

BEST Skills Academy



Parent/Student Handbook

2025-2026

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

At BEST Skills Academy, we envision a dynamic and inclusive learning community where every student is empowered to thrive academically, grow personally, and lead confidently. Through individualized instruction, strong family partnerships, and real-world exposure, we equip students with the skills, character, and resilience needed to become responsible, engaged citizens prepared to succeed in college, careers, and life.

* In this document, the term BEST is being used to refer to BEST Skills Academy.

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 the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

At BEST, academic integrity is highly valued, and any form of academic dishonesty is strictly prohibited. Academic dishonesty is defined as the following actions when committed without the permission of a staff member:

- Using another student's homework, test, quiz, project, or workbook
- Altering or filling in information during the grading process to make corrections, whether on the student's own paper or someone else's
- Obtaining or providing test or quiz questions in advance through unauthorized means
- Giving information to another student orally, electronically, or by intentionally allowing another student to copy work
- Receiving answers by listening, copying from another student, or using any source containing unauthorized information
- Possessing any unauthorized materials during an assessment or assignment

In addition, plagiarism is considered a form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is defined as submitting work that is presented as one's own but is fully or partially produced by another source, including individuals, the internet, books, or any other verbal or printed medium. Examples of plagiarism include copying and pasting text from the internet without citation, paraphrasing without giving credit, or submitting someone else's work as your own.

We take academic integrity very seriously. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will face serious consequences, which may include receiving a failing grade, being placed on probation, or facing suspension or expulsion from BEST. Students are encouraged to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and to seek guidance from staff if they have any questions or concerns.

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Admission Process Steps

Welcome to BEST! We believe that the admissions process is an important step in ensuring we can provide the best educational experience for your child. Here are the steps to apply:

1. Schedule a Visit and Interview

Call us at **864-977-1285** to arrange a campus visit. A visit to BEST is essential to experience our facilities and meet with the Executive Director. During your visit, you'll receive a personal tour of the campus followed by an interview. Please allow approximately two hours for the full visit. All applicants must participate in an interview. If you are applying from out of town, a virtual interview will be arranged. Students applying after the school year has started are encouraged to shadow BEST for a day. A **\$50 application fee** is required if parents choose to proceed with the application.

2. Submit Records and Financial Information

Parents must request that records from the current school be sent directly to BEST. Additionally, financial documents must be submitted to our third-party provider to determine scholarship eligibility.

3. Application Review

The BEST Admissions Board will review the application, interview, school records, and financial information to determine if BEST can meet your child's educational needs. You will be notified of the decision within two weeks of all documents being received.

4. Probationary Period

All new students will be placed on a **30-day probationary period**. During this time, the student will be evaluated to ensure compatibility with BEST's goals and expectations. This period allows the family, student, instructors, and administration to determine whether the student is a good fit for our school environment.

Additional Admission Guidelines

- Parents are expected to provide all relevant information that may impact the admission decision in a timely and transparent manner.
- Students requiring specialized care due to behavioral issues or disciplinary reassignment from another school will not be considered for enrollment.
- We are unable to accept students who require intensive academic or emotional support beyond what we are equipped to provide.

- As a small, independent school with limited resources compared to public schools or larger institutions, BEST may admit students with special educational needs only when we believe we can offer appropriate support.
- Families seeking enrollment for students with special needs must provide documentation, including an official diagnosis, Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and any Special Education Evaluations at the initial meeting with school administration. This helps determine whether we can serve the child's needs while maintaining the safety and educational goals of the school community.
- Students who are non-native English speakers will be considered on an individual basis. BEST does not offer an English as a Second Language (ESL) program, and we may recommend alternative schools better suited to support the student's success.

Current Students

To continue enrollment at BEST, students must demonstrate:

- Normal academic ability and progress
- Emotional stability
- Positive social behavior
- Good moral character

Additionally, students and parents must work cooperatively with instructors and administration to meet individual educational goals.

If these expectations are not met, the Executive Director will review the student's status and determine if re-enrollment is appropriate. Families will receive notification of the decision by letter.

Returning Students

Former students who wish to re-enroll must complete the full admissions process and pay the same fees as new applicants. Re-enrollment is not guaranteed. Applications will be reviewed based on BEST's current admissions criteria at the time of application.

ATTENDANCE

BEST has adopted the following rules to ensure that students attend school regularly. Each day a student misses school, they lose hours of valuable instruction and learning opportunities that cannot be replaced. Students are counted as present only when they are physically in school. A student is considered in attendance when they are present for at least three (3) hours of the school day.

