

Bridgeport International Academy

Student/Parent Handbook

2026 - 2027



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Welcome

Dear Students and Parents:

Over the years, Bridgeport International Academy (BIA) has gained a growing reputation as an outstanding college preparatory school, with a global student body and a challenging curriculum, while maintaining the individualized attention of a small, select institution. Accredited by the prestigious New England Association of Schools and Colleges, the nation's oldest accrediting association, BIA has continued to forge a path to even stronger programs and personnel, with the student at the center of our concerns.

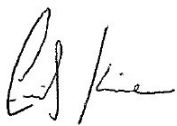
Welcome all new and returning students. May this year provide you with many new opportunities to create memories to carry with you throughout life. You play a significant role in this school, and I am grateful we get to share this next year with you.

Students, parents, and teachers are the foundation of the Academy, continuing to establish traditions and set ever-higher standards. Each year, students and faculty members add even greater diversity to the Academy.

We are very proud of the accomplishments of our students. You represent a diverse new generation of leaders who are willing to overcome prejudices and preconceived notions about people of other races, religions, nationalities and ethnic groups. You can be part of the world's hope for peace and compassion for those in need. At BIA, we are a mini-global community where the international relationships you form will make a lifetime impact on you and on the broader community.

While at BIA, please try your wings, discover your potential, and experience the excitement of being young. At times you may feel academically or personally challenged or vulnerable. It is at those moments that you will have the greatest opportunity to discover and develop your internal values. As your own moral character evolves, you will know who you are and what you believe as a young adult. We hope that BIA will be instrumental in creating a path to help you to find your true self and to understand the world around you.

As we move forward throughout the school year, our plans include new efforts to reach out into the local community, as well as to enhance the academic program to help international students learn English and adapt to American culture while preparing for college and life beyond. As the Academy grows, you will always be a part of its foundation and history.



Emily Kise
Principal

History

Bridgeport International Academy is a private, college preparatory high school committed to academic excellence, moral development, and the advancement of international, intercultural, and inter-religious awareness and understanding. The name Bridgeport International Academy was adopted to reflect a desire to fulfill its mission as a school for international, as well as domestic students. Although many students are from the local community, BIA also draws many students from overseas, as well as U.S. students from outside the Bridgeport area; these international and non-local domestic students are housed either in a BIA dormitory or with a host family.

In 1997, Bridgeport International Academy opened its doors on the campus of the University of Bridgeport (UB). From the beginning, the Academy sought to create a close bond with the University of Bridgeport and the diverse community around the BIA/UB campus. On December 3, 1997, the Academy received approval from the Connecticut State Board of Education to operate a residential dormitory for high school students.

On June 21, 2001, the Academy obtained state approval from the Department of Education of the State of Connecticut. BIA received approval from the Immigration and Naturalization Service on December 29, 2001 to issue I-20 forms, which enable international students to obtain F-1 student visas.

An Intensive English or English Language Learner (ELL) curriculum prepares international students to be mainstreamed into regular classes as soon as possible. Through the ELL program, the international component of the school was expanded.

In 2002, the Academy introduced a “character education/community service” curriculum, which sought to teach values in a variety of modalities. A community service requirement of twenty-five hours per year was added.

As a small school, BIA offers students an opportunity to tailor their academic and social activities into an environment in which they can thrive. Students are offered classes where their creative abilities are challenged. Qualifying juniors and seniors are able to take university courses at local universities and colleges. This allows greater diversity in course offerings, as well as the opportunity for the student to earn dual credits for high school and college. In certain disciplines, these college courses are offered in lieu of AP courses. Some students complete internships for credit as well.

In 2006 and 2007, BIA renovated the Seaside Institute Building, and in August 2007 moved into that new facility, which is its primary office and classroom building.

In 2007, BIA was accredited by New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). As a prestigious accrediting institution, founded in 1885, NEASC recognizes more than 2,000 public and independent schools, colleges and universities in six states and American and international schools in more than 60 nations worldwide.

On December 5, 2007, the Academy was re-certified by the US government to issue I-20 forms, in order for international students to obtain F-1 student visas.

On September 14, 2015, BIA was again re-certified by the School Certification Branch of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to issue I-20 forms.

On June 23, 2016, BIA was granted continued accreditation for ten years by NEASC. On September 2, 2016, BIA again received the full ten-year approval by the State of Connecticut to operate as a nonpublic school.

On April 22, 2017, as part of its 20th Anniversary Celebration, BIA had an official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of Spurgin Hall, a large, multipurpose room that serves many needs for BIA as well as the larger community. During this same 20th Anniversary Celebration, BIA inaugurated the “Four Pillars Awards” in recognition of the key pillars of BIA’s mission: academic excellence, character development, creativity, and global citizenship.

In the spring of 2019, BIA entered the prestigious Halo Awards for its drama production: *Finding Mulan*., a play written by a BIA faculty member. The Halo Awards recognize top high school theatre productions in Connecticut. BIA was nominated for four awards including, “Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical” “Best Makeup and Hair,” and "Fearless Award." The school won the “Best Costume Design.”

In the fall of 2020, the city of Bridgeport recognized BIA for its work in the community. A group of students went to City Hall to be recognized by a city official. Students were interviewed by local newscaster Frank Recchia and the event was broadcasted on the local news channel: News 12.

In 2021, BIA partnered with Bridgeport Prep Basketball to enroll talented prep basketball players preparing to play at D1 colleges and even professional careers. When not engaged in their studies, these talented players, whole hail from countries in Africa, the Mideast, and the United States, play on travel teams that compete throughout the American South, Southwest, East, and Midwest.

In 2023, BIA achieved the enrollment of students from its 42nd country, a remarkable achievement for a small school. BIA has been ranked, by Niche.com, the number 1 school in Connecticut for diversity for several years (an A+ rating), as well in 2026 with an A+ rating for Academics, an A+ rating for College Prep, and an A+ overall rating.

In the spring of 2023, after a three-year hiatus in its public theatre productions due to COVID, BIA again performed on the big stage, *A Little Piece of Heaven*. This time BIA received eight Halo Award nominations (including hair and makeup design, best running crew, best female performance in an ensemble production, and best contemporary play), with a BIA student winning first place for "Best Comic Male Performance in a Play." In 2024, BIA’s play, *Clue*, received seven Halo Award nominations, including a BIA student winning Best Stage Management. In 2025, BIA’s play, *Twelve Angry Men*, garnered four Halo Award nominations, with a group of BIA students winning Best Hair and Make-up Design/Execution. In 2026, BIA’s play, *A Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, earned three Halo Award nomination, including again winning Best Hair and Make-up Design/Execution.

In the spring of 2025, BIA graduated a record 43 students, from ten different nations, among its 104 total students. These students also completed 57 college courses while at BIA. In May of 2026, BIA’s 27th graduating class included 40 seniors and 2 postgraduate students.

Vision And Mission Statement

Bridgeport International Academy's mission is to provide a college preparatory educational program for students of diverse cultures and nationalities that fosters academic excellence, character development, creativity, and global citizenship.

The Academy fulfills its mission by: (1) offering a holistic educational experience, emphasizing the study of core academic subjects, oral and written communication skills, character education, community service, technological skills, fine and digital arts, performing arts, and physical fitness; and (2) seeking to instill in each student a passion for learning while promoting respect for and harmonious relations with other people and cultures in a safe, nurturing, and positive educational environment.

The Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age or any other basis prohibited by federal, state or local law. This policy applies to, but is not limited to, admission, financial aid, educational policies, hiring and employment practices, use of school facilities, and other school-administered programs.

Location and Facilities

The Academy is located adjacent to the campus of the University of Bridgeport, fifty miles from New York City. Seaside Park and Long Island Sound mark the southern boundary with sandy beaches. BIA's beautiful setting and adjacency to the university provide Academy students with a rich environment for studies in a variety of disciplines and for the enjoyment of recreation and the arts. Picturesque Seaside Park also offers a number of facilities for supplementing BIA's sports program, including softball and soccer fields.

All offices and classrooms are located in BIA's four-story Seaside Institute Building at 285 Lafayette Street. Classrooms include: English classroom, intensive English or ELL classroom, science classroom, mathematics classroom, two computer laboratories, language rooms, social science classroom, assembly room, lunch room, nurse's office, and an art and computer graphics studio. BIA also has a 2000 sq ft multipurpose room (Spurgen Hall). The Academy's computer laboratories feature networked PC computers connected to the Academy's server and a dedicated line connecting the Academy to learning centers using the Internet. Many of the classrooms include state-of-the-art equipment, including SmartBoard technology, and the graphics studio includes Macintosh computers and a stage for the studio's TV and video productions.

BIA facilities also include two dormitories. Both dorms are located in the Seaside Institute Building. The girls' dormitory is located in the North Wing, in beautiful, newly renovated, interconnected loft apartments. The boy's dormitory is located in the South Wing, in large, newly renovated apartments. Both dormitories have internet access. The residential life coordinators ("dorm parents") live in an apartment adjacent to both dorms, and a number of support staff live on the floor, including many in the dorms with the students, to assist with the residential life program. The residential life coordinators and support staff work together to create a family atmosphere and provide regular supervision and support for dorm students.

The BIA building is open to students at 7:30AM every school day. Students arriving to school early have access to the computer room for homework and school preparation purposes. Students can stay after school and work in the computer room until 4:00PM if they are engaged in educational activities. The school building officially closes at 4:00PM. Students must depart by that time unless they are linked to a club and its advisor. Students waiting for a ride home after this time can be picked up at the UB library.

BIA's proximity to the University of Bridgeport provides access to the following facilities:

- *Marina Dining Hall* offers a wide selection of cafeteria-style meals. For dormitory students, a Marina Dining Hall meal ticket is included as part of their tuition and boarding cost. Day students can purchase a lunch plan through BIA at a discounted rate.
- *Wheeler Recreation Center* offers facilities for students to enjoy recreational sports. BIA Physical Education classes are held there. The center includes a 25-meter pool with two diving boards, a sauna and a steam room. The field house is a multi-purpose area for tennis, basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, jogging, exercise machines, and martial arts.
- *Arnold Bernhard Arts and Humanities Center* is the center of cultural life for the Bridgeport community. Facilities include the 950-seat *Andre and Clara Mertens Theater*, the *Littlefield Recital Hall*, and the *Art Gallery*. BIA holds annual theater productions in Mertens Theatre and has held commencement exercises in Littlefield Recital Hall.
- *Magnus Wahlstrom Library* supports student and faculty research with 265,000 volumes of books and bound journals, 1,000,000 microforms, 1,200 periodical/index subscriptions, over 80 electronic databases, around 70 PCs, and 100+ docking stations, and a collection of educational videos and music CDs. The library has open stacks for easy access and browsing.
- *Charles A. Dana Hall* offers students a chance to use professional science laboratories a few times a year. BIA science classes are allowed to hold one lab a quarter at the university, schedule permitting.
- *The John J. Cox Student Center*. UB's student center has often served as sites for BIA cultural and community events, including hosting BIA graduation ceremonies in the expansive Social Room, with its large stage, and functions in the Private Dining Room (or "Great Room"). The student center also provides areas for student study, a bookstore, a small cafeteria, a Subway restaurant, and areas for recreation (ping pong, pool, bowling, etc.).
- *Knights Field* is a state-of-the-art athletic facility with artificial turf playing surface; at times, it serves as a site for NCAA tournament soccer games.

Admissions, Costs, and Financial Aid

The Admissions Committee is responsible for reviewing all applications for admission. A decision to offer admission relies upon a balanced consideration of grades, letters of recommendation, a student questionnaire/writing sample, a parent/guardian statement, the student's interests, and a personal interview where possible (including interviews via Zoom for international applicants). An entrance exam is given to domestic applicants applying for the ninth grade.

Applications and admission materials are available on the BIA website, as well as through the Academy directly. An online application, accessible through the website, offers a streamlined process, but applicants may also submit forms via mail, fax, or email. Application fees may be paid through the BIA website or directly by check, cash, credit card, or money order.

