

BEST Skills Academy



Parent/Student High School Handbook 2022-2023

28 Bolt Street, Greenville SC 29605

864-977-1285

Best-skills.org

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LEADERSHIP

Mr. Marquis Flemings
Executive Director

Mr. Robert McKenzie
Mentoring Program Director

MISSION STATEMENT

Students come for education and life skills, they leave as responsible and productive citizens.

VISION

1. Create a safe and supportive environment that promotes student learning within a diverse community.
2. Adapt teaching strategies to fit individual student needs.
3. Create a learning environment that allows for individual thinking driven by individual effort in order to help each student excel and fully participate in their education.
4. Aim to develop leaders amongst students and staff.
5. Equip students with the necessary skills to function as strong, independent, responsible adults able to overcome any challenges within society.
6. Expose students to opportunities in the workforce and higher education.
7. Give students the opportunity to become active members of the community through community service.
8. Build strong relationships with families of students as a way of improving student learning.
9. Strive to recruit, develop and grow a staff that works collaboratively and respectfully with students, families and fellow staff.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

BEST Skills Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is defined as the following and is without permission from the staff member:

- o Using another student's homework, test, quiz, project, or workbook
- o Altering or filling in information during the grading process to make corrections whether it concerns the student's own paper or someone else's
- o Obtaining or providing test or quiz questions or information in advance through unauthorized means
- o Giving information either orally, electronically, or by intentionally allowing another student to copy them
- o Receiving answers either audibly, by copying from another student, by looking at any source containing information, or by any other means
- o Possession of any unauthorized materials during an assessment or assignment

Plagiarism: submitting a work as yours that in actuality was either fully or partially produced by another source, including individuals, Internet, books, or any verbal or printed word.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Admission Process Steps

1. Please call to schedule an appointment: 864-977-1285. A visit to the BEST campus is an essential part of the process. Your visit includes a personal tour followed by an interview with a member of the Admissions Board. Please allow two hours for your tour and interview. An interview is required for all admission candidates. A virtual interview may be used for out-of-town applicants.
2. The BEST Admission Board will discuss the interview and application documents to determine if BEST can meet all the educational needs of your child. You will be informed of a decision within 2 weeks.
3. All new students are placed on a **30-Day** probationary period. During this time the student will be assessed, and cumulative records will be evaluated. The family and the child must be compatible with the goals of BEST and willing to work cooperatively with instructors and administration in order to continue to be enrolled in the program.

- * It is important that parents are forthcoming with any information that may affect an admissions decision.
- * Students needing specialized assistance due to behavioral issues or due to school reassignment due to behavioral issues, will not be considered for enrollment. Children who need specialized care due to severe academic, emotional, or disciplinary problems cannot be accepted.
- * BEST will admit students with special educational needs when we believe that we can truly serve and educate.
- * Parents wishing to enroll a child with special educational needs, must present an official diagnosis, Individual Education Plan used and any Special Education Evaluations concerning the child. Please bring these to your first meeting with school administration. This information is crucial to determining if BEST can meet the needs of your child while maintaining the safety and educational goals for all students.
- * Students for whom English is a foreign language will be assessed on an individual basis. BEST does not offer an ESL program, so ESL students may be advised to seek other schools, which may be in the better academic interest of the student.

Current Students

- * **In order to ensure continuous enrollment**, students must exhibit normal academic ability and academic achievement, emotional stability, positive social behavior, and good moral character. Students and parents alike should be willing to cooperate with instructors and administration in an effort to ensure that the educational goals of each student is met.
- * In cases where the aforementioned requirements are not being met, the Executive Director will consider and evaluate, to the best of their ability, whether the student should be accepted for re-enrollment. In such cases, each family will be notified by letter of the Executive Director's decision.

Returning Students

Students who have disenrolled from BEST Skills Academy and would like to re-enroll are subject to the same admissions requirements and fees as all first-time students. A student is not guaranteed readmission to BEST Skills after disenrolling.