Any student who misses school must submit an excuse, written by a parent, legal guardian, or health care professional, within two (2) days of returning to school. Excuses may be submitted in writing or electronically through the BEST website. The excuse should include the reason and date of the absence. If a student does not provide a valid excuse, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. The following criteria are used to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused:

Excused Absences

- Illness that would endanger the health of the student or others. These must be verified by a physician or parent within two (2) days of the student's return.
- Illness or death in the student's immediate family, verified by a parent statement within two (2) days.
- Observance of a recognized religious holiday, approved in advance in writing by the Executive Director.
- Participation in an activity approved in advance by the Executive Director (e.g., extreme hardships). Approval should be arranged ahead of time when possible.

Unexcused Absences

- Absences without the knowledge of the parent or guardian.
- Absences with parental knowledge but without acceptable cause.

Attendance Guidelines

- Parents may submit up to 10 physician or parent notes to excuse absences for illness or immediate family emergencies.
- Any additional absences due to illness must be accompanied by a physician's note.
- The Executive Director will review and approve or deny any absences beyond ten (10), regardless of excuse status.
- A student does not exceed the 10-day absence limit until reaching their 11th absence.
- After 10 absences, the student will be placed on probation.
- If the student accumulates additional absences without approval during the probation period, withdrawal from the school will be considered.
- A student who has 10 consecutive unexcused absences with no communication will be automatically withdrawn.
- A tardy is defined as arriving after 8:30 a.m.
- Five (5) tardies = one (1) unexcused absence

Prearranged Absences

Family vacations during the school year are strongly discouraged. Parents should plan vacations during scheduled breaks and follow the school-approved calendar. A written request for a prearranged

absence must be submitted at least as many days in advance as the number of days the student will be absent. For example, a one-day absence requires at least one day of prior notice.

Unless otherwise approved by the instructor, all assignments must be submitted before the absence. Excused or prearranged absences that exceed the number of allowable absences may be counted as unexcused.

Reporting an Absence

Parents should contact the school by **8:00 a.m.** if a student will be absent. Call **864-977-1285** or email **info@best-skills.org**.

*Students are responsible for making up any missed assignments.

BULLYING, HARASSMENT, AND INTIMIDATION

At BEST, we are committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students, staff, and visitors. Any form of harassment, intimidation, bullying, or threats is strictly prohibited, as it interferes with a student's ability to learn and feel secure. This policy applies to all school-related activities, whether on or off campus, and regardless of whether the student is under the direct supervision of BEST staff.

All students are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful, dignified, and orderly manner and to follow the school's rules and policies at all times. Creating a safe learning environment is a shared responsibility between students and staff.

For the purpose of this policy, "harassment, intimidation, or bullying" includes any communication, electronic, verbal, or written, as well as any physical or sexual act that is intended to:

- Emotionally or physically harm a student
- Damage a student's property
- Cause a student to reasonably fear harm to themselves or their belongings
- Disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school through insults, threats, or demeaning language

Reporting

Reporting incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation is essential to maintaining a safe environment at BEST. Students who experience or witness such behavior should report it immediately to a member of the school administration. Parents may also file a report on behalf of their child. Staff

members who receive complaints or observe such behavior are required to report the incident to the Executive Director as soon as possible.

All reports, including anonymous ones, will be subject to a thorough investigation. BEST is committed to protecting the privacy of all individuals involved, unless disclosure is required to conduct a proper investigation or fulfill legal obligations.

Investigations

BEST takes every report of harassment, intimidation, or bullying seriously. Investigations will be prompt, thorough, and fair, with steps taken to determine the facts and respond appropriately. Corrective actions will be taken to stop the behavior and prevent future incidents.

Families will be informed of the investigation outcome and any actions taken. Students and parents will also be advised on how to report any further concerns. BEST will make every reasonable effort to protect the privacy and safety of those involved, unless disclosure is required by law.

Consequences for Engaging in Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying

If an investigation confirms that harassment, intimidation, or bullying has occurred, BEST will take age-appropriate and effective corrective action. Consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Disciplinary action against the aggressor
- Expulsion of a student
- Termination of a staff member
- Required apologies or conflict resolution
- Counseling, interventions, or additional supervision
- Written statements clarifying the school's zero-tolerance policy
- Reassignment of academic work or tutoring, where necessary

In some cases, students, staff, parents, or volunteers may be referred to law enforcement.

