner is designed for classroom purposes and identification is needed to check out library materials, or complete financial transactions, use the computer, and attend school sponsored events. You will not be able to check out materials, purchase items at the Financial or ASB Offices without a planner, lanyard, or student identification card.

ACADEMIC GRADING

Academic Grading Policy

The scholarship grade indicates the level of proficiency and competency achieved in the specific subject. Scholarship grades are cumulative. Grades for the first seven-week report period will be reflected on the first report. The second report period will reflect scholarship grades for 13 weeks. The semester scholarship grade will reflect the entire semester's academic work. The following marks are used:

- A = Superior, exceeds standards
- B = Above Average
- C = Satisfactory completion of standards
- D = Standards not met
- F = Failure, credit not granted
- NC = No credit
- INC = Incomplete

WHEN ABSENT FROM A CLASS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING UP MISSED ASSIGNMENTS RESTS WITH THE STUDENT.

NC (no credit) may be issued in place of an “F” grade if the teacher feels that the student has put forth effort yet failed to meet minimum proficiency standards. Parents must be notified as if the grade to be received were an “F”. A “Special Progress Report to Parents” should be issued.

Listed below are the only two reasons for which incomplete marks may be recorded on report cards or grade report sheets. A form from the Counseling Office must be completed and approval received from the Counselor or Administrator before the grade of “I” is submitted.

- a. Lack of a transcript of record from the last school attended.
- b. Due to illness a student missed so much work that it is impossible to receive a passing grade.

Responsibility for making up work rests with the student, yet teachers should make an effort to provide an opportunity for the work to be made up and to give the student needed assistance. Six weeks after the student first returns to school, the subject teacher will submit a final grade on a form obtained from the Counseling Office.

Incomplete grades that are not changed as noted above will automatically become “F” failures. The following comment will be printed on all 12 or 13-week progress reports: “Any grade of D or F may fail at the semester.”

Citizenship Grades

When a spirit of cooperation exists on a school campus, a positive learning atmosphere exists as well. Good citizens demonstrate attitudes of caring, concern, and respect for others, and respect for personal and school property. The guidelines in citizenship for Bell Middle School are based on the general guidelines found in the district’s Discipline Policy.

E = Excellent (*Outstanding student who exceeds citizenship standards.*)

G = Good (*Exceeds citizenship standards.*)

S = Satisfactory (*Meets citizenship standards.*)

N = Needs to Improve (*Needs help in meeting citizenship standards.*)

U = Unsatisfactory (*Fails to meet citizenship standards.*)

Ethics Policies

1. Academic Ethics

Honesty and integrity are essential to a successful education. Cheating undermines the academic process, shatters students’ integrity, and destroys the trust required for an honest, productive teacher and student relationship. To instill in students the importance of honesty and integrity, the staff at Bell Middle School will enforce the Academic Honesty Policy to promote academic honesty.

Academic Ethics Violations:

- a. Allowing other students to copy your tests, assignments, or homework.
- b. Copying from another student's homework, test, or assignment.
- c. Committing plagiarism by obtaining materials from other students, printed materials, or on-line sources.
- d. Stealing, exchanging, or altering materials.
- e. Developing a pattern of being absent when tests are scheduled.
- f. Applying pressure for grade changes
- g. Using computers or computer networks inappropriately.

Consequences Any violation will result in one or more of the following consequences:

- a. Students will receive a zero on the assignment or test.
- b. The citizenship grade will be no higher than an "N" on that six-week progress report.
- c. The parent(s) will be notified.
- d. The offense will be reported to the counselor and kept in the student's permanent file.
- e. Suspension.
- f. Referral.
- g. F/U for the semester.
- h. Removal from the class.

It is the goal of the Academic Honesty Policy to create an atmosphere of academic honesty by all participants.

2. Technology Ethics

Bell Middle School provides technology for instruction and access to the Internet for all students who have a signed *Student Network Responsibility Contract* on file. Students are expected to access the Internet only for instructional purposes. Class time and equipment are not to be used for unethical or unauthorized information searches. Students not meeting ethical standards will lose their privilege of using computers on campus.