ATTENDANCE

- Parents should contact the office by calling 864-977-1285 or send an email to info@best-skills.org by 8:00 a.m. if a student will be absent.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

Any acts of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or threats to a student, staff, or third parties will not be tolerated. This behavior potentially disrupts a student's ability to learn and function in a safe environment. It is the responsibility of BEST Skills Academy to ensure that students are educated in a safe and orderly environment, whether that be in the class room, on school premises or at a school-sponsored event or activity, whether or not it is held on school premises or at another program or function while the student is under the care of BEST Skills Academy.

BEST expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified and respectful manner. Students and staff have a responsibility to understand and know the policies, rules and regulations of the school.

Definitions

"Harassment, intimidation, or bullying" is any gesture, communication, electronic, verbal or written, verbal, physical, or sexual act that is intended to have the effect of:

1. harming a student, whether emotionally or physically or damaging a student's property, or causing a student to be in reasonable fear of personal harm or damage to his or her property;
or
2. verbally insulting or demeaning a student or group of students with the intention to cause disruption in, or interference with, the orderly operation of the school.

Reporting

Any student who believes he or she has been subject to bullying, harassment or intimidation should immediately file a complaint with the school administration. A complaint may also be filed by a student's parent. If a member of the staff receives any such complaint or observes any such behavior, the staff member must transmit the complaint to the Executive Director as soon as is practical.

If any reports are made anonymously, they will still be subject to the same investigative steps and measures before any action is taken.

BEST will ensure that reasonable efforts are made to prevent public disclosure of the names of all parties involved in any investigations involving harassment, intimidation, or bullying allegations, except in any instances where it would be necessary to conduct an investigation and/or comply with any statutory obligations.

Investigations

Any reports of abuse, harassment or threats will be thoroughly investigated in prompt and confident manner. The investigation will include all appropriate steps to determine what occurred and what actions need to be taken to end the harassment, intimidation or bullying and to prevent such misconduct for occurring again. The student and his or her parents will be informed of the appropriate actions taken and will be advised how to report any subsequent problems.

Consequences for Engaging in Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

If, after the investigation is completed, it is determined that harassment, intimidation or bullying occurred, the administration will take reasonable, age-appropriate and effective corrective action. Examples of corrective action that may be taken include but are not limited to disciplinary action against the aggressor up to and including termination of a staff member, or expulsion of a student. Alternative actions, such as special training, interventions, apologies, dissemination of statements to indicate that the school does not and will not tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying in any form, independent reassessment of student work/ and/or tutoring will also be considered if these are deemed to be applicable to the situation.

In some instances, individuals, including staff members, students, parents, and volunteers may also be referred to law enforcement officials. BEST will take all other appropriate steps to correct or rectify the situation.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

State law requires school administrators, instructors and support staff to report cases of suspected child abuse and neglect to the Greenville County Department of Social Services (DSS) or to the appropriate law enforcement officials. Furthermore, BEST requires that any employee who in the course of his professional or employment capacity receives information which gives him reason to believe that the physical or mental health or welfare of any child under eighteen years of age has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must himself report the suspected abuse or neglect both orally and in writing to DSS or appropriate law enforcement officials.

CLOSED CAMPUS

BEST operates a “closed campus” system. Students are not allowed to leave campus without permission from the administration and parents. No food is allowed to be delivered to students from an outside vendor.

CURRICULUM

At BEST, we believe that mentoring is just as important as academic success, which is why we focus on it as much as we do the educational aspect. A dual approach with academics allows us to prepare students, not just for the academic world but for real world success as well.

The mentoring program that is intertwined with the student's academic day, will prepare him or her for a vital role within a 21st Century society. When students graduate from high school, academics are not the only test these young men and women will face. Graduating an academically competent student does not necessarily mean a school has adequately equipped a student with the skills to interact with society. It is our desire to graduate both academically and socially excellent wise young men and women.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The success of school discipline depends upon a collaborative effort among home and school. It is the expectation at BEST that all instructors and staff will enforce the Student Behavior guidelines and abide by those guidelines in intent and spirit and that parents of students will support the efforts of the school to provide a safe and effective learning environment. It is understood that parents are ultimately responsible for their child's behavior even while the child is at school.