If a student has been dismissed from a previous school, parents must inform the BIA administration and discuss the situation thoroughly prior to applying for admission. Records or information knowingly withheld are grounds for subsequent dismissal.

Every effort is made to keep the cost of tuition affordable. BIA is a nonprofit educational institution dedicated to providing a top-quality education and environment for students. In keeping with this nonprofit orientation, and recognizing that BIA provides an invaluable service to students and their families, we strive to keep our expenses low in order to make this unique opportunity as widely available as possible. In the same sense, however, it is important for families of enrolled students to recognize they have a fiscal responsibility to meet all payment schedules. Failure to keep payments current can result in additional assessment of late fees or dismissal from the Academy.

Please note that tuition payments do not include private tutoring, and students who take university courses on the UB campus will pay a fee for each university course. There is a BIA technology fee of \$100 per year, a \$100 textbook fee, and a \$50 P.E./activities fee. Purchase of attire meeting BIA's school code is the responsibility of the parents.

Limited financial aid packages may be available. It is the responsibility of students and their families to check with BIA's financial aid office regarding applications for financial aid. Such is to be done prior to enrollment for new students and prior to the end of the school year for returning students. All financial aid packages are reviewed on an annual basis; students must remain in good standing at BIA for scholarships to be renewed.

Costs for immunization and health care are the responsibility of the parents. It is expected that domestic students will be covered by their family's medical insurance policy. Parents of international and out-of-state students should either obtain health insurance or reimburse BIA for all medical or immunizations expenses that are incurred by their child. For all international or out-of-state students, a charge of \$250 will be added to the fees that are paid to BIA, in order to cover all of the medical exam and immunization requirements of the State of Connecticut. The school does not provide health insurance, but has a student accident policy, which covers injuries sustained while at school.

Academic Program

BIA's academic year consists of two semesters, with the first during the fall, and the second during the spring. Each semester is split in half, yielding four quarters, with report cards issued quarterly.

Students are encouraged to explore many avenues of learning. BIA's academic program therefore integrates cultural, scientific, artistic, and technological literacy to prepare students for success at a college level. Students are provided with academic skills to compete successfully for admission to the best colleges and with practical life skills to support whatever personal and professional paths they choose as an adult. A Colleges & Careers class provides guidance and information for this process. The school encourages students to develop a broad view of the world and of their place in it as active and thoughtful citizens. Efforts are made to bring all students to a basic level of technological literacy, so that they may become independent learners and individualize their own academic education.

Academic Guidance and Evaluation

Academic guidance is provided to encourage each student to set goals and work strategically to achieve those objectives. Upon matriculating, each new student is required to take diagnostic exams in mathematics and English to determine his/her level of proficiency. All academic transcripts or report cards, standardized test results, and letters of recommendation from former teachers must be provided for review in order to determine proper placement of students. Throughout their time as BIA students, and even beyond, academic guidance is provided by the Academic Dean, School Counselor, and other administrators relative to course selection, academic progress, credit analysis, college applications, and standardized examinations such as the SAT, the ACT, and TOEFL tests. During the fall semester, one day is devoted freshmen taking the PSAT 9, one day to sophomores taking the pre-ACT, and one day to juniors taking the PSAT. There is also one morning set aside for seniors to work on college applications under the supervision of the school counselor.

Academic Evaluation Policy

Academic grades are awarded based on a 4-point scale and reflect demonstrated mastery of the subject matter.

Letter Grades	Percentage Equivalents	Grade Points	Grading Scale
A	93 to 100	4.0	Outstanding
A-	90 to 92	3.66	Excellent
B+	87 to 89	3.33	Very good
B	83 to 86	3.0	Good
B-	80 to 82	2.66	Satisfactory
C+	77 to 79	2.33	Average +
C	73 to 76	2.0	Average
C-	70 to 72	1.66	Average -
D+	67 to 69	1.33	*
D	63 to 66	1.0	*
D-	60 to 62	.66	*
F	Below 60	0.0	No credit awarded

During each school year, teachers maintain a record of a student's significant achievements to effectively evaluate each student's progress and development.

Drop/Add Policy

The drop/add period is the first ten days of each semester for year-long or semester-long courses and the first ten days of the quarter for quarter-long courses. A student may request to add a course during that time period. Any student requesting to drop any given course must make the request within the first ten days of the student starting the course. Students must continue to attend a course until a withdrawal is granted.

Schedule changes will be considered and approved by the administration only for sound educational reasons. If class enrollment would fall below a minimum number of students due to a withdrawal request, the request may be denied. The administration reserves the right to change a student's schedule as dictated by the requirements to obtain the necessary credits for graduation, behavioral concerns in the class, a student's academic level relative to a course, or other educational reasons.

College Courses

As a college preparatory school, BIA makes easily available, and at greatly reduced cost, the opportunity for its students to take college courses. In particular, many students take advantage of enrolling in courses at the nearby University of Bridgeport (UB) campus and the proximate CT State Community College Housatonic (HCC). The completion of college courses is a great way to improve one's high school transcript and build one's college transcript. For each semester-long college course taken, the student earns one high school credit, as well as the college credit; however, the student must achieve a final grade of C- or better in the college course for the credit to transfer to BIA.

To take college courses, the student must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and receive parental and administrative permission. Qualifying juniors and seniors at BIA may take up to two UB college courses per semester and two HCC courses, as long as the times do not conflict with the student's BIA schedule. Students and families are responsible to cover the course cost and additional fees (books, lab fees, etc.) related to a college course.

Barring extenuating circumstances, college courses are to supplement the student's education and not replace any BIA course or the core curriculum.

Midyear and Final Examinations

Bridgeport International Academy conducts midyear and final examinations in most subjects. These take place during dedicated examination periods. The midyear examinations are held at the end of the fall semester, after the second quarter has concluded. The final examinations are held at the end of the spring semester, after the fourth quarter has concluded.

The examination grades are used in calculating the student's final grade for the course. For a year-long course, the midyear examination counts as ten percent of the course grade and the final examination likewise counts as ten percent of the course grade. For semester-long courses, the end-of-semester exam serves as the final examination and counts as twenty percent of the course grade.

All students are required to take the midyear and final examinations. However, if a student is added to a class roster too late for a grade to be assigned for the 1st quarter, such as enrolling at BIA late in the 1st quarter or during the 2nd quarter, then he or she is exempt from the midyear examination; likewise, if a student is added to a class roster too late for a grade to be assigned for the 3rd quarter, he or she is exempt from the final examination.

Furthermore, students who are scheduled to graduate at the end of the spring semester may be exempt from the final examination in a particular course should they meet specific requirements. Note that exemption from a final examination is a privilege, not a right.

The seven requirements for graduating seniors to earn a final exam exemption are:

1. The student needs to be a member of the class graduating during the spring graduation ceremonies.
2. The student has to have completed all the requirements to graduate, including academic credits, community service, financial obligations, and so forth. On rare occasions involving special circumstances, a person lacking sufficient academic credits may have received permission to go through the commencement ceremony with the graduating class without actually receiving his or her diploma at that time; such individuals do not meet the criteria to be exempt from the final exam.
3. The student needs to have a 95.0 average or above at the end of the final quarter of the course for which he or she is seeking final exam exemption. This average is computed for the entire length of the course (year-long average for year-long courses, and semester-long average for semester-long courses).
4. The student must be maintaining regular attendance in the course.
5. A student with nine or more school absences during the Spring Semester, excused or unexcused, is not eligible for a final exam exemption; a student with nine or more unexcused class absences in the Spring Semester is not eligible for a final exam exemption in that class.
6. The student must not have had disciplinary problems during the year (including during the final exam period), as determined by the administration. Demerits, as outlined in the *Merit/Demerit Policy*, will be taken into consideration. An in- or out-of-school suspension during the school year automatically disqualifies a student from any final exam exemption.
7. The student must be planning to attend all required school-related activities that take place after the final examination.

Graduating students are required to take final examinations in which the above conditions are not met. Note that graduating students are only exempt in the particular course in which he or she has obtained at least a 95.0 average. This average is computed by the teacher at or near the end of the fourth quarter in the Spring Semester. The administration provides a list of which seniors meet the administrative (financial, community service, etc.) requirements. Students will be notified at the teacher's discretion if they qualify academically, but not before the last week of classes.

Academic Awards

Bridgeport International Academy acknowledges students who have exhibited outstanding academic performance throughout the school year. Certificates of distinction are conferred at the end of the

year. Students with high academic achievement are also eligible to be considered for induction into the National Honor Society, although academic performance is just one of four criteria for membership (see National Honor Society under “Student Life and Activities”).

Honor Roll

Students with high academic achievement in all courses are recognized each grading period by being placed on one of three honors lists: distinguished scholars, high honor roll, or honor roll. The list of distinguished scholars recognizes those students with a 4.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA); in other words, an A in every class. Students whose GPA is 3.85 to 3.99, and who have at least a B+ in every class, are placed on the high honor roll. Students whose GPA is 3.3 to 3.84, without any grades less than a B, are placed on the honor roll.

Valedictorian/Salutatorian Policy

For a student to receive valedictorian or salutatorian recognition, the following apply:

1. The valedictorian and salutatorian must be students enrolled in the 12th grade who graduate with their cohort class and will have completed the entire senior year (fall and spring semesters) by the time of graduation.
2. The student must have attended BIA for at least seven consecutive quarters immediately preceding the determination of the class valedictorian and salutatorian. Since these recognitions are determined after the grades for the third quarter have been submitted, any student who transfers into BIA must have done so by the start of their junior year in order to be eligible to be either valedictorian or salutatorian. Also qualifying are those students who may have missed part or all of their junior year (for study abroad or any other purpose) but who by graduation will have attended BIA for at least eleven quarters in total, including their entire senior year.
3. To be considered for valedictorian or salutatorian, students must complete all regular-level required courses. In the event that a student needs to be exempted from any regular-level required course(s), the administration will convene a review committee to determine how the exempted student will be affected by this.
4. The valedictorian and salutatorian are selected on the basis of both grade point average and approval by the administrators. The primary criteria is grade point average, with the valedictorian earning the highest grade point average of the graduating class and the salutatorian earning the second highest grade point average in his/her graduating class. This grade point average is based on calculations made after the third quarter of the senior year (the third quarter update), includes all high school grades up to that point, and is calculated to the third place beyond the decimal point. The school administrators reserve the right to interchange or replace the valedictorian and/or salutatorian, maintaining the grade point average as much as possible as the determining factor. In the case of a tie, co-valedictorians and/or co-salutatorians may be recognized.
5. Any address at the graduation to be given by the valedictorian and/or salutatorian must first be presented in writing to the administration for approval.

Transcripts and Right of Privacy

Grades for academic courses completed will be reflected on an official student transcript. The school maintains cumulative academic records, which are available to parents or legal guardians when requested. These academic records will be copied and sent to other schools upon written request when the student's tuition and fees are kept current. A student who is eighteen years of age or older may receive copies of his/her academic transcript upon request if tuition and fees are current and no money is owed to the Academy.

For alumni, there is a fee for the issuing of each transcript. That fee must be paid before an academic transcript or any records will be issued by the school. Please note: students who leave the school with outstanding balances are not issued transcripts or records until their financial obligations are met in full.

Online Student Progress Reports

BIA utilizes innovative, web-based platforms, called StudentPlus and ParentPlus, for teachers to communicate regularly with the students and their parents, providing real-time data on student's progress in each class. These web portals can be accessed directly from the BIA website as well as via mobile apps for iOS and Android. Parents gain real-time access to grades, progress reports, attendance, discipline, class schedules, school alerts, and announcements, as well as personalized calendars that include their student's homework, tests, field trips, and other school events. There are class pages to stay current on what their students are studying, and email and message capability to communicate with teachers and staff. Students likewise gain real-time access to their homework, quiz, and test scores once the teacher has made those grades public, as well as class schedules and the personalized calendars that include their assignments and tests across all their classes. Students can use web lockers to submit homework and assignments and email their teachers and BIA staff.