BEST is committed to doing everything necessary to stop harassment, intimidation, or bullying and to prevent it from happening again.

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

As required by state law, all school administrators, instructors, and support staff at BEST are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Any employee who, in the course of their professional

duties, receives information suggesting that a child’s physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be harmed by abuse or neglect is legally obligated to report the concern.

BEST requires that all such reports be made promptly and in good faith to the Greenville County Department of Social Services (DSS) or the appropriate law enforcement agency. The report must be submitted both orally and in writing.

This policy reflects BEST’s unwavering commitment to ensuring a safe, secure, and supportive learning environment for all students.

CLOSED CAMPUS

To ensure a safe and secure learning environment, BEST operates under a closed campus policy. Once students arrive at school, they are expected to remain on campus for the entire school day. Students may not leave campus without prior approval from both the school administration and the student’s parent or guardian.

Any violation of this policy, commonly referred to as “cutting school”, will result in disciplinary action.

Exceptions to the Policy

Approved exceptions include:

- Scheduled medical or dental appointments
- Situations where the student is accompanied by a parent or guardian

Leaving campus for personal reasons, such as retrieving forgotten items or running errands, is not permitted. These absences will be recorded as unexcused, and the student will not be allowed to return for the remainder of the school day unless granted special permission by the Executive Director.

CURRICULUM

In today’s world, students face increasing challenges, higher academic standards, fast-paced environments, and constant technological advancements. At BEST, we recognize these demands and have embraced a blended learning model to help students reach their full potential.

Blended learning combines face-to-face instruction with digital tools and online content. This approach increases personalization, engagement, and mastery of essential skills. Our curriculum is designed to be more rigorous than traditional programs, requiring students to show motivation, perseverance, and strong organizational skills in order to stay on track.

One of the key benefits of blended learning is that it allows instructors to work one-on-one with students, creating more opportunities for individualized support and feedback. Students are encouraged to set goals and take an active role in their learning, which promotes both accountability and ownership of their academic progress.

At BEST, we also believe that mentoring is just as important as academic success. Our program focuses on developing social skills and real-world readiness alongside traditional academics. Mentoring is integrated into the school day and directly contributes to each student's overall grade. Students can positively impact their grades by following classroom expectations, or negatively affect them by choosing not to.

Our goal is to equip students with the skills, character, and knowledge they need to succeed in both school and life. By weaving mentoring into our curriculum, we strive to graduate socially and academically excellent young men and women.

DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

The effectiveness of school discipline depends on a collaborative effort between home and school. At BEST, we expect all instructors and staff to enforce the Student Behavior Guidelines with a shared commitment to upholding both the intent and spirit of these policies. Parents are expected to support the school's efforts in maintaining a safe and effective learning environment. We recognize that parents hold the ultimate responsibility for their child's behavior, even while attending school.

In practice, most discipline issues will be resolved at the classroom level. The BEST staff and Executive Director will determine the appropriate type and level of discipline, adhering to the established guidelines. When administering discipline, we take into account the unique needs of each student and the specific nature of the incident. Both parents and students must understand that a peaceful, structured environment is essential for a successful learning process.

Misconduct and Discipline

Students who violate the guidelines in the Student Behavior section will face corrective discipline. While classroom instructors may handle minor infractions, repeated, blatant, or severe misbehavior will involve the Executive Director.

If a staff member deems it necessary for a student to receive disciplinary action, a Disciplinary Action Form (DAF) will be used. The severity of the behavior will determine which of the three types of DAFs will be issued:

- **Warning**
 - Used for minor behavior issues that require minimal effort to address.
 - No action required by the parent.
- **Informal**
 - Used for behavior that needs addressing but doesn't require parental involvement.
 - Three (3) Informal DAFs will lead to a Formal DAF, after which every incident will result in a Formal DAF.
- **Formal**
 - Reserved for serious behavior that requires action from the parent/guardian.
 - A parent meeting will be scheduled, and suspension will be discussed.
 - Three (3) Formal DAFs will result in a discussion of removal from BEST.

Additional Policies

- **Field Trips:** If a student receives two or more Disciplinary Action Forms within a quarter, they will not be allowed to participate in any field trips during that quarter.
- **Immediate Suspension or Expulsion:** The Executive Director has the discretion to bypass the DAF process and impose an immediate suspension or expulsion for severe misbehavior.
- **Missed Classwork:** Any student who is suspended is responsible for completing all missed assignments.

