BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

FOCUS

Welcome to the 2026-2027 School Year

Creating the leaders of the next generation!

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BHHS NEWSLETTER VOLUME 38, NO. 1 SEPTEMBER 2026

“FOCUS” THE HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

FOCUS is the Byram Hills High School newsletter. It is generally published twice each month, on the first and fifteenth of each full month of school. One edition may be published during months that include major school holidays.

The first edition of the month includes articles of interest, important announcements about academic and extracurricular activities, school counseling information, and a monthly calendar specific to the high school. The second edition provides calendar updates and other timely announcements.

We encourage parents and guardians to review the article titles in each edition and read the sections that apply to their families so that they remain informed about high school programs, procedures, and activities.

The current edition of FOCUS can always be found through the navigation menu on the high school homepage or on the FOCUS page of the district website. Families will receive a ParentSquare notification each time a new edition is posted.

Anyone who would like to receive a printed copy may contact the principal’s secretary, Ms. Lisa Fanelli, at 914-273-9200, extension 4910.

STUDENT AND PARENT PORTAL

The Student and Parent Portal is an important communication tool for students and families. It can be accessed through the Byram Hills Central School District website by selecting the Portal link at the top of the homepage.

The portal is available outside regular school hours. It is closed during the school day to encourage students to communicate directly with their teachers about assignments, grades, and other academic questions.

DISTRACTION-FREE SCHOOL PROCEDURES

In accordance with New York State law and Board of Education Policy 5695, student internet-enabled devices, including smartphones, smartwatches, and tablets, must remain turned off and stored throughout the school day.

The school day begins with Office Hours at 7:45 a.m. and concludes with the final bell at 2:25 p.m. The restriction applies during passing time, lunch, free periods, and all other portions of the school day.

Students and families should review the updated procedures in the Community Handbook and the Frequently Asked Questions document available on the high school website. Information regarding storage, emergencies, parent communication, and violations will also be reviewed with students during the opening days of school.

MORNING DROP-OFF AND AFTERNOON PICKUP

The three lanes on Tripp Lane will again be used to help manage traffic during arrival and dismissal.

Morning drop-off and afternoon pickup will take place in the Athletic Circle. Parents and guardians dropping students off in the morning should proceed directly into the Athletic Circle. Those picking students up in the afternoon should line up in the designated parking lot area.

School buses will use the middle lane during arrival and dismissal. Drivers must follow the directions of school personnel managing traffic on campus.

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE DISTRICT WEBSITE

Byram Hills High School continues to support the district's sustainability goals by reducing unnecessary paper use.

FOCUS, the Community Handbook, college planning guides, the Course Selection Booklet, the District Code of Conduct, and other important documents are available through the district website.

Families are encouraged to visit the high school homepage regularly for news, announcements, calendars, forms, and updated information.

ORIENTATION FOR NEW STUDENTS

Students New to the District

All students who are new to the Byram Hills Central School District are invited to attend New Student Orientation on Monday, August 24, at 10:00 a.m.

Students will meet in the College and Career Center and receive an orientation from the assistant principals, school counselors, and current BHHS students. The program will help students become familiar with the building, school procedures, and available supports before the school year begins.

Incoming Ninth Graders

Incoming ninth-grade students may attend a building tour led by our Senior Mentors on either:

- Thursday, August 20, at 11:00 a.m.
- Monday, August 24, at 11:00 a.m.

Both tours will begin in the cafeteria.

Students may attend either tour. Their parents do not need to attend a Principal's Coffee for the student to participate.

Ninth-grade orientation will continue on the first day of school, Wednesday, September 2, during Office Hours and first period. Incoming ninth graders should arrive by 7:45 a.m. and report to their mentor classes.

Students should have access to their schedules on the first day.

PRINCIPAL'S COFFEES

One of our most successful communication structures is the informal gathering of parents and the principal known as the Principal's Coffee. These meetings provide parents and guardians with an opportunity to learn more about the high school, ask questions, and strengthen communication between families and the school.

Each Principal's Coffee will be recorded and shared with families through ParentSquare following the meeting. Unless otherwise announced, meetings will be held in Room 100A of the Learning Commons.