Practically, the vast majority of real and potential discipline problems will be dealt with at the classroom level. The kind and amount of discipline (within these stated guidelines) will be determined by the staff and Executive Director. The specifics and nature of each discipline incident and the individual personality of the student involved will be considered in the administration of discipline.

It is vital for parents and students to realize that maintaining an orderly atmosphere in the school and the classroom is critical to the learning process.

Misconduct and Discipline

The following behaviors necessitate corrective discipline. Staff may handle corrective discipline at the classroom level, but will involve the Executive Director in the discipline process for repeated or blatant misbehavior or strong attitudes. Those behaviors are:

1. Disrespect shown to any staff member. The staff member will be the judge of whether or not disrespect has been shown.
2. Dishonesty in any situation while at school, including lying, cheating, stealing.
3. Rebellion e.g., outright disobedience in response to instructions.
4. Fighting e.g., striking in anger with the intention to harm another student.
5. Unkind, obscene or profane language.

If for any of the above behaviors, or other reasons, a staff member deems it necessary for a student to receive discipline from the Executive Director, the following accounting will be observed. Within the entire school year:

1. The first time a student is sent to the Executive Director for discipline the student's parents will be contacted and given the details of the visit. The parents' assistance and support in averting further problems will be expected.
2. The second incident will be followed by a meeting with the student, student's parents, Executive Director and staff member.
3. Should a third incident arise, a two-day suspension will be imposed on the student.
4. Should a fourth incident arise, the student may be subject to expulsion from the program.
5. The Executive Director may, at his discretion, accelerate the above process and administer discipline due to a student's misbehavior or violations contained in **Student Behavior**.
6. The Executive Director may, at his discretion, bypass the above office-visit process and impose an immediate suspension or expulsion on a student who is not making progress in correcting serious misbehavior.

Serious Misconduct

There may be rare instances where the actions by a student are so egregious that it is deemed necessary to impose suspension or expulsion immediately. In those instances, the office-visit process may be by-passed and the enforcement of suspension or expulsion may be immediate.

Examples of such serious misconduct could include: acts endangering the lives of other students or staff members, gross violence/vandalism to the school facilities, violations of civil law, or any criminal activity.

Expulsion

The BEST Skills Academy Board realizes the impact that expulsion has on a student and is always handled in a case-by-case basis. The BEST Disciplinary policy places an emphasis on forgiveness and restitution as these are fundamental to us.

However, should a student and his parents not be able to eliminate the behavioral problems the student is having, the Executive Director is empowered to expel the student. The procedure will be as follows:

1. Parents will be notified immediately after the decision for expulsion.
2. The student will turn in any school owned materials and be picked up by his/her parents the same day.
3. Appeals may be made first to the Executive Director and then to the BEST Skills Academy Board.

Re-admittance

Should the expelled student desire to be readmitted to BEST at a later date, the BEST Skills Academy Board will review the student's record and may conduct interviews with the student, parent(s),

school or program student attended after expulsion from BEST and will assess whether the student will be allowed reentry into BEST.

***The Executive Director is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at his discretion.**

DRESS CODE

At BEST, we believe that personal appearance can impact how a student feels about and carries themselves. The personal appearance of every student is important in creating a safe environment that is conducive to learning and respect for one another. Students are expected to dress in an appropriate manner at BEST or while representing BEST. Personal appearances should be such that it does not distract or disrupt student work or school order. A student's clothing should not violate health and safety guidelines. The following standards apply and will be enforced.

The Executive Director may make additions to these standards.