Expulsion

At BEST, we recognize the serious impact that expulsion can have on a student's future. Therefore, we approach each case with care and sensitivity, while still upholding our values of forgiveness and restitution. However, if a student and their parents are unable to resolve the behavioral issues leading to disciplinary action, the Executive Director may make the difficult decision to expel the student. The following steps will be followed in such cases:

1. The parents will be immediately notified of the expulsion decision.
2. The student will return all school-owned materials and be picked up by their parents on the same day.
3. The student's records will be transferred to the new school within two weeks of the expulsion.
4. Fees or payments made to BEST will not be refunded.
5. Appeals may be made to the Executive Director first, and then to the BEST Skills Academy Board.

We hope that expulsion will not be necessary and that all students will thrive both academically and behaviorally. However, if disciplinary action is required, we are committed to being fair, transparent, and compassionate in our approach.

Re-admittance

Should an expelled student wish to be readmitted to BEST at a later time, the BEST Skills Academy Board will review the student's record and may conduct interviews with the student, parents, and any school or program attended after expulsion. Based on this review, the Board will assess whether reentry into BEST is possible.

*The Executive Director is the final authority in all disciplinary matters and may waive any disciplinary rule for just cause at their discretion.

DRESS CODE

At BEST, we recognize that personal appearance can significantly impact a student's self-esteem and overall behavior. We believe that a student's appearance contributes to a safe and respectful learning environment. Therefore, we expect students to dress appropriately while at BEST or when representing BEST, in a manner that does not disrupt or distract from the learning process, and that complies with health and safety guidelines. To maintain a consistent and respectful appearance, we enforce the following standards:

The Executive Director may adjust these standards as needed.

- Clothing and Hair: Must be appropriate for a school setting and not disruptive to the educational process. Clothing that is distracting, revealing, overly suggestive, or inappropriate is not permitted.
- Accessories and Safety: Accessories or clothing that pose a safety threat to oneself or others are prohibited. This includes eye, facial, tongue, and lip jewelry.
- Neatness: Students must wear neat and clean attire at all times.
- Midriffs: Should not be visible while standing, sitting, or engaging in normal school activities such as raising hands.
- Exposed Body Parts: Clothing that inappropriately exposes body parts (e.g., low-cut shirts, tank tops, halter tops, see-through or mesh garments without shirts, vests, or clothing that exposes bra straps or sides) is not permitted.
- Undergarments: Must not be visible at any time.
- Pants and Shorts: Trousers, shorts, and slacks must be worn at waist level. Excessively baggy clothing is prohibited, and clothing should not drag on the floor.
- Skirts: Should fit properly, be in good taste, and be no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.
- Leggings/Yoga Pants/Jeggings: May only be worn if a dress or shirt of tunic length (reaching the thigh) is worn over them.
- Pants with Holes: Pants with holes that expose skin above the knee are prohibited.
- Shorts: Must fit properly, be in good taste, and not be shorter than 4 inches above the knee.

- Pajamas and Slippers: Are not permitted at any time.
- Headwear: Hats, sunglasses, bonnets, hair curlers, skullies, or do-rags may not be worn indoors.
- Footwear: Proper shoes must be worn at all times.
- Inappropriate Clothing or Jewelry: Clothing or jewelry displaying profanity, suggestive phrases, alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, drug advertisements, or other inappropriate symbols is not allowed.
- Chains and Accessories: Extraneous articles hanging from clothing, such as chains, are not permitted.

Enforcement and Exceptions

The Executive Director has the final authority in determining the appropriateness of a student's appearance. The Director reserves the right to prohibit any clothing or accessory that may disrupt or interfere with the learning environment. If a student violates the dress code, the parent may be required to either bring a suitable change of clothing or pick up their child from school.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DRILLS

At BEST, the safety and well-being of our students, faculty, and staff are our top priorities. To ensure preparedness in the event of an emergency, we conduct regular drills for various scenarios, including fires, severe weather, security breaches, and evacuations.

These drills serve multiple purposes:

- To familiarize everyone with emergency protocols and procedures
- To identify areas for improvement in our response plans
- To provide valuable opportunities to practice and refine our procedures

By conducting these drills, we help ensure that everyone knows what to do in the event of an emergency and is prepared to respond quickly and effectively.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

To advance to the next grade level at BEST Skills Academy, students must earn a total of 6 units per school year. A total of 18 units is required to advance to high school.