These web-based programs seamlessly integrate with TeacherPlus Web Gradebook and the online Rediker student information system, Administrator's Plus®, utilized by BIA to streamline administrative tasks throughout the school. TeacherPlus allows teachers to post grades and attendance regularly, allowing real-time access to the students and parents as soon as the teacher has entered the grades and made them public.

Testing for Learning Disabilities

BIA is not fully equipped to service students with learning disabilities. During the admissions process, BIA vets students for learning differences, and the admissions committee determines if a student's needs could be met at the school. BIA ethically does not accept students it does not think it can effectively educate. Students are assessed through documentation of learning disabilities (i.e., IEPs) and through references from school counselors and previous teachers. If learning disabilities are suspected after matriculation, the administration will inform the parents and discuss appropriate testing possibilities through the Bridgeport Board of Education. If a parent or guardian wishes to independently hire a qualified professional to evaluate the student, then that parent is responsible to pay the cost.

Graduation Requirements

Credit Requirements for Graduation

No student shall graduate BIA who has not satisfactorily completed a *minimum of 24 credits*, with the minimum requirements by subject area as follows:

Minimum graduation requirements by category. For a student to graduate, he or she must have completed a minimum of twenty-four credits. This is to include not fewer than (1) eight credits in the humanities, including no fewer than four credits in English, three credits in social studies (including at least one credit in American history and government), and one credit in a humanities elective; (2) eight credits in science, mathematics, and technology, including no fewer than three credits in science, three credits in mathematics, seven total credits in math and science combined, one credit in technology, and one credit in a science, mathematics, or technology elective; (3) two and one-half credits in career and life skills, including at least a half credit in health and safety education, one-half credit in college and careers education*, and per semester-based credits (see below) in physical education and character education; and (4) two credits in world languages**, subject to the requirements below; and (5) additional graduation requirements in community service as described below.

I. Humanities

8.0 credits

English	4.0 credits
Social Studies	3.0 credits (including 1 credit Am. History/Gov.)
Humanities electives	1.0 credit

II. Science, Mathematics and Technology

7.5 credits

Mathematics	3.0 credits
Science	3.0 credits (and 7 total credits in math and science combined)
Technology	0.5 credits
Science, mathematics, and technology elective	1.0 credit

III. Careers and Life Skills

3.0 credits

Health & Safety	0.5 credit
PE and PE Alternatives	0.25 credits/sem
Character Education	0.125 credits/sem
College & Careers & altern.	0.5 credits

*Administration has the right to waive part or all of the half credit in College and Careers for incoming seniors and special cases.

IV. World Languages

2.0 credits

**International students for whom English is not their first language and students, domestic or international, who have completed successfully at least two academic years in middle school and or high school in a non-English speaking country and conducted in a language other than English may have the world language credits waived.

Humanities. In the humanities, each student must complete a minimum of eight credits, including at least four credits in high school English, three credits in social studies, and one credit in a humanities elective. In addition, at least one credit in American History and Government is needed to meet the social studies requirement.

Eligible courses for the electives include those in the fields of economics, English, geography, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology. Additional areas may qualify at the discretion of the BIA administration.

While it is recognized that students who participate in the ESL/ELL program may complete many of their English language credits through that program, such students must still complete at least one credit in a mainstream junior- or senior-level English class in order to graduate.

Mathematics, Science and Technology. In the mathematics, science and technology category, each student must complete a minimum of seven-and-a-half credits, including at least three credits in mathematics, three credits in science, and one-half credit in technology. The student must also complete a minimum of seven total credits in mathematics and science combined. Eligible courses for the technology credit include those in computer science, computer engineering, and digital arts. Additional areas for the technology credit may qualify at the discretion of the BIA administration.

Careers and Life Skills. In the careers and life skills category, each student must complete a minimum of 2.5 credits, including at least one-half credit in health and safety and one-half credit in college and careers education. The administration does have the authority to waive all or part of the College and Careers half-credit for incoming seniors and special cases. Furthermore, students are required to complete a minimum of 0.25 credits of physical education (PE) or a PE alternative for each semester the student is enrolled and taking courses on the BIA campus. Likewise, students are required to complete a minimum of 0.125 credits of a Character Education class for each semester the student is enrolled and taking courses on the BIA campus. There are exceptions for cases where a student has been given approval to attend a college course that conflicts with 5th period classes (PE, Character Education, and activity classes).

The health and safety half-credit shall include, but not be limited to, human growth and development, nutrition, first aid, disease prevention, community and consumer health, and physical, mental and emotional health (including youth suicide prevention, substance abuse prevention, and safety, including dangers of gang membership and accident prevention).

Electives that help to fulfill credits in the careers and life skills area, outside of those mentioned above, include those in the fields of art & design, business, chorus, communications, drama and theatre, fashion, filmmaking, human services, journalism, publications, marketing, music, and vocational. Digital arts may be used as a credit for either the mathematics, science, and technology category or the careers and life skills area.

World Languages. Students are required to complete a minimum of two credits in a foreign language while at BIA. Additional credits in foreign languages are recommended. Students already proficient in a foreign language may have one or both required credits waived by passing a CLEP examination in

the foreign language, testing out via a BIA administered test, or by completing a second-level language course at the college level. Likewise, students who have completed successfully at least two academic years in middle school and/or high school in a non-English speaking country and conducted in a language other than English may have the two-credit requirement waived upon receipt and review of the transcript(s), regardless of whether they enter BIA's ELL program or English is their first language. International students for whom English is not their first language and who enter the international program at BIA may have their two-credit foreign language requirement waived. Such students are expected to focus on becoming proficient in English while at BIA as opposed to acquiring an additional language.

Credits for College Courses. While qualifying students are encouraged to supplement their education with dual-credit college courses, each student must also fulfill the above-mentioned high school credits, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Community Service Requirement

Students are required to fulfill a minimum of 75 hours of community service during their four years in high school. For students attending BIA for less than four years, the required hours of community service are 25 per year. In other words, a student who transferred into BIA for just his or her senior year would have to complete 25 hours; a student who transferred for the junior and senior years would have to complete 50 hours; and students attending BIA beginning in their freshman or sophomore years would have to complete 75 hours to graduate.

Physical Education Requirement

For graduation, students are required to complete a minimum of 0.25 credits of Physical Education (PE) or a PE alternative for each semester the student is enrolled and taking courses on the BIA campus. Students also are encouraged to participate in various other co-curricular sports.

English Competency Requirement for Students from Non-English-Speaking Educational Systems

In order to graduate from BIA, international students who come from a non-English speaking educational system must demonstrate English competency. Any of the following criteria may be demonstrated:

- A passing grade in a mainstream 11th or 12th grade BIA English course or Pre-College English
- A grade of "C-" or better in one semester of a college English composition course at an accredited US university/college
- A score of 70 or above in the Michigan English Assessment Battery (MELAB)
- Minimum TOEFL score of 75 (IBT)
- SAT Critical Reading score of 450 or above
- ACT English score of 19 or above
- A level of "advanced" on the English Language Proficiency Test of the College Board.

Note that the course "Pre-College English" is not an ELL course and, when offered, is highly recommended for all international students and any English-speaking student who would like extra English preparation for college.

Additional Considerations

There have been occasions where a student feels the necessity to complete high school early, prior to his or her scheduled graduation. BIA does not have early graduation. However, there may be an unforeseen, extraordinary circumstance where a request to complete school early, and graduate later, may need to be considered. Such a request must be extraordinary and initiated by the parent/guardian, not the student, and such can be granted only at the discretion of the principal and academic dean.

There are important advantages in students completing a full course of study. Traditionally, all of BIA's students apply to college. BIA seeks to help the student gain a strong and impressive transcript for the college admissions process. Such includes credits in core, elective, and university courses, as well as participating in school clubs and take leadership roles, all of which make a better presentation for college. The taking of such courses also helps the student to be better prepared for success in college, when he or she may be competing with students who have fully taken advantage of course opportunities given; this extra preparation can make the academic transition to college easier and enhance later post-graduate opportunities. A strong transcript also helps in terms of college financial aid. Furthermore, it is both financially and time-efficient to take advantage of the opportunities for college courses while at BIA. Taken at reduced rates (and without tuition for those taking courses at CT State Community College Housatonic, as part of the High School Partnership Program), these college courses allow the student to significantly reduce the amount of subsequent college tuition. Some students have completed as many as eight to ten college courses by the time they have graduated BIA, or the equivalent of a full year of college. Finally, international students from non-English speaking nations are expected to take the full four years of high school in order to perfect their English in preparation for college classes.

Definition of Credit

One credit (1 credit) is earned by completing a course of study where the class meets for 200 minutes per week for 36 weeks, which equals one full year of study (i.e., two semesters). **One half credit** (0.5 credits) is based on completion of one semester course of study for 200 minutes per week for 18 weeks or 100 minutes per week for 36 weeks. For students who do not complete a full semester, such as late transfers to the school, partial credit may be earned for the time invested in class.

Credit for Character Education and Other Activities

Character education classes are held once a week. BIA has a four-year, character education program that covers personal growth, virtues and internationally shared values, an introduction to world religions, and navigating the real world with integrity.

Each semester students participate twice a week in an activity period where they have the option of diverse activities, including Fine Arts, Digital Arts, Music, Mentoring, Actors Studio, Stagecraft, and such sports activities as basketball, soccer, volleyball, and so forth.

Transfer Credit

With a grade of C- or higher, credit will be accepted for transfer students from other high school institutions and from recognized home school and distance learning programs. In some cases, transfer students have coordinated with the administration to arrange for accredited, online programs to achieve high school credit in areas in which they need additional credit to meet the Academy's graduation requirements. International transcripts should be translated when submitted.

The Core Curriculum

Grade 9

ENG-101	Elements of Writing
HIS-101	Ancient Civilizations
SCI-101	Earth Science
MA-101	Algebra I or Geometry*
PE-101	Physical Education
CS-101	Computer Science
	Foreign Language Elective

Grade 10

ENG-201	World Literature and Composition
HIS-201	Modern Civilizations
MA-201	Geometry and/or Algebra II*
SCI-201	Biology
HEA-201	Health & Human Biology
PE-201	Physical Education
	Foreign Language Elective

Grade 11

ENG-301	American Literature and Composition
MA-301	Algebra II or Precalculus*
SCI-301	Chemistry
HIS-301	American History and Government
PE-301	Physical Education
CL-301	College & Careers
	Electives

Grade 12

ENG-401	British Literature & Writing, Pre-College English, or Communications
MA-401	Precalculus, Calculus, Precollege Math*
SCI-401	Physics
SS-401	Social Sciences Elective (Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
PE-401	Physical Education
	Electives, Internships, etc.

*Testing and prerequisites will determine the appropriate math placement for each student

Once-a-week character education classes are mandatory. A mandatory one-week Global Studies seminar is offered school-wide for which students earn 0.125 credits. At times, a mandatory pre-Thanksgiving Break “seminar week” is offered school-wide for which students earn 0.1 credits.

English Language Learners Program

Competency in the English language is an essential foundation for academic success at Bridgeport International Academy and a requirement for graduation. In order to support those students who lack sufficient proficiency in English, known as English Language Learners (ELL), BIA offers a specialized instruction program. This program aims to develop ELL student's language and literacy competency to where they can fully participate in mainstream classes.

It is the policy of BIA to move ELL students into the mainstream classroom as soon as it is determined that they would not be at a significant disadvantage. For some BIA classes, such as character education, physical education, activity classes (fine arts, music, sports activity, etc.), global studies seminar, and some math classes, ELL students are immediately mainstreamed. However, most academic subjects require a certain minimal level of English competency.