- Clothing and/or hair should not be so extreme or inappropriate to the school setting as to disrupt the education process. Therefore, clothing deemed distracting, revealing, overly suggestive or otherwise disruptive will not be permitted.
- Wearing accessories or clothing that could pose a safety threat to oneself or others is not allowed – this includes eye, facial, tongue and lip jewelry
- Student dress and grooming must be neat and clean.
- At no time should the student's midriff be visible while standing, sitting, or participating in normal school activities (e.g., raising hand).
- Clothing that inappropriately exposes body parts is not permitted, including: low-cut shirts, tank tops, halter tops, and vests or see-through or mesh garments worn without shirts. Bra straps and bra sides must not be visible.
- Students shall not dress in such a way that partially or totally exposes underclothing.
- Trousers/slacks/shorts must be worn at waist level. Excessively baggy trousers and clothing are not permitted. Clothing may not drag the floor.
- Skirts should fit and be in good taste and be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.
- Leggings, yoga pants, and jeggings are not permitted unless the dress or shirt being worn over them is tunic length and reaches the thigh.
- Students may not wear pants that have holes that expose skin above the knee.
- Shorts may be worn; however, they must be properly fitted and in good taste and may not be shorter than 4 inches above top of knee.
- Pajamas and slippers may not be worn.
- Hats, sunglasses, hair curlers, skullies, or do-rags may not be worn.
- Proper shoes must be worn at all times.

- Clothing or jewelry that displays profanity, suggestive phrases, alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, drug advertisements, or other inappropriate phrases or symbols is not permitted.
- Extraneous articles hanging from clothing, such as chains, are not permitted.

The Executive Director will make the final decision on the appropriateness of clothing and/or a student's appearance and reserves the right to prohibit students from wearing articles of clothing, to include accessories, that lead to or may result in the disruption or interference with the school environment. A dress code violation may result in a parent being required to either pick their student up from school or bring a suitable change of clothes for their student to continue their day.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DRILLS

BEST conducts regular practice exercises with the students, faculty and staff to help ensure preparedness for Fire, Severe Weather, Security Breach, and Evacuation.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Because BEST does not provide transportation service, the responsibility for getting children safely to and from school rests on parents and their designated representatives. Parents are therefore responsible for discerning if road conditions during inclement weather or other emergencies allow for safe travel.

In the event of inclement weather, even if BEST is officially open for classes, parents who do not believe road conditions in their area permit safe travel should not attempt to get their children to school. They should keep their children at home and notify the school that they are doing so.

During times of inclement weather (or other school closing emergencies), BEST will generally follow the Greenville County public school system regarding starting delays, early dismissals and cancellations.

Parents should monitor BEST Social Media, FOX CAROLINA Channel 21 or WYFF Channel 4 television stations for announcements about Greenville County public schools starting delays, early dismissals, and cancellations.

If the notice is given that school will be delayed two hours, BEST will start at 10:30 a.m. (doors open at 10:15 a.m.)

LUNCH

All students are to bring their own lunch from home. Students are allowed to bring sensible snacks to consume during the school day. To aid with hydration, students are encouraged to bring a water bottle with a closed lid. Parents should provide students with their own plates and eating utensils (forks, spoons, etc.). A refrigerator and microwave are available for lunches only. Any items placed in the refrigerator, need to be labeled. Refrigerators will be cleaned out daily.

We make all efforts to make the school 'allergy aware' but cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment.

There will be no disruptive behavior during lunch. All trash will be thrown away, tables will be wiped down and floors will be swept at the end of lunch time.

Due to safety concerns and security issues, no outside food deliveries are allowed at any time during the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, Uber Eats, Grubhub, Doordash, BringMeThat and individual restaurant deliveries.

* Students are not allowed to leave campus during lunch

* Energy Drinks are not allowed

PICK UP AND DROP OFF

School Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The safety of each of our students is of utmost importance. Please follow these rules and refrain from any solicitation before or after school. Further, in case of inclement weather or security situations, do not interfere with safety procedures.

Students may be dropped off at school as early as 8:00 a.m. Students arriving early must stay in the car with their parents until 8:00 a.m.

Students are to be picked up at school by at least 3:10. Parents who are consistently late picking up their student will face a fine of \$1 per minute, each minute a parent is late.

During both drop-off and pick-up, we ask that parents never leave cars running or unattended or blocking an entryway to the school.