Incoming Ninth Grade Parents

- Thursday, August 20, 2026 | 9:00–10:00 a.m.
- Monday, August 24, 2026 | 9:00–10:00 a.m.

These two sessions will be held in the Learning Commons. The same information will be presented at each meeting. Attendance is optional.

All Parents and Guardians

- Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, October 27, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, January 26, 2027, at 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, March 30, 2027, at 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, April 27, 2027, at 9:00 a.m.
- Tuesday, May 18, 2027, at 9:00 a.m.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The first day of school for students is Wednesday, September 2.

Students should review their schedules before arriving and bring their district-issued Chromebooks fully charged.

Incoming ninth graders should arrive by 7:45 a.m. and report to their mentor classes for an extended orientation during Office Hours and first period.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS

Byram Hills High School will hold two Back-to-School Nights:

- Wednesday, September 9, at 6:00 p.m. for parents and guardians of students whose last names begin with A through M
- Wednesday, September 16, at 6:00 p.m. for parents and guardians of students whose last names begin with N through Z

Teachers will present the same information during both sessions. Parents and guardians with more than one child at the high school may attend both evenings as needed.

Additional logistical information will be shared before the events.

GRADE 9 SCHOOL COUNSELING PARENT MEETING

The School Counseling Department will hold a meeting for parents and guardians of ninth-grade students on Monday, September 14, at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting will provide families with information about the transition to high school, academic planning, available supports, and the role of the school counselor.

Additional information will be shared by the School Counseling Department.

HOMECOMING DANCE AND SPIRIT WEEK

Student Government and the Grade Activity Board are excited to host our new Homecoming Dance this year. It will be held on Saturday, September 26. The dance will kick off our Spirit Week, which will continue through Saturday, October 3.

The Traveling Pep Rally will take place on Monday, September 28, at 7:00 a.m.

A complete schedule of Spirit Week themes, athletic events, and other activities will be shared with students and families before the week begins.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP

The School Counseling Department will hold a College Admissions and Financial Aid Workshop on Monday, September 28, at 6:00 p.m.

Additional information regarding the program and intended audience will be shared by the School Counseling Department.

WIFI AND DISTRICT-ISSUED CHROMEBOOKS

Byram Hills High School provides students with access to district-issued Chromebooks and the district wireless network.

Students are expected to bring their Chromebooks to school each day fully charged and ready for use. Chromebooks should be used in accordance with district policy, the Community Handbook, and the district technology agreement.

Personal internet-enabled devices remain subject to the district's distraction-free school procedures. Students may not use personal devices during the school day unless an exception is specifically permitted under district policy.

FOOD SERVICE

The district's food service program provides meals to students throughout the school year. Menus, payment information, meal prices, and nutritional information are available through the Food Services section of the district website.

FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEAL PROGRAM

Information about the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program is available through the district website. Applications may also be obtained through the Main Office or District Office. Families are encouraged to review the eligibility information and submit an application when appropriate.

CLUB FAIR

The BHHS Club Fair will be held on Wednesday, September 16. Ninth graders will attend with their mentor classes, while students in grades 10–12 will attend during lunch. With more than 50 clubs and activities, there is something for every student. Don't miss the opportunity to get involved!

SAT AND ACT EXAM DATES

SAT and ACT examination dates are included on the district calendar and are also available through the official testing organizations.

The district calendar lists the following early testing dates:

- SAT on Saturday, August 22
- SAT on Saturday, September 12
- ACT on Saturday, September 19

Students and families should check the official testing websites for registration deadlines, locations, and updated testing requirements.

Please contact your child’s school counselor with questions about either examination.

DISTRICT CODE OF CONDUCT

The District Code of Conduct and Board of Education policies are available through the district website.

As the school year begins, parents and guardians are encouraged to review the Community Handbook and District Code of Conduct with their children. A shared understanding of school expectations helps support a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The district’s attendance policy requires students to attend at least 85 percent of the scheduled meetings of a course to receive course credit.

Both excused and unexcused absences count toward the attendance requirement. When a student misses more than 13 minutes of a class period, the student is considered absent from that class for purposes of the policy.