Placement into the ELL Program

Placement of a student into the ELL program involves a number of factors. Initial identification of potential candidates for the program is made from the application materials (application for admission, student questionnaire, transcripts, and recommendations from teachers at previous schools) and discussions with the parent, guardian, or representatives. A personal interview with the student may be conducted.

Students who are considered candidates for the ELL program are then tested during their orientation at BIA, with the primary instrument used being the Michigan English Placement Test or "Michigan Test." This is a standardized test that helps evaluate proficiency in the English language for an academic environment, with a section on listening comprehension, and grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension questions. It is administered both as a placement test during orientation for new students and at the end of each semester for current ELL learners as an assessment of their English language proficiency.

ELL Classes

The main ELL classes relate to mastery of the English language, with grammar, reading, writing, vocabulary, and conversation among the subjects. Both introductory and intermediate-level ELL classes are offered, as necessary. In addition, subjects such as American History and Government, Health, and General Science may be presented in an ELL intermediate-level format at the discretion of the BIA administration.

Students who are placed into introductory ELL classes may move to the intermediate ELL classes based on the assessment of the ELL faculty, in consultation with the Head of School and Academic Dean.

Pass/Fail and Audit Opportunities in Mainstream Classes

Students placed in ELL English classes will also be placed in various mainstream classes. Teachers of such classes, in consultation with the academic dean, have the option to recommend particular ELL students be provided the opportunity to take their class as pass/fail or to audit the class.

Graduation from ELL Program to Fully Mainstream Classes

The progress of ELL students is periodically evaluated to determine when they are able to move into mainstream classes. Based on these assessments, students may be advanced fully into the mainstream curriculum, retained fully in the ELL program, or placed into particular mainstream classes while remaining in ELL classes judged essential for their education.

Graduation from ELL classes to mainstream classes is made by a committee of administrators and teachers who have been involved in their education and bring their input to the decision-making process. Among the factors considered by the committee for advancement to mainstream courses:

1. Standardized test scores
2. Grades in the ELL classroom and mainstream classrooms
3. Communication skills
4. Maturity and responsibility (attendance, homework, punctuality, participation).

The primary test instrument is the Michigan Test, with a score of 75 or higher demonstrating ability to mainstream. However, this test is but one of several assessments and a student with a score lower than 75 may still be placed into mainstream courses based on other factors. The student may also submit scores of other standardized tests, such as TOEFL, in support of their ability to mainstream.

Students should achieve at least an average grade of C in their ELL classes to be considered for advancement to mainstream classes. It should be understood that being able to converse in English does not necessarily mean that the ELL learner has mastered the specific academic vocabulary necessary to succeed in subjects such as the sciences.

The assessment committee takes into consideration the input of the students, parents, and guardians.

Program Leadership

The overall operation and management of the ELL program is the responsibility of the academic dean. While the ELL teachers have the main role in administering the program, it is understood that all BIA faculty have a responsibility for ELL learning and for collaborating in developing English language competency.

ELL teachers are responsible for planning and teaching ELL courses, assessing and monitoring the English language competency of ELL students, placement of ELL students in the proper courses, and reporting on their progress. ELL teachers work collaboratively with subject teachers (non-ELL classes) to develop programs, practices, and resources to support the learning of the English language, and provide advice and professional support to school administrators on appropriate teaching programs and practices.

Subject teachers are responsible for the educational program of all students in their classes and collaborate with ELL teachers to cater to the learning needs of ELL students in their classrooms, assist ELL students in their classes to develop the competency in English necessary for achieving the outcomes of their subject matter; and work to ensure appropriate support, assessment, and reporting with respect to the ELL students.

Postgraduate (PG) Program

BIA offers a one-year postgraduate program for recent high school graduates. Such a program allows them an extra year to prepare themselves for success in college and to bolster their candidacy to apply to the colleges of their choice.

There are many reasons to consider a postgraduate (PG) year at BIA.

College Preparation. Many students seek a PG year in order to prepare academically and socially for college. At BIA, students can take up to four college courses during their PG year—immersing them in the college experience within the supportive BIA environment and earning credits that they can transfer later to their college. Moreover, with BIA located adjacent to the seaside campus of the University of Bridgeport, BIA postgraduate students already are able to experience college life, utilizing the university's many facilities, such as the library, cafeteria, recreation center, chemistry lab, and theatre. Within BIA's college preparatory environment, students can improve the academic and social skills needed for success at college, making the transition a smooth one.

College Applications. Many students seek a PG year in order to enhance their credentials to apply to their preferred colleges. For all postgraduate students, the program offers close, one-on-one advising on college applications, preparation for standardized tests, and an additional year to bolster one's profile with better grades, an enhanced resume, and a record demonstrating that one is prepared for college. Creating a stronger transcript bolstered with college courses allows students to demonstrate their ability to do college-level work and BIA's small size allows teachers to know students well, providing excellent recommendations and counseling for each student.

Creative Arts Portfolio. For students in the creative arts (digital arts, fine arts, theatre, stagecraft, music), the PG Program allows them to build their portfolio prior to applying to college. Film projects, a full-service art studio and digital arts studio is available for them to use. In 2023, Niche.com rated BIA the number one high school for the arts in Connecticut.

International Students' English Proficiency. For students from other nations, the PG Program allows them to enhance their English proficiency and spend one year in an American high school before college. BIA offers English Language Learner (ELL) classes, as well as challenging mainstream English classes, according to the student's level of proficiency. And for some universities, a grade of C or better in a BIA English mainstream course is enough to waive the TOEFL requirement in applying to college.

Program of Study

BIA offers a full-year program of study that leads to a Postgraduate Diploma. Students may also pursue a one-semester program of study that leads to a Postgraduate Certificate of Completion.

PGs take five courses each term, for a total of 2 and 1/2 credit hours per semester or 5 credit hours per academic year. As students, they engage fully in the life of the school and take part in the PE, Character Education, and activity classes, as well as Global Studies Week, a special project-based week of study in the spring semester.

For those with sufficient English proficiency, the taking of a minimum of one college course is a requirement as part of the five required courses to receive a Diploma. Students receive one full credit for a one-semester college course.

Each PG's specific class schedule is designed to match student interest, academic proficiency, and career goals and is based on a review of transcripts, placement tests, and discussion with the Academic Dean.

For all out-of-town students, boarding on campus is a requirement (with rare exceptions). BIA has a one-year boarding requirement; therefore, all PG students live on campus. An exception to this requirement is if a PG student has immediate family members living locally; in that case, the PG student may live with their immediate family.

PGs walk at graduation and are considered BIA alumni.

Admissions Standards and Enrollment Criteria

Applicants are to submit an application for admission, student questionnaire, high-school transcript(s), a writing sample, and two recommendations. Students must have completed high school, or its equivalent, by the time of enrollment in the postgraduate Program.

Policy on Distance Education/Independent Study courses

At times, students at BIA may wish to supplement their education by taking high school distance education/independent study courses offered by other institutions. Taking such courses can be helpful in a number of ways, including assisting students who transfer to BIA with inadequate credits to graduate on time; overcoming scheduling conflicts that prevent the taking of desired courses; and, in general, allowing a broader course selection to students. However, it is important that any such courses meet BIA's rigorous academic standards and students may not take distance education/independent study courses to replace a course offered at BIA when there is not a schedule conflict, barring special circumstances approved by the Principal and Academic Dean.

BIA students wishing to take such distance education or independent study courses for credit at BIA must obtain prior approval from the academic dean. Generally, such approval is provided only for the following reasons: (1) scheduling conflict, whereby a needed or desired course is not available at BIA or cannot fit into the student's schedule; (2) inadequate transfer credits, whereby such extra courses will allow a student who transferred to BIA to graduate on time; and (3) special graduation-related situations, whereby unforeseen circumstances require that a student complete his or her credits for graduation earlier than usual or outside of the classroom setting. Students may also take such courses simply to supplement their education, but in such cases are limited to courses totaling at most one credit per year, and the credits earned do not count towards the graduation requirements, either in terms of minimum credits per subject area or total credits.

Academic Integrity

BIA's academic program is designed to impart knowledge, foster critical thinking, prepare students for college and the workplace, and guide them to become lifelong learners and good citizens. These goals, and any evaluation of an individual's progress toward these goals, are undermined should a student not abide by standards of academic integrity. An authentic educational experience presupposes a context in which honesty is a respected and embodied virtue. Students are expected to honor this virtue at all times. Instances of cheating, plagiarism, infringement of exam rules, unacceptable use of generative artificial intelligence, and other violations of academic integrity will be dealt with appropriately in consultation with the student and teacher.

Infringement of exam rules

Using unauthorized notes or other aids in a test, or copying from or being influenced by another student's work during a test, constitute an infringement of exam rules.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's words, work, ideas, facts, or conclusions. It can give a reader the false impression that these are one's own ideas, words, and so forth and is considered a serious academic offense. It is not plagiarism when one uses facts that are common knowledge without acknowledging a source, such as "Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States," because one is not claiming or creating the impression of originality when using well-known facts. However, the unacknowledged use of ideas, works, facts, conclusions, or words that originate with another and are not common knowledge, and can reasonably give the impression that these are one's own ideas being presented, does constitute plagiarism.

Charges of plagiarism can be avoided by acknowledging the sources(s) (idea, words, works, etc.) upon which one draws. Direct quotes are either to be (1) enclosed in quotation marks (when integrated into the text) and cited, or (2) set off from the main text as block quotations and cited. Even if this direct quotation is from a well-known work and most people would recognize the source of the quotation, one still needs to identify the work. It is not enough to change the wording of the source: paraphrased content from any source must be cited. Ideas that are not one's own must be cited. (Facts that are common knowledge do not need to be referenced.)

Whether deliberate or accidental, plagiarism is not tolerated. Similarly, self-plagiarism, whereby a student submits the same work for credit to more than one teacher—unless both teachers give their permission—is unacceptable. Students are expected to understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid the charge of plagiarism or unauthorized assistance. For further understanding of this issue, see the document *Class Policy on Plagiarism* by Frederick Swarts (BIA Academic Dean), which served as a source, with permission, for the content in this section.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

"Generative AI" (or "AI") is a machine-based tool that learns from large amounts of data and mimics patterns, creating human-like output (text, images, etc.) in response to user questions and prompts. Examples of a generative AI chatbot includes OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard, Stability AI's Stable Diffusion, and Github's Copilot. These algorithm-based tools can produce and revise text, generate

images, create music and videos, and construct software code.

The use of generative AI in a course, such as with brainstorming, outlining, or producing text and images, is up to the discretion of the course teacher. BIA allows the responsible use of AI to the extent it can foster student learning, but its use also presents significant risks and limitations and can undermine educational goals, and thus each teacher determines its allowable use or nonuse in the classroom.

It is each student's responsibility to know what is permitted in the particular course the student is taking. Absent a clear statement from a course teacher granting permission to use generative AI, it is to be assumed by the student that the use of generative AI to complete an assignment is prohibited.

As generative AI is not produced by a person, but is algorithm-generated, its output would not be *cited* as one would to avoid plagiarism, but rather would be *disclosed*.

As a general rule, students are to *disclose* to teachers if they are using generative AI platforms and what role such played in their coursework. As a school-wide policy, it is expressly prohibited to directly present the output of generative AI as one's own work, and it is expressly prohibited to fail to disclose the role that generative AI played in the process of completing any assignment, including its use in editing or rewording. It is likewise prohibited to reword or paraphrase content derived from generative AI and submit in a way that it would give a reasonable impression to the teacher that this is one's own work independent of a role of generative AI in the process.

It is important for the student to also know that content produced by generative AI may be factually inaccurate. Generative AI has produced citations for legal briefs and publications where the papers, and even the authors, do not exist. It has produced content that is itself plagiarized or violated the intellectual property rights of others, and it has fabricated images and experimental data for experiments not actually conducted. It has provided demonstrably false information to prompts, while presenting convincing arguments for its erroneous information. If generative AI is used, it is up to the student to independently verify the accuracy of the content produced.