(Ref: District Administrative Procedure 4580 of 4/7/05)

In order to utilize technology and access the Internet at Bell, these rules must be followed:

- a. In accordance with District policy (4580), the student and parent must sign and submit a *Student Network Responsibility Contract*.
- b. Students will only use computers under direct supervision of a teacher or other district employee.
- c. One student at a time will use each computer, unless otherwise specified by a teacher.
- d. Internet access must be under teacher supervision and be a component of the class curriculum.
- e. Students must not access, search, display or print inappropriate or profane material.
- f. There can be no advertisements or political lobbying of any kind.
- g. Students must conform with netiquette.

Homework Policy

A written homework policy for each class, including the course syllabus and discipline policy, will be sent home with every student. This policy must be signed by both the student and parent and placed in the student's school binder.

Honor Roll

Students who meet the following requirements are placed on the Honor Roll at the end of each semester:

- Highest Honors: 4.00+
- High Honors: 3.50 - 3.99
- Honors: 3.19 - 3.49

Students are recognized at the end of the semester and at an awards assembly held in June.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Report cards are issued at the end of each semester. These grades are part of each student's permanent record. Progress reports are issued twice each semester and are an indication of the student's classroom performance. Progress reports are a tool used to inform parents of a student's progress. Students and parents/guardians should pay close attention to progress reports and work toward achieving their goals.

During the 2008-2009 school year, progress report periods end on October 17, December 5, March 13, and May 1. Progress Reports are distributed one week later. The first semester ends on Jan. 30. Report cards are mailed out within two weeks. End of the year grades will be mailed by the district office in late June.

Promotion Requirements

Certificates are awarded during Eighth-Grade Promotion to students who are in "good standing." "Good Standing" is indicated by:

- a. Not on retained list – failing 2 or more core classes
- b. No "N's" or "U's" on the final report card.
- c. All library fines and debts paid.

Note: 8th Grade students who earn two (2) or more F's in core subjects (math, science, language arts, or history) at the end of the second semester must attend summer school. Students on the Retention List who do not attend summer school or who still have two (2) or more F's in core subjects at the end of summer school, WILL be retained. Students who complete summer school with less than two F's in core subjects, will be promoted to 9th grade.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance plays a major role in the overall success of every student. Academic success can be achieved only by daily class participation.

Parents' Responsibilities

1. Absence Reporting

Please call Bell's attendance office as early as possible on the day of absence at 479-7111, 6th grade ex. # 2028, 7th grade ex. # 2020, 8th grade ex. 2204. The attendance office is open between 7:00 AM and 3:30 PM daily. You may leave a message on the voice

mail system at any time.

2. Absence Clearance

Absence clearances should be made by telephone; notes will be accepted in special circumstances only, e.g., no home telephone.

3. Appointments

Please make every effort to schedule medical or dental appointments after school hours.

Closed Campus

Bell Middle School supports the district's closed campus policy which requires students to remain on campus during the lunch period. The closed campus policy applies to all students; parents may not exempt their students from this policy. Students are expected to attend all classes Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday between 7:20 AM and 2:15 PM, and between 7:20 AM and 12:15 PM on Wednesday.

Blue Slips

Any student leaving campus during school hours must have a blue slip and sign out in the attendance office. The parent/guardian must contact the school to request a blue slip. For security purposes the parent/guardian must bring and present a photo ID. Students who leave campus without a blue slip will be considered truant and subject to the appropriate consequences. Students may be detained by the police and charged with daytime loitering.

Passes

Inside the planner you will find nine pages designed specifically for pass purposes (*pages 23 through 31 of this Handbook*). To request permission to leave the classroom during class, a student must complete, in ink, the information required for this section. The student then brings the planner to the teacher to request approval. If approval is granted, the teacher will initial the pass entry. While out of the classroom, the student must carry this "pass" and display the pass to any staff member who inquires. This system promotes student and staff accountability, communication between the home and school, and ensures that the focus remains on classroom instruction.

Tardy Policy

Punctuality is a crucial element in academic and life-long success. Students are expected to be in their seats and ready to work when the tardy bell sounds. Repeated tardiness will lead to disciplinary action, including lunch detention, after school detention, Saturday school, referral to counselor or vice principal, parent notification, and parent conferences. It should be noted that after 30 minutes, an unexcused tardy becomes a truancy.

For citizenship purposes, students are considered to have a clean slate at the beginning of each six-week grading period. Tardiness negatively impacts citizenship grades and the citizenship grade for the semester is the average of the citizenship grades for each of the three six-week grading periods that semester.