COURSE	UNITS
<u>English</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Science</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Social Studies</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Mentoring</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Electives</u>	<u>3</u>

Grading Scale

BEST uses a 10-point grading scale.

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: below 60

Academic and Mentoring Grading

At BEST Skills Academy, we have designed a unique approach that blends our mentoring and academic programs to create a well-rounded learning experience. We believe that mentoring plays a critical role in a student's growth and development, not just in academics but in life.

To reflect this, 20% of a student's final grade in each core class (Math, English, Science, and Social Studies) will come from their Mentoring class grade.

Example:

If a student has a Math score of 97 and a Mentoring grade of 65, the final Math grade would be calculated as:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Final Math Grade} &= (\text{Math} \times 0.8) + (\text{Mentoring} \times 0.2) \\ &= (97 \times 0.8) + (65 \times 0.2) \\ &= 77.6 + 13 \\ &= 90.6\end{aligned}$$

This approach helps students build essential life skills, like communication, time management, and goal setting, while also encouraging them to take mentoring seriously as part of their academic journey.

Late Submissions

Late submission of any assignment may result in a reduction of the final grade. The following scale applies:

- 1 Day Late: Maximum possible grade = 80%
- 2 Days Late: Maximum possible grade = 60%
- 3 Days Late: Maximum possible grade = 50%
- 4 Days Late and Beyond: 0% will be awarded

Timely submission of assignments is crucial for academic success. Late work not only affects a student's grade but may also limit their ability to keep up with future lessons.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

At BEST, the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. Since BEST does not provide transportation, it is the responsibility of parents or their designated representatives to ensure the safe travel of students to and from school each day.

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, parents should use their own judgment when deciding whether road conditions are safe for travel. If a parent believes that travel is unsafe, they should keep their child at home and notify the school of the absence.

Delays, Early Dismissals, and Closures

BEST typically follows the decisions made by the Greenville County public school system regarding:

- School start delays
- Early dismissals
- Closures due to inclement weather or emergencies

To stay informed, families should monitor:

- BEST's official social media channels
- FOX CAROLINA (Channel 21)
- WYFF News 4 (Channel 4)

Late Start Schedule

If a two-hour delay is announced:

- BEST will open at 10:30 a.m.

Remote Learning During Closures

If the school facility is closed, students may receive online assignments to ensure academic progress is not interrupted. These assignments will help students stay on track with their goals and responsibilities.

LUNCH

To ensure the safety and well-being of our students, BEST has established the following expectations for lunch and snack times:

What to Bring

- Students are required to bring lunch from home each day.
- Sensible snacks may be brought for consumption during the school day.
- Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle with a closed lid to stay hydrated.
- Parents must provide students with their own plates and utensils (e.g., forks and spoons) as needed.

Food Storage and Heating

- A refrigerator, freezer, and microwave are available for lunchtime use only.
- All items placed in the refrigerator or freezer must be clearly labeled.
- These appliances will be cleaned out daily, so items left overnight may be discarded.

Clean-Up and Behavior Expectations

- Students are expected to behave respectfully during lunch.
- Disruptive behavior is not permitted.
- At the end of lunch, students must:
 - Throw away all trash
 - Wipe down tables
 - Sweep the floor around their eating area

Restrictions

- Outside food deliveries are not permitted at any time during the school day. This includes services like Uber Eats, Grubhub, DoorDash, or restaurant drop-offs.
- Students may not leave campus for lunch.
- Energy drinks are not allowed at school.

PICK UP AND DROP OFF

School Hours

Monday–Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Drop-Off Procedures

- Students may begin arriving at 8:00 a.m.
- Please keep students in the car with their parent or guardian until that time.
- Do not drop students off before 8:00 a.m., as supervision is not available.

Pick-Up Procedures

- Students must be picked up by 3:10 p.m.
- A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for each minute after 3:10 p.m. if late pick-up becomes a recurring issue.

Safety and Courtesy Reminders

To ensure a smooth and safe experience for all families:

- Do not leave your vehicle running or unattended at any time.
- Avoid blocking the school's entryways during drop-off or pick-up.