Uses of Technology

Respect for intellectual creativity is central to academic discourse and development. This principle applies to works of all authors and publishers in all media. Because electronic information is readily available and easily reproduced, respect for the work of others is especially crucial in a computer environment. Violations of authorial integrity, including plagiarism, invasion of privacy, unauthorized access, and trade secret and copyright violations are grounds for sanctions.

The Academy's computer network is to be used for educational purposes only. Any unauthorized use is subject to disciplinary action.

Consequences of Violations of Academic Integrity

A student who is caught cheating during a quiz or test will receive a zero for that particular examination. When it is obvious that a student has plagiarized, a teacher will give a "0" for that particular work. When a student has used generative AI in the process of completing an assignment and failed to disclose that a teacher will give a "0" for that particular assignment. In each case, the

student's parent/guardian will be notified. The teacher does have the discretion to provide alternatives to zero being the final grade based on his/her evaluation of the severity of the case; for example, a teacher might elect to have the student rewrite the paper in order to receive some partial credit, or to give a failing grade of a higher value than 0.

A student who is caught for a second time cheating or plagiarizing or using generative AI without disclosing its use will be placed on academic probation for one semester.

Student Life and Activities

The BIA administration supervises student life. The Academy encourages an environment conducive to academic excellence and personal growth. It also oversees student leadership, counseling services, community service, and character education activities. The Academy offers opportunities for students to participate in several extracurricular events and educational and cultural trips and outings. Additionally, special events such as club activities and sports may be planned. International students are encouraged strongly to participate in such activities in order to enhance their experiences in American culture and the English language.

Character Education and Community Service

BIA seeks to incorporate character development and education into most aspects of the school. At the weekly morning assemblies, issues related to character education are typically addressed. At times, homeroom teachers begin the day with a short character education lesson, reading, or discussion with each grade level, sometimes utilizing a variety of materials from diverse traditions, reflecting common universal values. Once a week, students participate in a character education class that seeks to foster responsible, caring, and ethical individuals.

Engagement in community service is a requirement of all BIA students (see "Graduation Requirements"). Local students may either find service opportunities in cooperation with their parents and for which a signed record of their work is required, or join the monthly service projects provided by the school. International students will work with the school to fulfill this requirement and provide enhancement of their cultural experience in America.

Students are encouraged to participate and become involved in a variety of functions and activities at the Academy. Students are asked to volunteer by accepting duties, responsibilities or tasks in support of services benefiting student life. In this way, students are challenged to take initiative, to learn positive interaction skills, and to develop a heightened sense of personal and communal responsibility.

Student Council

The Student Council meets weekly; a faculty advisor attends the meetings. The president of the Student Council presides over the meetings and in his/her absence the vice-president presides. The faculty and administration approve the slate of candidates for the office of the president, and an election for the president and all other officers is held in the autumn. Students plan activities, fundraising projects, and events to create and provide enhancement to student life. Representatives from each class and an international representative bring student life concerns to the Student Council meetings.

National Honor Society

Membership in the National Honor Society (NHS) is one of the highest honors that can be awarded to a high school student. The NHS was formed in 1921 by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. As the nation's premier organization for recognizing outstanding high school students, membership provides clear evidence of a student's achievement in both the school and the community. To be selected for membership, students must meet high standards in four areas: scholarship, leadership, service, and character.

To be eligible for induction into the Hugh D. Spurgin chapter of the National Honor Society of Bridgeport International Academy, students must be members of the sophomore, junior, or senior class, and generally must have been in attendance for a period of at least one semester at BIA (although there are unique circumstances identified in the Bylaws by which this last stipulation can be waived). Candidates are first identified on the basis of meeting the minimum scholastic requirement of having a cumulative GPA of at least 3.5 (out of 4.0). However, no student is inducted simply because of a high academic average; scholarship is but one of four criteria that must be met. Students must also demonstrate high standards of leadership, community service, and character, which are evaluated by a faculty council based on an application submitted by the student.

Selection and induction of new active members takes place during the second semester of the school year. All members are expected to maintain the standards by which they were selected and maintain all obligations of membership.

The active members of the Hugh D. Spurgin Chapter elect five members to serve as officers of the chapter: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and public relations officer.

Clubs

BIA students are encouraged to join student-initiated clubs. Each club must have a faculty advisor who supervises every meeting. Each club must clearly communicate with BIA's administration its meeting schedule and roster. Clubs may use the school building from 3:10PM to 5PM with a faculty present. Any student in the school at 4:00PM who is not a member of a club will be asked to vacate the premises.

Residential and Homestay Program

Bridgeport International Academy has a diverse student body with students from throughout the world and various states in the United States. Most international and some domestic students (who are not local residents) are housed in the dormitories and thus part of a residential life program. At the request of the parents, some students stay with a host family as part of the homestay program.

The residential and homestay programs are in accord with the school's commitment to advancing cross-cultural, international, and inter-religious awareness and understanding. The four pillars that

form BIA's identity, mission, values, culture and climate are academic excellence, creativity, character development, and global citizenship. Having an international or global perspective is the very essence of BIA. The Academy is international in its mission, core values, policies, learning environment, programs, activities, curriculum, leadership, faculty, staff, student body, classroom layout, global studies program, and culture and climate. Since internationalism is the essence of the school, BIA is receptive to international students living with host families at the request of a parent, even though the school's expectation is that foreign students will live in the dormitories, space permitting.

Bridgeport International Academy places a high priority on providing a secure, comfortable, healthy, wholesome, and enjoyable living environment for its students in the residential and homestay programs. These programs are supervised and designed to provide the students with a "home away from home." Indeed, each dormitory has a "family atmosphere," and the residential life coordinators work to create a balance between providing a structured environment and the flexibility essential to developing good personal relationships. The school seeks to promote that same friendly, family-like atmosphere for homestay students. Overall, these programs help to cultivate cultural appreciation, as well as providing the opportunity for friendships that will last for a lifetime.

Details on the residential life program, including policies and responsibilities, can be found in the *Residential Life Handbook*. Details on the Homestay Program can be found in the *Homestay Handbook*.

Student Code of Conduct

This section delineates proper student conduct while on the BIA campus (dress code, attendance, care of textbooks, use of computer equipment and electronic devices, etc.). It also covers BIA students when they are off-campus for BIA activities (school trips, tours, etc.) and when they are on the University of Bridgeport campus. These rules, regulations, and policies governing student behavior are known as the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Bridgeport International Academy is dedicated to creating an environment for learning, which emphasizes academic proficiency and moral integrity so that students may become successful and responsible adults and citizens. To further this objective, the Academy has established this *Student Code of Conduct*, which promotes a wholesome and safe educational and social environment for students. Each individual student plays a critical role in supporting this environment by complying with the *Student Code of Conduct*. An individual student's failure to follow the *Student Code of Conduct* undermines the environment for the entire student body and is therefore taken seriously by BIA administrators and teachers.

The diversity of the student body in terms of nationality, culture, religion, race, and age makes it incumbent upon the Academy to adopt and implement standards of conduct for all students. Beyond respectful, courteous, and ethical behavior, the Academy insists upon the observance of the highest moral and academic standards by its faculty, staff, and students. Alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs, dating, and sexual activity are prohibited on the campus, and an acceptable grade point average must be maintained.

The Academy expects its older students to serve as positive, wholesome role models for younger students. **Both students and parents/guardians are expected to have read and accepted the *Student Code of Conduct* and to recognize and acknowledge that its provisions shall be binding for all BIA students.** All students are expected to observe the *Student Code of Conduct*, as printed in the current edition of the *Student/Parent Handbook*, during all classes, events, school trips, sporting events, and tours.

After evaluating any misdemeanor, the Administration reserves the right to dismiss a student if the Discipline Committee recommends such action to the head of school (principal), who makes the final decision.

Maintenance of student status is contingent upon, but not limited to, the following factors:

1. The student's continued satisfactory academic standing, with a 2.0 minimum average;
2. Observance of the rules and policies of the Academy and of the *Student Code of Conduct*;
3. Maintenance of current and on-time payment of tuition and charges, with on-time payment by parent(s) or guardian(s) of monthly financial fees.

Rules Regarding Proper Conduct and Behavior for BIA Students

I. Attendance

A. School Attendance

Each student reports to homeroom/morning assembly at 8:00AM for attendance, uniform check, and announcements. If the student is absent or tardy, a parent or guardian is to notify the BIA office before 8:30AM. If the office does not receive an acceptable excuse from the parent or guardian, the student's absence or tardy will be considered unexcused. A phone call or a note does not necessarily excuse the absence or tardy. Please refer to the sections below for a list of acceptable absences and tardies.

A student who is tardy for homeroom must first go to the school office to obtain a late pass in order to be admitted to the homeroom. A student absent from school is to bring a written excuse when he or she returns to school.

Excused School Absences

An absence shall be excused for:

- Attendance at an authorized school activity with the approval of the administration
- A medically documented illness or injury that prevents a student from being physically able to attend school.
- Isolation ordered by the county health offices, the State Board of Health, or an appropriate school official.
- The death or serious illness of an immediate family member, including grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, and stepsisters.
- A medical or dental appointment with approval of the administration in advance, except in the case of an emergency.
- Attendance at a court proceeding when the student is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
- Observance of a religious event, with the approval of the administration in advance.
- Participation in a valid educational opportunity, with approval by the administration.
- Special circumstances, such as natural disasters, severe weather, traffic accidents, or other causes deemed acceptable by the administration.
- Other conditions sufficient to warrant non-attendance, with approval of the administration.
- Absences caused by suspension, expulsion or other disciplinary action are not excused

The BIA administration makes the final determination whether or not an absence is excused or unexcused and will report this to the student's teachers and record this in the student's school record.

Excused School Tardies

Being tardy for the start of the school day may be excused for any of the above reasons. For example, a valid educational opportunity could include attending a college course scheduled for the morning hours. A medical or dental appointment approved in advance by the administration would be a valid excuse for a delayed arrival at school.

The BIA administration makes the final determination whether or not a tardy is excused or unexcused and will report this to the student's teachers and record this in the student's school record. Students and parents should seek this decision ahead of time if at all possible.

Senior privilege

An additional acceptable reason for a student to arrive at the campus after the start of homeroom would relate to senior privilege. On school days when there is no school-wide assembly, seniors have the option of arriving at BIA for their first academic class; that is, they do not need to arrive for homeroom or any study halls they have prior to their first academic class. Seniors must attend the school-wide assemblies that typically are held on the first school day of every week.

Senior privilege cases are not classified as tardies. However, if a senior is late for the first academic class, or the weekly assembly, without an acceptable excuse, that would constitute a tardy.

Senior privilege may be suspended for particular students should the administration decide such is warranted for academic or disciplinary reasons.

Consequences of School Absences or Tardies

- Any student with an unexcused morning tardy will report to the office after school for a ½ hour "After-school Tardy Session" on the same day as the student is tardy.
- An unexcused school absence for one day will go before the Discipline Committee and may result in a suspension.*
- A student who is absent, either excused or unexcused, more than 18 days within a school year (9 per semester) will have missed a substantial amount of class work and is in danger of failing courses. Absences of 9 or more days in a semester will be brought to the Disciplinary Committee for review and if the student misses more than 18 days, the student may be denied credit for one or more quarters. The student may need to attend summer school, take independent courses, repeat classes, or be separated from BIA. The student will be advised of the plan of action by the administration

Note: A student who is suspended will accumulate school absences during the suspension time.

*Serving a suspension is discussed in the section on "Disciplinary Action." Note that a suspension is reported on the student's permanent record.