Truancy Policy

Truancy, "absence from school or class without prior knowledge of parent or school," is a serious matter. Truancy may impact citizenship grades. Because truancy will result in lost class time, repeated trancies will result in a lower academic grade. Students with a chronic truancy problem may be referred to the site's School Attendance Review Team

(SART); assigned after school detention; be assigned to Saturday School; or considered for placement in another comprehensive school or alternative program. For each grading period, the following guidelines will be in effect:

Unexcused Absences: An unexcused absence by a student will be recorded as a truancy.

Uncleared Absences: A period absence that is not cleared within five school days will be recorded as truancy.

Saturday School

Bell Middle has a Saturday School program. This program is designed to be a motivating force in eliminating full day and period trancies; unexcused and unverified absences; and habitual tardiness. Attendance at one entire Saturday School session will result in clearance of one full day of absence.

Student Attendance Review Team (SART)

The site's Student Attendance Review Team has been established for the express purpose of helping students to resolve chronic attendance problems. When a referral is made to the SART team, a consultation meeting is arranged with the parent and student. A plan of action is developed at this meeting to improve the student's attendance and all parties sign a contract agreeing to take specific steps to achieve this goal. If improvement does not occur, the student is referred to the district's School Attendance Review Board for one last opportunity to resolve the matter before being referred to the court system.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Behavior to and from School

Students are expected to display safe and courteous behavior to and from school and in the classroom. Students must not trespass on private property en-route to school or home.

Classroom Expectations

At Bell we believe that every student has a right to learn, and every teacher has a right to teach. A positive school climate is essential to creating a learning environment where students can achieve to their full potential. To this end, students will:

- a. Be present, on time, and prepared to work.
- b. Follow classroom rules and expectations.
- c. Keep their hands, feet, and possessions to themselves.
- d. Conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner with no putdowns.

Assemblies (Plays, Performances of any kind)

There are wonderful opportunities throughout the year for students to attend informational and educational assemblies. In order to continue offering these experiences, students are expected to behave in a cooperative and respectful manner and follow the guidelines below.

- a. Walk in an orderly manner to the auditorium and enter through the designated door.

- b. Proceed quickly and efficiently to your assigned area.
- c. Fill in every chair.
- d. Place your belongings on the floor in front of you.
- e. Stand in a quiet and respectful manner for the Pledge of Allegiance.
- f. Polite applause, when appropriate, is appreciated during the program.
- g. Do not display inappropriate behavior, such as yelling, whistling, and stomping.

Field Trips

Educational field trips may be a part of your student's educational program. Information regarding these will be sent home, along with parent permission slips, as needed. No student will be allowed to participate in a field trip unless a signed permission slip has been submitted and approval is received from all classroom teachers.

Campus Cleanliness and Beautification

1. Litter Disposal

Keep our campus clean! Place discarded paper goods in the blue recycling bins in classrooms and place trash in the trashcans. Students are responsible for putting their trash in the trashcans at lunch and at other times during the day.

2. Gum

In order to maintain a strong educational focus, as well as a clean and orderly campus, gum chewing is not allowed.

3. Permanent Markers

Permanent markers are not allowed on campus. Formal consequences will be given to students who bring markers to school.

4. Violation Consequences

Acts involving graffiti, vandalism, and lack of proper trash disposal, may result in parental notification, a referral, the lowering of citizenship grades, detention, campus clean up, and possible suspension / arrest for damage to school property. In addition the parent/guardian is liable for all damages caused by the minor up to \$10,000. (*Education Code 48904*)

COUNSELING

The counselors at Bell Middle School provide proactive support for the academic and social well being of our students. They are eager to help students succeed and are available before and after school to assist in the following areas:

- a. Providing personal, social, family, academic, and career counseling.
- b. Understanding your behavior and that of other people, including how to get along with others.
- c. Learning techniques of decision-making and problem solving.
- d. Helping with study skills.
- e. Interpreting tests and inventories.
- f. Conducting counselor-facilitated conferences to help you, your parents, and your teachers to work together.
- g. Making a referral to other resources and community agencies.
- h. Conducting the Four-year Educational Plan Conference and the Promotion/Retention Intervention Plan Conference.

Parents are encouraged to first contact teachers if they have any questions about a student's academic or social achievement. Teachers will schedule conferences with parents in appropriate situations.

DISTRICT POLICIES

Juvenile Loitering

According to California law, all persons between the ages of six and eighteen must attend school. A few exceptions exist for special circumstances. Juveniles are not permitted to loiter in public places when school is in session.