We appreciate your cooperation in keeping our school community safe and respectful.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

- First Day August 11
- Last Day May 13

Important Days

August 11	BEST First Day
September 01	Labor Day
October 13	E-Learning
November 26	E-Learning
November 27-28	Thanksgiving Break
December 19/22	E-Learning
December 23-Jan 1	Winter Break
January 2/5	E-Learning
January 19	MLK Day
February 16	E-Learning
March 13	E-Learning

SEARCH

To maintain a safe and secure learning environment, all students, parents, staff, and visitors should be aware that, under state law, any person entering the BEST campus is subject to search. This includes personal property and any vehicle brought onto school grounds.

BEST operates under the jurisdiction of the Greenville City Police Department, and the school reserves the right to conduct searches as needed to protect the safety of everyone on campus.

Student Responsibility

- Students are fully responsible for the contents of any vehicle they bring onto school property.
- It is expected that students ensure no prohibited or illegal items are in their possession or vehicle at any time.

Prohibited Items

If any of the following are found on a student, in a student's possessions, or in their vehicle, whether in plain sight or discovered during a search conducted by school or law enforcement officials, it will result in a recommendation for expulsion:

- Illegal drugs

- Unauthorized medications
- Alcohol
- Weapons (including but not limited to knives and firearms)

BEST takes violations of the law and school policy seriously. These measures are in place to protect the safety and well-being of the entire school community.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

At BEST, we use the MAP Growth assessment, a nationally recognized standardized test, to measure each student's academic progress and growth over time.

To gain a clear and comprehensive understanding of student development, the MAP Growth test is administered three times per year:

- Beginning of the year
- Middle of the year
- End of the year

These assessments help our instructors identify academic strengths and areas for growth, allowing them to provide more targeted and personalized instruction throughout the school year.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

At BEST, we believe that a positive learning environment begins with consistent and respectful behavior. Our goal is to provide every student with the best opportunity to learn and succeed in a setting that is safe, orderly, and supportive.

Through our Mentoring Program, students learn the value of responsibility, self-control, and integrity. All students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that reflects these values and contributes to a respectful and cooperative school community.

Behavior Expectations

To maintain a safe and respectful environment, students are expected to follow these guidelines:

1. Show respect to all students and school personnel.
2. Follow all directions from staff members the first time they are given.
3. Fighting, encouraging, instigating, or recording a fight on campus or at any school function, regardless of location, will result in disciplinary action and may lead to arrest.

4. Use appropriate language and speak at an appropriate volume while on campus or at school events.
5. Respect school property, resources, and technology.
6. Threatening, coercing, or intimidating other students or staff, whether alone or in a group, will not be tolerated.
7. Do not possess, handle, or transmit any object that could be reasonably considered a weapon on school grounds or at school-related events.
8. Follow all classroom rules and procedures.
9. Be in assigned areas on time and come prepared with necessary materials.
10. Act safely and responsibly at all times on campus.
11. Possessing, using, selling, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at school or school functions will result in disciplinary consequences.
12. Possession or use of tobacco, vapes, E-cigarettes, or related paraphernalia is prohibited.
13. Inappropriate displays of affection, including kissing or prolonged hugging, are not allowed.
14. Cell phones and personal electronic/media devices must be silenced and stored in backpacks during school hours. Devices will be confiscated if used during the school day. In case of an emergency, parents should call the school directly.
15. The use of skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, or similar items is not permitted on campus.

By following these guidelines, students contribute to a positive, respectful, and focused school culture, one where everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

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

At BEST, we understand that the internet is a powerful tool for communication, creativity, and self-expression. Social networking sites, personal blogs, wikis, and other digital platforms, collectively referred to as Internet Postings, are widely used by students. While we support students' rights to express themselves online, we also recognize that inappropriate content can negatively impact the school community and cause significant disruption.

To promote a safe, respectful, and responsible online culture, students are expected to follow these guidelines at all times, regardless of where or when the internet is accessed.

Prohibited Online Behaviors

Students may not use Internet Postings to engage in the following behaviors:

1. Using profanity, pornography, vulgar, or sexually offensive language, images, or graphics that could disrupt the school environment.
2. Promoting violence or gang activity through words, images, or symbols.

3. Defaming or insulting BEST, any staff member, or another student.
4. Harassing, bullying, or intimidating others online. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Derogatory comments based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, color, age, or disability
 - b. Sexually suggestive, humiliating, or threatening messages
 - c. Threats of stalking, physical harm, or property damage
5. Taking or posting pictures or videos of staff members without written permission, or falsely representing oneself as a BEST staff member.