B. Class Attendance

Students are to report to their classrooms as scheduled. Each student should be in his or her seat by the time the second bell rings. In each class, attendance will be taken and reported to the main office. Should a student be late for a class, he or she is required to come to the office to obtain a late pass in order to be admitted to the class. The administration will make the determination whether or not a class absence or tardy is excused or unexcused and report this to the student's teachers. A student who skips class or arrives late unexcused will be marked either absent excused, absent unexcused, tardy excused, or tardy unexcused, as appropriate. Class absences and tardies can be excused for any of those conditions listed under excused school absences and excused school tardies. In addition, other conditions may apply, such as meeting with a teacher or school official, attending a school sporting event, medical issue that arose during the school day, and so forth.

Consequences of Class Absences or Tardies

Unexcused class tardy

- For an individual class, unexcused tardies will result in a disciplinary action at the discretion of the teacher, which may include, but is not limited to, demerits or grade consequences.
- An accumulation of three unexcused tardies may result in a disciplinary action that includes the possibility of grade reduction and/or detention.*

Class absences

- Any student who skips a class will receive a detention.*
- Six or more unexcused class absences in one semester will result in "0" credit for that particular class.
- Any student who has nine or more class absences in a semester, excused or unexcused, risks not getting credit for the class.

Early Pick Up/Departure Policy

While students are at school, they are the responsibility of the Academy. Students are allowed to leave school after their scheduled classes; however, any student that leaves school before the 3:10pm closing must sign out at the office. Students that leave school early without communicating with the office will receive a warning the first time, a demerit the second time, and then detentions.

*An accumulation of four detentions will result in an in-school suspension. Serving detentions and suspensions is discussed in the section on "Disciplinary Action." Note that a suspension is reported on the student's permanent record

II. Dress Code

Student attire must reflect respect for the standards of the Academy. Modesty in personal dress is expected for all students. Please note that in the case of “gray areas,” it is at the discretion of the administration whether or not a student is in compliance with the dress code.

A. Proper Attire during School Hours:

- A black, navy blue, white, or gray polo shirt with a collar and long or short sleeves for both boys and girls.
- Layers must match the polo shirt color, although a white T-shirt is allowed, but must be tucked into the pants.
- In cooler weather, students may wear plain black or navy-blue jackets, which can be worn over the polo shirts. Students may also wear plain black, white, gray, or navy-blue sweaters, cardigans, sweatshirts, or blazers. A warm winter coat (of any color or colors) is also recommended for very cold weather, including for activities requiring transit on the University of Bridgeport campus, but it may not be worn to classes. School-approved sweatshirts (e.g., approved senior-class sweatshirts and Bridgeport Prep Basketball sweatshirts) are also allowed. Hooded sweatshirts (hoodies) are allowed, but the hood is not to be worn in the school building during the day.
Khaki pants for both boys and girls. All pants must be properly fitted and neat. Pants must not be worn low on the hips so as to show underwear or skin between the shirt and pants. Skirts are not allowed. (However, see “Casual Friday.”)
- In warm weather, boys and girls may wear classic style, khaki-colored, long shorts, as long as they touch the knee.
- Footwear must be worn at all times. Students must wear closed shoes. Sneakers are acceptable.
- Specified “Casual Friday” days are marked on the school calendar.

B. Unacceptable Attire during School Hours:

- No sandals, crocs, or shoes without backs.
- No caps, hats, or other headgear may be worn in the school building, with the exception of headwear worn for religious purposes with the approval of the administration.
- No blue jeans or sweat suits, except for designated Casual Friday days.
- No P.E. attire during regular classes.
- No leggings (skin-tight or form-fitting garments that cover the legs) unless under pants that itself meets the school dress code, or under the proper gym outfit in the case of P.E. class.
- No attire that is distracting.

C. Proper Attire on Campus After School Hours, including Extracurricular Activities (i.e., after 3:10PM and/or after classes are completed):

- **All BIA students** are expected to dress modestly and properly while on the BIA campus, even after classes are finished for the day.
- **For girls**, this means no pajama bottoms, halter tops, deep V-neckline, strapless or tank tops, short shorts, or tops which expose the abdomen.
- **For boys**, this means not going shirtless, not wearing muscle shirts, and not wearing pants so low on the hips so as to expose underwear or skin.

D. Casual Friday

The last school-day Friday of each month is a designated Casual Friday day. On this day, students have the option of dressing more casually in terms of choice of attire (shirts, pants, shorts, skirts). Students may also wear regular school uniform on those days.

Students must still be in school appropriate attire: shorts and skirts should touch the knee, no leggings as pants, no midriff-baring shirts, tops should not be low cut or sleeveless. Students are not to wear pajamas, nor have anything profane or offensive on their clothing.

In the case of “gray areas,” it is at the discretion of the administration whether or not a student is in compliance with the dress code for Casual Friday. Administration may ask the student to change into more appropriate attire.

E. Designs

A student may not display a design, message or depiction of a sexually explicit, profane, or offensive nature, nor anything that would incite or initiate an illegal, violent or sexual action, including identifiable gang clothing or paraphernalia.

F. Jewelry and Make-Up

Any jewelry being worn is to be moderate—if too excessive the student will be notified to remove it. Makeup for girls should be tasteful, a light color, and natural looking. It is inappropriate for students to wear heavy, dark-colored eyeliner and lipstick.

G. Hair

Students are expected to look neat and professional as school.

All students should have neat haircuts. Hair styles are to be neat and not distracting. Unnatural hair

colors (neon orange, blue, green, pink, neon red, purple, etc.) are prohibited, as are spikes and mohawks.

Boys must be clean-shaven. Beards, mustaches, or long sideburns are prohibited unless a religious, medical, or cultural exemption is requested by a parent or guardian.

The administration determines action on questionable haircuts/styles.

H. Consequences of violations of the dress code.

A student found to be in violation of the dress code during the school day is issued demerits according to the *Merit/Demerit Policy*. A teacher or administrator who determines that a student's apparel is inappropriate has the authority to exercise discretion in directing a student to change clothes. A student who is wearing non-uniform clothing in the school building during the school day will be asked to remove the item of clothing, be sent home to change, or wear a provided garment for the day. Sweatshirts or jackets of a different color must be removed while in school. Students will be required to take them to the office until the end of the school day. Jewelry that is not acceptable will need to be removed and must be held in the main office until the end of the day. Refusal to remove the item or wear the provided garment is reason for detention, being sent home, and parental notification.

Students and parents will be given notification of a three-day period to correct a hairstyle, hair color, or to get a haircut, after which the student will report to the administration for approval. If the hair style is still unacceptable, the student will be sent home. Repeated infractions of the dress code are reported to the Discipline Committee and administration.

Proper gym attire is part of the grading process for P.E. class (including classes serving as P.E. alternatives). Students who come to P.E. class without proper attire may be subject to additional disciplinary action at the discretion of the teacher, including the possibility of detention.

III. Lockers

One locker is provided to each student for all personal and school-related supplies. Students are not to use any other locker, whether or not it is unused at the time. A student may request a lock from the school office or bring his or her own combination lock as long as it is properly registered in the main office. The school cannot be responsible for possessions and valuables that are not secured with locks. Students must not keep in their lockers any items that are inappropriate, objectionable or in any way violate the student rules of conduct. The Academy reserves the right to search lockers, back packs, and any places and articles of private property located on the school premises. Coat hooks are provided for coats and sweaters to be hung in the hall. No book bags are allowed on the floor in the hallways.

Consequences: Items prohibited either by law or by the school regulations will be confiscated. Staff members are permitted to confiscate objectionable or obscene materials, such as personal music with foul language and explicit sexual posters, as well as alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, and other types of private property deemed to be in violation of the student rules of conduct.

IV. Lunch

The lunch period is from 11:50AM until 12:40PM. Students may eat in the Marina Cafeteria or bring their own lunches and eat in the lunchroom. With written permission from a parent or guardian, local students may go home to eat. Parents should inform the office at the beginning of the year if their child is allowed to eat at home and is allowed to bring friends home, and if the student is allowed to pick up lunch at a local establishment.

V. Study Hall

All students will be assigned to study halls when they do not have classes. Once they have completed their regular classes for the day, they may depart the school; however, should they remain in the school building, they are assigned to a study hall. Only seniors, based on senior privilege, have the option of returning to their dormitory room or apartment/home during scheduled study halls.

Study hall is treated like all other classes and all classroom rules and consequences apply. This is a quiet time to concentrate on doing homework, reading books, or writing. Students must bring appropriate study materials and homework assignments to the study hall. All students must remain in the study room under the supervision of a teacher. With permission, students may use the computer labs for research and study.

Consequences: Anyone who misuses study hall time will be issued demerits according to the *Merit/ Demerit Policy* and may also be given a reading and writing assignment or other disciplinary action, including a detention to be fulfilled after school. Repeat offenses will result in a meeting of the Discipline Committee and report to the parents.

VI. Use of the Student Computer Lab and Technology

The lab hours are from 8:00AM until 4:00PM. Research may be done before classes, during lunch hour, during study hall, or after school until 4:00PM. To protect the computers, food or drinks or water in open containers are not allowed in the computer lab. The use of the computer lab is a privilege for schoolwork and is for academic research only.

Violations include:

- Placing of unlawful information on the computer system.

- Use of abusive and/or objectionable language in either public or private messages.
- The sending of messages that result in the loss of a recipient's work or damage to the computer network system.
- The sending of an inappropriate message or information that causes congestion of the computer network or otherwise interferes with the work of others.
- Use of school computers for non-educational purposes (playing computer games, visiting social networking sites, watching non-approved media online, etc.)
- Any use of a telephone or computer network (e.g., e-mail) to insult, demean, distress, or intimidate another person.

Consequences: Specific services of the computer network may be revoked at any time for abusive conduct. Violations will result in the student being asked to leave the computer room. Repeat violations will result in the student not being allowed in the computer room for three days. Continued misuse of school computers will result in suspension of the student's account, the student not being allowed in the computer room for a week, plus a teacher conference.

VII. Electronic Devices

The policy on use of electronic devices is governed by the document *Digital Citizenship at Bridgeport International Academy: Policy for the Appropriate Use of Electronic Devices by Students*.

VIII. Textbooks

Textbooks are expensive school property on loan to each student for the school year. All books should be covered and protected from marks or other damage. Textbooks must be kept in the lockers or book bags, not in the classrooms or public places, and must be returned at the end of the year or upon leaving the school. Some of the new textbooks have a CD that students may use to carry back and forth. This CD is expensive to replace and must be turned in when the textbook is returned.

Consequence: A parent/student will be charged for lost or damaged books.

IX. Elevator Policy

The elevators in the building are for emergencies, deliveries, and laundry and otherwise require special permission to use. Students are to take the stairs and not use the elevators. In the mornings before school starts, dorm students may find the south stairway the easiest to reach the second-floor homerooms. At all times, students may use the north stairway and proceed into the school through the main entrance.

Consequence: Misuse of the elevator will lead to demerits, and repeat offenses will result in detentions and a possible meeting of the Discipline Committee.

X. Policy Regarding Public Displays of Affection/Dating/Romantic Relationships

BIA's philosophy is that students perform best academically in an atmosphere where they are not distracted by the social pressures of dating. Exclusive relationships limit a student's opportunity to interact socially with peers who have a wide variety of ethnic and national backgrounds. Furthermore, pre-mature sexual intimacy poses potential serious risks to the emotional and physical health of high school students. Therefore, BIA expects that:

A. Students will treat everyone with equal respect as a friend and co-student, rather than entering into an exclusive romantic or dating relationship. At BIA there are many international students. It is helpful for everyone's social development and cultural education when we reach out to each other as friends and peers.

B. Dating, romantic relationships, intimate sexual behavior, sexually explicit activity, and public displays of affection (PDAs) such as kissing, hugging, draping arms on one another, holding hands, and resting heads on shoulders are considered inappropriate for students while on the BIA/university campus. At the school and in the dorms, all BIA students are expected to focus on academics, and **not to be sexually active** or romantically involved with others.

BIA believes strongly in respecting personal space and boundaries. Students of both genders are expected to show respect for everyone's personal boundaries at all times.

BIA believes in preparing students for the future. Most, if not all, workplaces require employees to respect professional standards. BIA expects the same from its students.