PROGRAM CALENDAR

- First Day August 15
- Last Day May 18

Important Days

Labor Day	September 5
E-Learning Day	October 17
E-Learning Day	November 7
Election Day	November 8
Thanksgiving Break	November 23-25
Christmas Break	December 19-January 2
E-Learning Day	January 13
MLK Day	January 16
Presidents Day	February 20
E-Learning Day	March 17
Spring Break	March 20-24
E-Learning Day	April 7 & 10

SEARCH

As provided by state law, anyone (student, parent, staff member, or visitor) who comes onto the BEST campus is deemed to have consented to a search of his/her property. This includes any vehicle brought onto campus. BEST is under the jurisdiction of the Greenville City Police Department. Students are responsible for all items found in automobiles that they drive onto school property. Confiscation of illegal drugs, unauthorized medications, alcohol, and weapons (including but not limited to knives and guns), whether in plain sight or discovered as the result of a search by school or law enforcement officials, will result in a recommendation for expulsion of the student.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

At BEST we believe that good discipline is essential to good learning. Each student has a right to learn and function in an environment that is free from the distractions caused by the inappropriate behavior of another. Part of our Mentoring program is teaching responsible behavior. We expect students to conduct themselves in a manner that allows them the opportunity to acquire the fullest education possible. Students should avoid any behavior that is disruptive to the good order of the school.

1. Students will show respect toward all students and school personnel.
2. Students will follow all directions the first time, when given by a staff member.
3. Students who participate in, encourage, instigate, or record a fight on campus or at any school function regardless of its location, will face disciplinary action and may be subject to arrest.
4. Students will use appropriate language and volume while on campus or at any school function.
5. Students will be respectful of school property, resources, and technology.
6. Students who threaten, coerce or intimidate, singly or in groups, any fellow students or staff will be subject to disciplinary action.
7. A student shall not possess, handle, or transmit an object that reasonably can be considered a weapon on school grounds or at any school function regardless of its location.
8. Students are expected to comply with all classroom rules and procedures.
9. Students will, at all times, be in assigned places on time and with necessary materials.
10. Students will act safely and responsibly while on campus.
11. Students who possess, use, sell or are under the influence of any drugs or alcohol at school or school functions will be subject to disciplinary action.
12. Students who possess or use tobacco products/paraphernalia, including vapor and E-cigarettes at school or school functions will be subject to disciplinary action.
13. The inappropriate display of affection, including kissing and prolonged hugging, is prohibited.
14. Student are permitted to bring cell phones, electronic/media devices to school. However, they must be on "silent" and kept in the student's backpack during school hours. Devices will be confiscated by the BEST staff if they are used during school hours. If there is an emergency and a parent needs to reach a student, they are asked to call BEST directly.
15. No use of skateboards, scooters, roller blades or any other item that jeopardizes safety is allowed on campus.

STUDENT DRIVER POLICY

Driving a vehicle to and parking at BEST is both a responsibility and a privilege granted to licensed drivers.

Student drivers

- o must have a current Student Driver Form on file in the office. A new form must be completed annually.
- o must have prior approval from BEST to park on campus
- o are to obey the traffic directions of any staff member.
- o should be courteous at all times.
- o obey the speed limits posted.
- o should not drive recklessly on BEST's campus. This includes, but is not limited to, "Jack-rabbit" starts and spinning of wheels. It is at the discretion of the Executive Director whether or not a driving behavior is considered a violation.
- o must come on campus and immediately park. No unnecessary driving around the campus should occur.
- o may not congregate or loiter in the parking lot or in the cars.
- o may not drive on school field trips.
- o who arrive at or leave campus at some time other than their scheduled arrival or departure time must have parental permission.
- o understand that BEST has the right to require the removal of any license plates, bumper stickers, decals, emblems, and/or items affixed to the car that reflect an inappropriate message.
- o acknowledge that BEST reserves the right to conduct routine searches of students' vehicles without necessary or probable cause to insure adherence to school policies.

In order for students to ride with other parents or student drivers they must do the following:

1. The student driver must have written parental notification in the office verifying that he/she has permission to have the student passengers.
2. The parent must have written parental notification from the students' parents, in the office verifying that he/she has permission to have the student as a passenger.
3. The student passenger must have written parental notification in the office verifying that he/she has permission to ride with that particular parent or student driver.