The complete attendance policy, including the maximum number of absences permitted for full-year courses, semester courses, Physical Education, and senior courses, is available in the Community Handbook.

Students and families should review the policy carefully at the beginning of the school year.

CLOSED CAMPUS

Byram Hills High School operates as a closed campus.

Students are expected to remain on campus for the duration of their scheduled school day except in the case of an approved appointment, emergency, or other circumstance authorized by an administrator.

Leaving campus for work, transporting siblings, retrieving forgotten materials, or completing personal errands is not permitted.

All requests to leave school must follow the attendance procedures outlined in the Community Handbook and must be approved when required by an administrator.

We appreciate the cooperation of students and families as we work to maintain a safe and productive school environment.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students are responsible for securing their personal belongings throughout the school day.

Items are most likely to be lost or taken when they are left unattended in hallways, classrooms, locker rooms, or unlocked lockers. Students should avoid bringing unnecessary valuables to school and should secure their belongings at all times.

Students must use only the locker assigned to them. Locks placed on unassigned lockers may be removed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION LOCKS

All students enrolled in Physical Education and all students participating on athletic teams must provide their own combination lock.

Only combination locks may be used for gym lockers.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is an essential part of the learning process and the district's mission.

Students are expected to complete their own work, follow teacher directions, properly acknowledge the ideas of others, and use artificial intelligence and other digital tools only as permitted by their teachers.

Parents and guardians are asked to support the school by ensuring that attendance decisions are not used to help students avoid assessments, presentations, or other academic responsibilities.

The district's academic integrity expectations are outlined in the Community Handbook and District Code of Conduct.

BELL SCHEDULE

Byram Hills High School operates on an eight-day cycle. Each school day includes five 63-minute instructional periods, a 43-minute lunch period, and Office Hours from 7:45 to 8:15 a.m. The regular bell schedule and delayed-opening schedules are available through the high school website and district calendar.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

All students are invited to apply to run for office and represent their classmates through Student Government. Information about officer positions and the application process is available on the high school website. An information session for students interested in running will be held on Tuesday, September 8, during Office Hours in the Lecture Hall. Elections will be held on Friday, September 25.

PARKING PRIVILEGES

Student parking is a privilege. Students who park on campus must follow all parking procedures outlined in the Community Handbook.

Senior Parking

The senior parking application will be available on the Byram Hills High School website beginning August 26, 2026.

Seniors who complete the application and submit all required documentation may pick up their parking tags beginning September 2, 2026.

Students must display a valid 2026-2027 parking tag while parked on campus. Parking tags issued during the previous school year are no longer valid.

Junior Parking

Juniors are not permitted to park in the student lot during the regular school day until senior internships begin.

The junior parking application will be available on the high school website beginning April 26, 2027.

Eligible juniors who complete the application and receive approval may begin parking on campus on May 3, 2027.

Additional instructions and documentation requirements will be included with each application.

DRIVER EDUCATION

Byram Hills High School will not offer the Golden Crown Driver Education Program during the Fall 2026 semester.

We are exploring other providers that meet our expectations for organization, communication, and student safety. Families will receive an update regarding the possibility of a Spring 2027 program as more information becomes available.

Driver Education questions may be directed to Assistant Principal Jennifer Spirelli at 914-273-9200 or JSpirelli@byramhills.net.

CHALLENGE SUCCESS

Since 2017, Byram Hills High School has partnered with Challenge Success, a nonprofit organization affiliated with the Stanford University Graduate School of Education.

Challenge Success works with school communities to elevate student voices and implement research-based strategies that support student well-being, engagement, and belonging.

The BHHS Challenge Success Committee includes students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators. The committee examines the student experience and recommends ways to support healthy, meaningful, and appropriately challenging learning.

Additional information about the committee and its work is available through the Challenge Success page on the high school website.

GREEN TIP

Bring a reusable water bottle to school each day. Using a refillable bottle reduces single-use plastic waste and helps keep disposable bottles out of our classrooms, hallways, and recycling bins. Water bottle filling stations are available throughout the building.