Consequences: A boy and a girl who display public displays of affection or intimacy toward one another will result in a conference with an individual designated by the head of school. The head of school, based on the recommendation of the Discipline Committee, may determine the consequences depending on the behavior and/or frequency. Serious offenses could result in suspension or expulsion.

XI. Obscene Language and Materials

A. It is essential that the school atmosphere is pleasant and spiritually wholesome. No written or spoken obscene language or pornographic materials are allowed.

B. Viewing of pornographic magazines, posters, books, cartoons, videos or other such materials (electronic or print) is considered damaging to the well-being of a high school student and is prohibited on the university/BIA campus. Downloading, uploading, storing, distribution or printing of electronic files and messages that are profane, obscene or that use offensive language, or language that is degrading to others, are all prohibited.

C. The Academy reserves the right to search lockers, backpacks, and any places where articles of private property are located on the school premises. Teachers and staff members will confiscate objectionable or obscene materials such as explicit sexual posters and personal music with foul language, and other such objects.

Consequence: Items prohibited either by law or by school regulations will be confiscated and potentially destroyed. A student violating these policies will be given a detention. Serious, repeat offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal from the Academy.

XII. Substance Abuse

BIA has a zero tolerance for substance abuse. No illegal, recreational drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products are allowed on the school premises. The administration of BIA has the right to search lockers and backpacks, if deemed necessary. Any purchase, possession, distribution, consumption, inhalation, sale, or use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or controlled or chemical substances at any time, by any student, on the BIA campus is strictly prohibited and cause for immediate suspension and possibly permanent dismissal. If there is a reason to believe that a student has violated this rule, he/she may be tested for drug use in accordance with the law. The school reserves the right to employ random testing under the supervision of the Administration.

Consequences: Any violation of these rules will be brought before the Discipline Committee and may result in assignment to a counselor, a parent conference, a suspension, and ultimately expulsion.

XIII. Violence and Weapons

BIA has a zero-tolerance policy for violence of any kind. It is possible for disagreements, name-calling, taunting, and other annoying behavior to escalate into fights. Especially in a diverse environment where cultural misunderstanding may occur, students must be vigilant about seeking peaceful mediation, or leaving the area when it appears that emotions could escalate to cause a physical fight. Students must not try to intervene or become involved in a physical fight. Instead, they should report the incident immediately to a teacher or administrator to prevent anyone from being harmed. The Discipline Committee will explore the complete situation and make a recommendation to the administration.

Students are not allowed to bring to school property, or to any school-sponsored event, any weapons or other dangerous items that appear to be weapons, including but not limited to firearms, knives, daggers, clubs, explosive devices (including fireworks), metal knuckles, laser lights, chemical inhalants, or any other potentially dangerous devices.

Consequences: Any violation of these rules will be brought before the Discipline Committee and may result in assignment to a counselor, a parent conference, a suspension, and ultimately expulsion. If a student becomes involved in a physical fight, even to intervene, he/she faces consequences, as

well as the parties initially involved. Should there be a need (e.g. the students are in danger of being injured), the administration will call the police. International students should be aware that such action could result in the loss of their I-20 and they would have to leave the country. Students involved could be given suspension or be dismissed from the Academy.

XIV. Sexual Harassment, Racial Innuendos, and Verbal Abuse

Sexual harassment, racial innuendoes, and verbal abuse are not tolerated. Any occurrences will be reported to a teacher or administrator who will determine whether to give the offender a detention or whether to bring the issue to the administration and/or Discipline Committee.

The following specific behaviors are violations of the *Student Code of Conduct*.

- Staring or leering at parts of someone else's body.
- Comments, gestures or jokes of a sexual or obscene nature.
- Displaying sexual pictures, objects, and private body parts.
- Either spreading sexual rumors or commenting about sexual behavior.
- Touching, grabbing, pinching or kissing someone else.
- Sexual innuendo, especially if this is repeated behavior.
- Making derogatory or demeaning comments, or writing derogatory or demeaning words, symbols and the like that are directed at an individual or group, directly or indirectly presented, because of his/her/their race, ethnicity, color, national origin or ancestry, religion, disability, gender, or any other protected status as defined by law.

Consequences: Consequences will be determined by the Discipline Committee based on the seriousness of the offense and may include counseling, community service work or suspension.

XV. Vandalism

Vandalizing and damaging furniture, equipment, and/or other school property are not allowed, including graffiti or putting gum on property. Throwing objects anywhere, including through windows, in stairwells and halls, or at other people is not allowed. Students and their families will be held financially liable for any damages to people or property. The Discipline Committee will determine the amount of remuneration for damaged goods.

Consequences for infractions are given in the following ways:

- (1) Cleaning the defaced furniture, if possible;
- (2) A general cleaning assignment;
- (3) Fixing the broken items or articles;
- (4) Replacing the damaged goods;
- (5) Paying money to fix or replace an item;
- (6) The Discipline Committee may be called upon to make recommendations to the administration.

XVI. Fire Alarms

Tampering with fire alarms or other safety equipment is forbidden and against the law. Students may not engage in dangerous pranks or activities such as tampering with smoke detectors.

XVII. Use of Faculty and Staff Areas and Possession of Keys

Areas specifically designated for use by teachers and staff, such as the offices, employee bathrooms, faculty desks, faculty lounge, and storage and maintenance facilities, are off limits to students. Students may use the computer lab as a place to study. The use or possession by a student of a BIA key without faculty or staff permission is a violation of the *Student Code of Conduct*.

XVIII. Driving Permission

With parental permission, a student may drive to and from school. A student may take another student by car to and from the Academy only with the express written permission of both sets of parent(s) or guardian(s) for both the driver and the passenger. This written permission is to be provided to the school office. Likewise, for the safety of all students, no student is allowed to have another student in his or her car as a passenger during the school day unless there is express written permission of both sets of parent(s) or guardian(s) for both the driver and the passenger. Note that no student is allowed to teach another student to drive while at or on the BIA campus. Please note applicable Connecticut State Law for driver license restrictions for those who are 16 and 17 years of age. For example, such minors may not drive other individuals unless they are immediate family members (e.g., brothers or sisters) and even then, only after 6 months of having their driver license.

XIX. Visiting Policy

Student guests are not permitted on campus unless approved by administration. Visitors with special permission/circumstances that come to the Academy must check in with the office and wear a visitor's pass during their stay. Anyone caught on school property without a visitor's pass will be escorted to the office for a pass or asked to leave.

Disciplinary Action

Bridgeport International Academy has a comprehensive policy on disciplinary action that is designed to foster a positive learning environment for all students and guide compliance of students with the *Student Code of Conduct* (attendance, dress code, electronic device policy, etc.). BIA's disciplinary procedures are designed to be an educational process, not a punitive experience. Founded on responsibility, accountability, and restorative action, students are given a facilitated opportunity to address (their) policy infractions, and seek appropriate/responsible course(s) of action. BIA's disciplinary model is reinforced through the integration of a merit/demerit/detention/suspension system.

Merit/Demerit System

The merit/demerit system implemented by BIA helps to foster a classroom and school environment conducive to learning. The system is designed to help students have greater awareness of how their actions impact others and to raise self-discipline, and to reward students who are particularly meritorious in their behavior.

Demerits are issued to students for actions that the teachers or administrators do not consider to rise to the level of a detention, but deserve more than a verbal warning. For example, demerits may be issued for dress-code violations, use of electronic devices in classrooms without permission, non-educational use of school computers, or other conduct that falls short of that required of a BIA student. Demerit points accumulate throughout the semester and could rise to the level of loss of certain privileges, detentions, teacher/parent intervention meetings, and suspensions.

Demerits themselves are not a punishment, but they do serve as a record of unacceptable actions and provide means of communicating to the students and parents what behaviors need to be corrected. On the other hand, those students who do not accumulate demerits, or to whom teachers/administrators award merit points for particular praiseworthy actions, are eligible for various privileges and recognitions.

Demerit points may vary according to the type and severity of the infraction. In general, one demerit point is issued per infraction. However, teachers and administrators have the discretion to issue two or three demerits should they deem a certain infraction to be particularly deliberate, defiant, and/or serious, or should there be successive violations. More serious actions, such as defiance of authority, class disruption, failure to put away electronic devices when so instructed by the teacher, skipping a class, and use of another student's ID card to gain access to the UB cafeteria, generally result in detentions, not demerits.

Many classroom issues may result in impact on student's grade rather than demerits, such as failure to bring required classroom materials, unexcused tardy, late/missing assignments, failure to participate in classroom activity, and plagiarism.

Students and parents should review the *Merit/Demerit Policy* for a list of infractions as well as consequences relative to accumulated demerit points and for awards for those with few or no demerits accumulated. The procedure for issuing and recording demerits and notification to students and

parents regarding individual and accumulated demerits likewise is detailed in the *Merit/Demerit Policy* handout.

Discipline Committee

A Discipline Committee may be convened to address violations of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Based on the recommendations of the Discipline Committee, the head of school may issue a written warning, assign restrictions, or take such disciplinary action as he/she deems necessary, after evaluating the seriousness and consequences of a violation. There will be no corporal punishment, profane or abusive language, ridicule, or ostracizing treatment by any of the teachers or staff towards any student(s). Students will, however, be held accountable for misbehavior or for violation of the Academy's rules and code of conduct.

When deemed appropriate, the head of school may ask other members of the faculty or staff or residential life staff to attend a particular meeting of the Discipline Committee, in order to solicit input from adults who are knowledgeable about the students and about incidents involved. Students under review for a violation may be required to appear before the entire committee in order to answer questions. The head of school and the Discipline Committee render their decisions in private, and the head of school will communicate those decisions in writing to the parties involved. Parents will be informed of the decision.

While the Discipline Committee may make recommendations, it is the responsibility primarily of the head of school to decide the appropriate form of discipline on a case-by-case basis. Ultimately, it is the head of school's task to determine such actions as probation, in-school suspensions, or permanent dismissal or separation from the Academy. In the absence of the head of school, another administrator will assume those disciplinary responsibilities.

Disciplinary actions

A single violation of the *Student Code of Conduct* or of any one of the basic policies or rules of the Academy may result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

Verbal Warning

In many cases, a student is notified via verbal warning when he/she has violated a stated Academy rule, regulation, or policy. A verbal warning is the first line of communication that a student receives and should be acknowledged as a word of caution and/or reminder that further violations may result in more serious restriction(s) or disciplinary actions. This warning may be accompanied by a short counseling session with the assumption that the student will understand clearly the offensive behavior and know how to correct it.

Restrictions

Certain violations may entail the loss of student privileges. Restrictions may include any combination of the following: confinement to a classroom or another location, loss of recreational privileges, loss of computer privilege, a cleaning detail, a writing assignment, and/or exclusion from an activity.

Demerits

Demerits are issued to students for actions that the teachers or administrators do not consider to rise to the level of a detention, but deserve more than a verbal warning. Demerit points accumulate

throughout the semester and could rise to the level of loss of certain privileges, detentions, teacher/parent intervention meetings, and suspensions. The *Merit/Demerit Policy* details the list of infractions, number of demerits per infraction, and consequences relative to accumulated demerits.

Detention

A detention will be given for offenses such as skipping a class or accumulated demerits, or at teacher's discretion for three unexcused tardies, or as deemed necessary for unruly classroom behavior. Detentions will be fulfilled from 3:15 to 4:15PM on a day of the week set by the administration and will also be reported to a parent or guardian. Detentions accumulate throughout the year and any student who accumulates four detentions will be issued a suspension.

Written Warning

An official warning or incident report is a written record of a significant violation and is added to the student's file. The warning is issued to the student with a copy sent to the parent or guardian. The Academy will inform the parent or guardian of the nature and seriousness of the violation. A student may be issued a written warning if found exhibiting a pattern of disregard for the Academy's rules (for example, repeated missing of classes or activities).