Consequences

Any student who creates, posts, or distributes content that causes substantial disruption to the school environment or violates the rights of others will be subject to disciplinary action. Consequences may include:

- Confiscation of devices
- Loss of privileges
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Students are encouraged to think carefully before posting online and to uphold the same values of respect, responsibility, and maturity in digital spaces as they do on campus.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL

We understand that circumstances may arise that require a family to withdraw their child from BEST. If this becomes necessary, parents must follow the proper withdrawal process to ensure a smooth and timely transition.

Withdrawal Process

To officially withdraw a student from BEST, parents must:

1. Notify the school administration of the decision to withdraw.
2. Complete and submit an official Withdrawal Form.
3. Return all school-owned materials, including textbooks, devices, and uniforms (if applicable).
4. Pay a \$200 withdrawal fee.

Once these steps are completed, the student's academic records will be transferred to their new school.

We recognize that the decision to withdraw a child is not easy. If you are considering withdrawal or need assistance with the process, please reach out to the Executive Director for guidance and support.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Personal Computer
- Headphones
- Folders
- Paper
- Pencils
- Water Bottle
- TI-30X Calculator

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition for the 2025–2026 academic year at BEST Skills Academy is \$10,000.

Application Fee

A \$50 non-refundable application fee is required as part of the admissions process.

Payment Schedule

To ensure smooth financial operations, monthly tuition payments are due on or before the 15th day of the previous month.

For example:

- November tuition is due by October 15th
- December tuition is due by November 15th, and so on.

Timely payment is essential for maintaining enrollment and ensuring access to all academic and extracurricular programming.

Available Discounts

BEST offers tuition discounts for families who choose to pay in advance:

- 10% discount for families who pay the full annual tuition upfront ($\$10,000 - 10\% = \$9,000$)
- 5% discount for families who pay in two lump sums (one per semester)

Please contact the Executive Director if you have questions about payment options or need assistance setting up a payment plan.

VALUABLES

At BEST, we encourage all students to be mindful of their personal belongings, particularly valuable items and large sums of money. While we make every effort to maintain a safe and secure environment, BEST cannot be held responsible for the loss, theft, or damage of personal belongings brought onto school premises.

Electronic Devices

The school is not responsible for the protection of personal electronic devices, including but not limited to:

- Phones
- Smart watches
- Tablets
- Hand-held gaming devices

We recommend that students avoid bringing these items to school unless they are necessary for educational purposes.

Recommendations for Safety

To ensure the safety and security of their belongings, students should take the necessary precautions to protect their items. If you have concerns or need further guidance, please feel free to reach out to the school administration for assistance.

WELLNESS

At BEST, the safety and well-being of our students is our top priority. While we do not have a school nurse, we have established policies to ensure that students receive the necessary care when needed.

When to Stay Home

To help maintain a healthy learning environment, we request that students stay home if they experience any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 100 degrees
- Vomiting
- Frequent diarrhea
- Persistent cough
- Widespread rash
- Earache

- Severe headache

Students must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

Injuries and Medical Attention

In the event of an injury, a BEST staff member will assess the severity of the situation and determine the appropriate course of action.

- First Aid: If the injury can be treated on campus, we will provide first aid and inform parents if necessary.
- Serious Injury: For injuries that are serious but not life-threatening, we will contact the parents to decide whether they want to pick up the child or if they prefer the school to call 911 for transport to the hospital.
- Life-Threatening Injury: In the event of a life-threatening injury, we will immediately call 911.

Medications

Students must self-administer any medications they require during school hours. Parents should ensure their child is prepared to do so.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our medical policies, please do not hesitate to contact our administration.

DISCLAIMER

At BEST, we are committed to providing the best education and support for our students and families. As part of this commitment, we regularly review and update our policies, rules, and regulations to ensure that we are offering a safe and enriching environment for our community.

Changes to Policies and Programs

Please note that the provisions in this handbook should not be construed as a contract between BEST and any student or parent. While we strive to provide accurate and up-to-date information, we reserve the right to modify or discontinue any of the services, programs, or activities described in this handbook at any time. This includes changes to:

- Policies
- Rules and regulations
- Curriculum
- Extracurricular activities
- Other offerings

We understand that changes to our policies and programs may raise concerns for our students and families. We will make every effort to communicate any updates in a timely and transparent manner. If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this handbook, please feel free to contact our administration for clarification.