Under the Daytime Loitering Ordinance a truant juvenile can be cited with an infraction, and both the juvenile and the parent will be required to appear in Juvenile Court. The court may set fines up to \$250 and require community service. On the third offense, the court may set fines up to \$1,000 and require the parents to spend up to six months in jail.

Sexual Harassment

San Diego Unified School District is committed to making all schools free from sexual harassment. This means that the district prohibits harassment made by someone from, or in, the educational setting. Sexual harassment can be such actions as: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual behaviors, verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature made by someone from, or in, the educational setting.

The district prohibits conduct that has the purpose or effect of having a negative impact on the student's academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment. The district further prohibits sexual harassment in which a student's grades, benefits, services, honors, program, or activities are dependent on submission to such conduct.

Students should report any sexual harassment to their school principal, vice principal, counselor, or teacher. The district believes that harassment issues can be resolved at the site. However, if this problem is not resolved satisfactorily, parents and students may contact the district's legal office to file a formal complaint.

To file a formal complaint, obtain a copy of the Uniform Complaint form and procedure from the school or the district's Legal Office. Remedies available outside of the district are listed in this procedure.

San Diego Unified School District will immediately undertake an effective, thorough, and objective investigation of the harassment allegations. The investigation will be conducted in a manner that respects the privacy of all parties concerned. A written report will be provided within 60 days of when the complaint is filed.

If it is determined that the policy prohibiting sexual harassment has been violated, disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, will be taken. Employees who violate this policy shall be disciplined according to personnel procedures. The person filing the complaint may pursue action in civil court.

Substance Abuse

The district's Substance Abuse policy prohibits a student from possessing, using, furnishing, and selling alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs at school. It is important that parents as well as students are aware of the new, more rigorous consequences related to this policy. For instance, violations are cumulative during a student's four years in high school, and cigarettes and tobacco are included. A student in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action at school and referred to law enforcement.

1st Offense: The student will be suspended for one to three days. The suspension may be reduced if the parent/guardian and student agree to participate in the district's Comprehensive Health program. The student will be unable to participate in extracurricular activities for 30 days.

2nd Offense: The student will be suspended for three to five days. The suspension may be reduced as stated above. The student will lose the right to participate in the above activities for a 90-day period. The school may initiate an alternative school placement.

3rd Offense: The student will be suspended for five days and a recommendation for expulsion will be made. Expulsion will not be recommended for the third tobacco violation; this will be done for the 4th offense. The Board of Education may suspend the expulsion, if the student agrees to attend a district-approved substance abuse program, which is private, public, or court supervised. Failure to complete the program will result in notification of the appropriate legal authorities. The student will be ineligible to participate in school activities, including ninth-grade activities, for one complete calendar year. The school may initiate an alternative school placement.

4th Offense: The student will be suspended for five days and a recommendation for expulsion will be made. The Board of Education may suspend the expulsion if the student agrees to enter and completes a district-approved substance abuse program, which is private, public, or court supervised. Failure to complete the program will result in notification of the appropriate authorities and reinstatement of the original expulsion order. This action is true for tobacco violations as well.

Participation in promotion ceremonies will be denied any eighth grade student in violation of the Zero Tolerance Policy. The school will initiate an alternative school placement.

We believe that the new policy and enforcement of its consequences, along with parent and community support, are essential for student well being. If you have questions regarding this policy, please contact your student's counselor or a school administrator at Bell Middle School.

Student Nondiscrimination Policy

San Diego Unified School District is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education. District programs and activities shall be free from discrimination based on sex, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, physical or mental disability, or any other unlawful consideration. The district shall promote programs which ensure that discriminatory practices are eliminated in all district activities.

Any student who engages in discrimination of another student or anyone from the district

may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, expulsion. Any employee who permits or engages in discrimination may be subject to disciplinary action, up to, and including, dismissal. Any student or parent who feels that discrimination has occurred should immediately contact a teacher or principal for resolution. If the matter is not resolved satisfactorily at the site level, contact the district's legal office.

Other Suspendable Offenses

1. Defiance/Verbal Abuse: Defiance refers to the refusal by a student to follow the directions of any school employee. This includes refusal to give legal name; to accompany the employee to the office; to give accurate, truthful information; or failure to attend disciplinary assignments. Verbal abuse refers to the use of vulgar words or phrases or other types of language which are considered uncomplimentary or demeaning when used toward another person. **Consequences:** The penalties for defiance will range from detention to a recommendation for expulsion. Students who use profanity directed toward any school personnel on campus will be suspended.