In-school suspension

When a student accumulates four detentions during the school year, or has violated a rule for which it is deemed necessary to give an in-school suspension, the student will spend a day on a supervised project in a designated place at the school. In-school-suspensions may be fulfilled on Saturdays. Students will report to the Detention Supervisor at 8:00^{A.M.} on Saturday morning for work detail. A suspension (whether in-school or out-of-school) is reported on the student's permanent record.

Out-of-school Suspension

A student may be suspended out-of-school for one day, three days, one week, or the remainder of the current semester. A student who has been suspended for an entire semester may apply for re-admission for any following term. No credit will be given for tests or any other school work during the suspension time.

Probation

See below for details related to the four types of probation.

Expulsion

A student may be dismissed from the Academy for either an indefinite period or permanently. A student who has been dismissed must receive written permission from the Academy before making an application for re-admission.

Probation

Four types of probation are recognized by BIA.

Admissions Probation

A student may be admitted to attend BIA for a probationary period of time (e.g., for 1st quarter or 1st semester) whenever there is some concern about whether the student will be able to thrive at BIA.

Such probation may be related to being too young, questionable academic preparation, health issues, or a history of behavioral issues. We believe that there are times that students deserve the opportunity to prove themselves, but at the same time we reserve the right to a trial period on BIA's part as well as that of the student.

Disciplinary Probation

A student placed on disciplinary probation risks immediate suspension or dismissal from the Academy for any additional violation. The Discipline Committee determines the length and conditions of the probation.

Academic Probation

A grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 (C) is the minimum for acceptable academic progress. A student who earns less than a 2.0 GPA for any quarter in the school year—unless there are significant extenuating circumstances, as determined by the head of school or academic dean—will be placed on academic probation until improvement to a 2.0 GPA is demonstrated.

Students and parents of students placed on academic probation will receive a warning letter indicating that if the student does not improve by the end of the following quarter, he/she is in jeopardy of being dismissed from the Academy. Additional requirements, such as regular meetings with teachers of those classes where the student has poor grades, are set at the discretion of the Academic Committee.

A student who earns less than a 2.0 GPA for two consecutive quarters, or who fails to complete requirements set by the Academic Committee, may be separated from the Academy at the end of the probationary time period. In addition, a student who earns less than a 2.0 GPA for the entire year may be separated from the Academy at the end of the school year.

The administration may consider an exception that allows a student additional time to improve to a 2.0 GPA. If the administration, in consultation with faculty, determines that the student is motivated to improve or if there are special circumstances that have temporarily influenced the student's grades, the student may be allowed to remain in good standing for an additional time period.

Financial Probation

Students will not be allowed to attend classes beginning on the first day of the month in which the tuition payment for the preceding month has gone unpaid. Students may not return until all fees and late charges are current. A \$40 late fee will be assessed for any past due payment, and a \$20 fee will be assessed for any check returned with the designation insufficient funds. If parents find there will be a problem, they should schedule an appointment to meet with the principal and make a payment plan.

Dismissal from the Academy

If a student does not meet the terms of any of the aforementioned probations, that student will be at risk for permanent dismissal from the Academy.

Medical Services & Policies

The Health Center

BIA's Health Center is overseen by the school nurse, who reports to the head of school. For all emergency medical services, BIA draws on the support of Southwest Community Health Center (see below), Bridgeport Hospital, St. Vincent's Hospital and other recognized institutions. Various other medical professionals may be consulted and commissioned to assist, as deemed necessary.

Medical services of BIA include the following:

1. Medical Treatment

The nurse, head of school, and other properly authorized teachers/staff may dispense over-the-counter and prescription medications to students per orders from a doctor. Students taking medication will be monitored appropriately. The responsibility for payment of all medical expenses is that of the parent/guardian, not of BIA. With the exception of dormitory students, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian, not of BIA, to arrange all medical appointments for his/her child to visit either a doctor's or a dentist's office.

2. Illness

It is sometimes unavoidable for students to miss school due to emergencies, inclement weather, illness, or doctor appointments. If a student is sick, parents or guardians must notify the Academy in the morning by 8:30AM.

In all instances, students must bring a note from home that explains the reason for the absence and submit this to the nurse or school secretary when returning to school. Students who fail to submit a written note from a parent, guardian or medical professional will be marked unexcused.

3. Medical Records on File

A copy of each student's medical records (including the Connecticut Health Assessment Form, medical history information, consent to medical treatment, insurance information, and emergency contact information) is kept in the office and a copy is taken on field trips. A parent or guardian may view the medical records and reports of their child upon written request. A parent/guardian and the student concerned are requested to inform the nurse, head of school, or school secretary immediately if the medical status of a student changes.

4. Mild Illnesses and Injuries

If a student is diagnosed to be well despite claiming to be ill and thus is able to take classes, he/she will be given the appropriate medical attention, but be required to attend and participate in all classes

as scheduled. If an occasion arises when the teacher sends a student out of class for a medical reason (such as a shortness of breath, weakness, or fatigue), the student should report to the office or school nurse immediately.

The school nurse may release a student from participating in a class, if it is found to be medically in the student's best interest to remain in the Health Center or designated administration room to rest. The school nurse will inform the head of school and school secretary of the student's absence, and the school secretary or head of school will inform the teachers of the student's classes.

Dormitory students (unless they have a fever, diarrhea, or vomiting) should report to the school nurse for any ailments that are questionable. The nurse will determine medication, rest, return to the dorm, or participation in classes and activities.

5. Use of Medical Supplies

Students may not take any medical supplies without permission from the school nurse. Medicines and medical supplies will be dispensed as needed under the supervision of the head of school, doctor or nurse.

Southwest Community Health Center (SWCHC)

In January of 2013, BIA entered into a partnership with Southwest Community Health Center (SWCHC) as one of the primary medical providers for BIA's international and out-of-state students. This partnership was established in order to provide multiple medical services for such BIA students, ranging from sick visits to vaccinations to dental and behavioral services. The partnership also was arranged to facilitate issues regarding health records that are mandated by the State of Connecticut with regard to physical examinations, health assessments, and immunizations, as well as testing for tuberculosis, that must be completed in the United States by a legally qualified physician or practitioner of medicine in the United States prior to enrollment in school.

Costs for immunization and health care are the responsibility of the parents. Parents of international and out-of-state students should either obtain health insurance or reimburse BIA for all medical or immunizations expenses that are incurred by their child. All international or out-of-state students will be charged \$250 in order to cover all of the health immunization requirements of the State of Connecticut. This amount of money will cover the cost for a physical examination/health assessment by a physician of SWCHC, as well as cover any missing vaccines, immunizations, or testing that is necessary. Any subsequent visits to a physician, medical clinic, or hospital that exceeds the cost of that initial visit to SWCHC will be billed directly either to the parents' insurance company or to the parents/guardian.

Security

Bridgeport International Academy has placed a priority on student and staff safety.

BIA has extensive security system in and around the school. External doors are continuously locked

with entrance via key fobs issued to staff. Visitors are buzzed through the main door into the office after viewed on a camera and with an audio system should questions need to be posed to screen guests. Dormitory students are also issued key fobs, but these are programmed only to provide access to doors leading to the dormitory. There are cameras placed throughout the building and in various places providing a view outside the building; these cameras are monitored throughout the day by the office staff, supplemented by periodic viewing by the IT manager.

Nearly the entire staff lives in the school building, positively adding to the environment of the school. The faculty is in constant communication through a "Staff/Faculty Chat" app, where reports on student behavior, well-being, and safety are shared in real time, ensuring the environment is closely monitored throughout the day. BIA takes its responsibility as mandated reporters seriously with channels to communicate any concerns to administrators or relevant authorities. Maintaining a safe, nurturing environment is at the heart of BIA's culture, and the entire staff works collaboratively to ensure the protection of every student.

BIA is located adjacent to the campus of the University of Bridgeport, which utilizes a state-of-the-art security monitoring and response system. BIA has an excellent relationship with UB and UB security, and BIA staff members are all provided a direct number to UB security. Connecticut state police are located in a building only a few blocks from the BIA building.

BIA students are issued ID cards, which they are to have in their possession at all times, including on the UB campus. BIA students are not permitted off the campus during school hours without permission of an adult staff or faculty member.

The school has *Crisis Plan*, and it is made available to all faculty and staff in a shared faculty folder. It provides a detailed plan, updated annually, to deal with building evacuation, shelter-in place, and two levels of lockdown (full lockdown and soft or lockdown with warning). The staff and faculty strive to practice drills monthly, complete with notification of parents and UB security. The crisis plan is in place and posted, and various emergency drills are conducted periodically throughout the year, so everyone, students and staff, can practice the proper procedure.

All adults who work with students receive CPR and basic first-aid training every two years.

School Delays and Closures

As a general policy, the Academy follows the same weather-related school closings and delays as that of the Bridgeport Public Schools. For example, if the public schools have a two-hour delay due to weather, BIA will have a two-hour delay; if the public schools close early due to weather, then BIA will close school early.

However, note that BIA follows a school calendar that is separate from that of the Bridgeport Public Schools. BIA has school on many days when the public schools do not have school scheduled and vice versa. Likewise, public schools may have a half-day scheduled on a day when BIA has a full-day

scheduled, and vice versa.

The independent calendars between BIA and the Bridgeport Public Schools means, first of all, that this above-mentioned policy on closings and delays *refers only to those unscheduled events caused by inclement weather or catastrophes*. Secondly, it means that for days on which BIA has school scheduled, but the Bridgeport Public Schools do not have school scheduled, parents and students need to access various sources to determine whether or not BIA has a weather-related school closing or delay.

In the case of delay or closing, the school will communicate via automated messaging service. Messages will be sent via phone call, text, and email. It is important that students and parents keep the office up to date on contact information. Families can also go to CT weather.com to see any cancellations and delays.

Regardless of weather reports or how the weather looks, please assume that BIA is open unless you find out clearly that school is closed or delayed, whether because the Bridgeport Public Schools have a weather-related closure or delay, or because you have seen specific closure-delay information about BIA. If you have any doubt, please call the BIA office at 203-334-3434.

Although rare, please note that BIA does reserve the right to not follow the Bridgeport Public Schools regarding any specific delays or closures should it be deemed necessary or important. If this is the case, all parents and students will be personally notified—by email, texts, and phone calls—in a timely fashion.

Schedule for Full-days, Half-days and Weather-Related Delays

The normal school schedule is as follows:

Period	Meeting Time	
1	8:00–8:10AM	Homeroom
2	8:15–9:00	1st morning class
3	9:05–9:50	
4	9:55–10:40	
5	10:50–11:50	P.E./Character Ed/Activity
6	11:50AM –12:40PM	Lunch period
7	12:45–1:30	1st afternoon class
8	1:35–2:20	
9	2:25–3:10	Last class of the day

For scheduled half-days, BIA follows a condensed schedule whereby each class meets, but for abbreviated time periods. The schedule for half-days is as follows:

Period	Meeting Time	
1	8:00–8:10	Homeroom
2	8:15–8:40	1st morning class
3	8:45–9:10	
4	9:15–9:40	
7	9:45–10:10	1st afternoon class
8	10:15–10:40	
9	10:45–11:10	
5	11:15–12:00	P.E./Character Ed/Activity

For weather-related school delays, there is no homeroom. Students go to whatever class is scheduled at the particular time school begins. For example, a one-hour delay means school begins at 9:00AM, and the student would go to his or her period 3 class (the second academic class of the day, since the first academic class ends at 9:00AM). For a two-hour delay, school would begin at 10:00AM. and the student would go to his or her period 4 class (the third academic class of the day), since fourth period begins at 9:55AM.

Mail

Letters and packages should be sent to Bridgeport International Academy, 285 Lafayette Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604. The school's phone number is (203) 334-3434; the fax number is (203) 334-8651. Incoming mail is distributed to students individually

For security reasons, parents and others sending mail are requested to limit the number of valuables to a minimum. Please do not mail cash to students.