Violations of any of the above will be cause for revoking the driving privilege at the discretion of the Executive Director.

STUDENT USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES, BLOGGING, AND THE INTERNET

BEST respects the right of students to use social networking sites (e.g., SnapChat, Facebook), personal Web sites, Blogs, Wikis and other web tools (collectively “Internet Postings”) as a medium of self-expression. However, inappropriate Internet Postings by students can cause substantial disruption to the school environment. Accordingly, BEST requires that students observe the following guidelines for Internet Postings, regardless of the location of the internet access.

Prohibited Behaviors

1. Students shall not use profane, pornographic, obscene, indecent, lewd, vulgar or sexually offensive language, pictures or graphics in Internet Postings that could cause a substantial disruption to the school environment. Such postings will result in disciplinary action for the student(s) responsible.
2. Students shall not use language, pictures or graphics promoting violence or gang activity in Internet Postings.
3. Students shall not use Internet Postings to libel or defame BEST, staff members, or other students.
4. Students shall not use Internet Postings to harass, bully, or intimidate staff members or other students. Behaviors that constitute harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, comments that are derogatory with respect to race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, color, age or disability; sexually suggestive, humiliating, or demeaning comments; and threats to stalk, haze, physically injure or damage the property of another student or staff member.
5. Students shall not take and/or post pictures of staff members without obtaining written permission. Students shall not falsely represent themselves as staff member of BEST.

Consequences

A student will be disciplined for creating and/or distributing written or electronic material, including Internet Postings and texts that cause substantial disruption to school operations and/or interfere with the rights of other students or staff members. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including long-term suspension or expulsion.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

Parents wanting to withdraw their children must notify the Executive Director at least **30 days** in advance. An absence of a full week without notification or explanation will be considered an early withdrawal from BEST. Upon withdrawal, all fees paid up until that point are considered non-refundable. Parents are responsible for the full year of fees based on the financial agreement signed with the school. Parents must submit a "Withdrawal Form" stating the day of withdrawal and the reasons for withdrawal. Parents must also pay any remaining balance on their accounts at the school.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Personal Computer
- Headphones
- Folders
- Paper
- Pencils

FEES

- Application Fee- \$50.00 (non-refundable)
- Enrollment Deposit Fee- \$100.00 (one time, non-refundable)
- Installments are paid over 10 months at **\$790** per month from August 1, 2022 to May 1, 2023.
- If enrolled after August 30, 2021, payments will be adjusted accordingly.
- Payments will be for the full month regardless of what day of the month the student enrolls.
- Payment is due the **1st** of every month.
- After the **15th** of the month, a 1% late fee will be added to the account.

Payment Method: Check, Cash, Money Order, Debit or Credit Card

VALUABLES

Students are not to bring valuable items or large sums of money to school. The school cannot be held responsible for items brought to school that are lost or stolen. BEST is not responsible for the protection of personal electronic devices. This includes but is not limited to phones, smart watches, tablets, and hand-held gaming devices.

WELLNESS

***BEST Skills Academy does NOT have a school nurse.**

***All medications taken at school must be self-administered.**

Students need to stay home if they have any of the following symptoms: fever over 100 degrees, vomiting, frequent diarrhea, frequent cough, widespread rash, earache or severe headache.

Symptoms should not have been present for at least 24 hours before the student returns to school.

If a child is injured and requires first aid but does not need to leave school, a BEST staff member will assess the seriousness of the injury and decide whether to call the parents. If a child appears to be injured too seriously to be treated by first aid on campus, but the injury is not life-threatening, a school representative will call parents to see whether they want to pick up the child or want the school to call 911 to transport the child to the hospital. If a child appears to have a life-threatening injury, a school representative will call 911 immediately.

DISCLAIMER

The provisions of this handbook are not to be regarded as a contract between BEST and any student/parent. BEST reserves the right to change any of the policies, rules and regulations at any time as may be necessary in the interest of BEST. BEST also reserves the right to modify or discontinue any of the services, programs, or activities described in this handbook.