2. Displays of Affection: At Bell Middle School, we have high academic and behavior expectations for all students. Public Displays of Affection (PDA's) create distractions in the learning environment. Kissing, hugging, and touching are not acceptable at Bell Middle School. **Consequences:** Students involved will be warned about their behavior. A parent conference or suspension may be required, if the behavior continues and becomes defiant.

3. Gang Symbols: No student will use any words or nonverbal gestures, hand-signs, writings, etc., showing gang membership, affiliation or support. **Consequences:** Incidents may lead to suspension, arrest by the police, and/or removal from school.

4. Hate Crimes: No student may injure, intimidate, interfere with, oppress, or threaten any student because of that student's race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender or sexual orientation. **Consequences:** Any student found guilty of an act of hate violence will be suspended from school and the police may be contacted to take further action.

5. Intimidation: Intimidation is defined as threatening, harassing or frightening another student to the extent that the student's learning environment is disrupted. **Consequences:** A student who is found guilty of using intimidating behavior will be suspended from school.

6. Technology Misuse/Abuse: Bell Middle School uses a District-mandated *Student Network Responsibility Contract* which students and parents must sign. This contract supports the use of technology for instructional purposes. The use of the Wide Area Network and the Internet is a privilege, not a right. **Consequences:** Inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of user privileges.

7. Vandalism: Vandalism is the intentional damage or destruction of property. This act includes, yet is not limited to, writing on, defacing, breaking or damaging any school, public, or private property. Graffiti is vandalism. **Consequences:** Vandalizing the school will lead to cleanup, possible suspension or arrest by the police and removal from the school. In addition, the student, parent, or guardian will be liable for damages.

Zero Tolerance Policy

Bell Middle School adheres to the provisions of the district's Zero Tolerance Policy. The Zero Tolerance Policy defines a weapon as a firearm, pistol replica, starter pistol, stun, BB or pellet gun, knife of any size/type, dirk, dagger, razor, slingshot, explosive, and all fireworks. Any object used in a threatening manner, and not usually considered a weapon, i.e., pants' chains, will be considered a weapon under the Zero Tolerance Policy.

The first offense for possession or use of a weapon and the third offense for fighting that inflicts injury within one year are Zero Tolerance offenses. The Zero Tolerance Policy applies to trespassing on school grounds by non-enrolled students who have not obtained clearance from the school office and will result in a Zero Tolerance action on the third offense. Students who violate the Zero Tolerance Policy are subject to a police investigation and a five-day suspension pending a district expulsion hearing.

1. Explosive Devices

In San Diego County the possession or lighting of explosive devices is illegal without an official permit. The use or possession of any explosive device, regardless of size, on campus or at a school-sponsored activity will not be tolerated. A threat to use an explosive device is considered to be just as serious an offense as the actual use of such a device. **Consequences:** A student may be suspended, referred to an alternative educational program, or recommended for expulsion. The police may be contacted. In addition, students and their parents/guardians will be held liable for any damages caused by the explosion of said devices.

2. Fighting

Students who participate in fighting and/or threatening and intimidating behavior will be sent to a school administrator. Students who fight off campus before or after school are subject to the same consequences as those who fight on school grounds. **Consequences:** Students caught fighting will be referred to an administrator for suspension, a possible alternative educational program at another site, or expulsion. In each event the parents of the student involved will be notified and appropriate conferences held. Police may be contacted.

3. Robbery and Extortion

Robbery or extortion is a Zero Tolerance offense. **Consequences:** Any student who commits robbery or extortion will be suspended and recommended for expulsion. The police will be contacted.

4. Weapons

It is a misdemeanor to have a weapon on any school campus or school-sponsored activity. Any item classified as a weapon by a law enforcement agency is considered to be such by the school. This includes, yet is not limited to, knives, clubs, guns, nunchaku sticks, metal knuckles, chains, screwdrivers, or any other item that might be used as a weapon.

The Zero Tolerance Policy of City Schools specifies that weapons, violent acts, and repeated fighting on campus will not be tolerated. Any student who possesses a firearm, knife, explosive, or any other dangerous object, or who uses an object of any type in a threatening manner, is considered in violation of this policy. **Consequences:** Any

