Welcome to Bernice Ayer Middle School

Welcome to Bernice Ayer Middle School. The staff at Bernice Ayer Middle School are committed to ensuring the academic social and emotional growth of all students. We look forward to working with students and their parents in making Bernice Ayer Middle School a special place.

You will find that Bernice Ayer Middle School staff members are enthusiastic, caring, competent, and ready to meet your child’s educational, social and emotional needs. Each child’s future depends on how much and how well he/she learns. When children work as hard as they can, they gain skills and knowledge that will enable them to be successful as students and as adults.

While at Bernice Ayer, students will develop a sense of responsibility, not only for making choices, but also for being accountable for their actions. This handbook is intended to help you become familiar with school activities and procedures, and the ten steps on how to be successful. It was written to help answer many of the questions you might have. We encourage you to review this handbook carefully and highlight areas that pertain to your child. Additionally, please visit our website regularly.

From all of the Bernice Ayer staff, we want to welcome you and wish you and your child/children a highly successful and productive year.

Parent Portal: https://abi.capousd.org/
School Loop: www.bams.schoolloop.com
BAMS Website: www.capousd.org/bams/
Facebook: Bernice Ayer Middle School
Twitter: @BerniceAyerms
Instagram: @BerniceAyerms
BERNICE AYER MIDDLE SCHOOL
General Information and Procedures

Student Planner
All students are required to keep a planner to record assignment dates for homework, projects and tests. Students will also need the planner daily so that teachers can indicate which SWELL classes students will be attending. Students without planners will incur consequences.

Bicycles
Students who ride bikes must wear helmets. All bicycles are to be parked and locked in the bike area. Bikes must be walked through campus and never ridden in the hallways or on the blacktop. Do not leave bikes at school overnight.

Skateboards
Skateboards, roller blades, and other roller-sports equipment are not permitted at school.

Cell Phones and Recording Devices:
The use of recording devices and cameras is prohibited without the written permission of teachers or administrators and the students being photographed. Students are allowed to possess cell phones; however, they must be turned off and put away unless authorized by a teacher. The school is not responsible for lost or damaged phones and staff will confiscate phones observed out during the school day without authorization.

Change of Address or Telephone
It is the responsibility of parents to provide the school with current contact information. If the school is not provided with current contact information then staff may not be able to reach parents in an emergency. Please contact the school office when changes are made to your address, telephone or contact information or update any information but an address change on Parent Portal.

Custody-Related Issues
It is the responsibility of parents to provide the school with current documents regarding legal custody. If notified in advance, the school will send both parents copies of records such as grades, progress reports and classroom notices. The school will not restrict information provided to parents unless it possesses current court documents stipulating changes in parental rights. Please contact the school office if you have any questions regarding this policy.

Grades
Progress reports and report cards are issued 8 times a year at 4 or 5 week intervals. They are available on the Parent Portal or can be mailed home upon request. In addition to grades for scholarship, citizenship, and work habits, the report card includes comments teachers.

Progress and report card schedules can be viewed on the BAMS and CUSD school calendars.
If you become concerned about your child’s grades and need information, please contact your child’s teachers. Please expect your child’s interdisciplinary team (his/her group of teachers) to send home a handout during the first week of school that explains their academic and behavioral expectations and grading system. Many teachers ask that parents sign and acknowledgment and have their student return it to one of their teachers. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers directly via school loop.

School Loop
Bernice Ayer students and parents can check grades for classes by going online. Teachers post grades to a secure site that can be accessed using a student’s 7 digit school I.D. number which can be found on the student schedule pickup at registration. Parents and students will need to register for School Loop following the steps below:

- go to: www.bams.schoolloop.com
- Click: Register Now
- For Students – Click: I am student
- For Parents – Click: I am a parent or caregiver
- Fill out the form – you must have the student identification number (7 digits) that is on the student schedule slip that you will receive at Orientation

Once you have registered and the school year has begun, you may access your student’s classes and assignments. School Loop will begin to automatically send a daily update to your email each afternoon beginning late August.

Parent Portal
The CUSD Parent Portal is available to all K-12 parents & students. This program is NOT connected to School Loop; thus, all parents need to register for a parent portal account. Through the use of Parent Portal, parents have the ability to re-register students, update student information, print report cards, and download important documents directly from the portal, such as transcripts & testing data. Access to student information is intended only for the parents or guardians of the student and is restricted by a secure login and password. Simply log onto https://abi.capousd.org/ where you will find directions for creating your Parent Portal account. The following information will be needed to set up your account:

- Personal working email account
- Students name, home phone, school ID #
- Verification pass code obtained from BAMS front office

Hall Pass
Students are allowed to leave class during the instructional period with teacher permission. Teachers will explain classroom rules regarding bathroom breaks and other contingencies during the first days of school. Students must carry hall passes when they are excused to leave class or they will be escorted back immediately by campus supervisors.

Technology Contract
Parents and students sign a technology contract at the beginning of the year agreeing that the use of computers will be restricted for violations of school rules regarding internet safety, hacking, cyber bullying and Loop Mail.
Homework
To be successful, students should expect to do between 70 and 90 minutes of homework each evening including independent reading. Homework is included as part of each student’s grade in a subject area. If a student has no homework, the student should review class work notes. Students may access School Loop online at www.bams.schoolloop.com for any current homework.

Make-up Work
Students absent due to illness, doctor, or dental appointments have the opportunity to make up their missed assignments. It is the student’s responsibility to check School Loop for assignments and to request, from their teachers, make-up work due to any kind of absence.

Early-out Procedures and Photo Identification
A PHOTO I.D. IS REQUIRED whenever a student is signed out or requested for contact during school hours, and the individual needs to be listed as a contact in the CUSD Parent Portal in order to remove a child from school.

Closed Campus and Visitors
Students must remain on campus until the end of the school day and can only leave early with special permission and approval from office staff. Only adults with district ID or visitor badges are allowed on campus during school hours.

Forgotten Items/Drop-offs
During the school day the classrooms are only contacted by the office for official school business. All items brought to the office for students will be left on the attendance counter for pick up. Students must pick them up during break or lunch on their own.

Visitor badges can be obtained from staff in the front office. Campus supervisors will immediately escort to the office all persons lacking proper identification.

Lost and Found
The lost-and-found box is located at the front office. Items that are unclaimed will be donated to the Goodwill at the end of each quarter. Several school-wide announcements will be made before items are donated.

Lunches
Students wanting to buy lunch at school will be taught how to purchase lunches by their teacher at the beginning of the school year. A combination lunch can be purchased and includes milk, or students can purchase a la carte items for varying prices. A menu and information regarding lunches will be available by the first day of school. Free and reduced-priced lunches are available for students who qualify. Applications may be picked up in the office or on-line. A pre-paid account system is available at www.capousd.org under the departments/programs heading. Information will be included in the August packet. Students who have used an account at a CUSD elementary school will be able to use their same account number.
Health Office
The Health Office is open all day and is staffed by office personnel to help students if they are injured or feeling ill. Students always have the option to call parents. Staff will contact parents if they cannot send them back to class. Students will not be returned to class for the following reasons:

- Vomiting
- Fever
- Rash
- Injuries that may need medical care (beyond basic first aid)
- Signs of considerable pain or discomfort

In the event of a serious health problem, injury or life threatening emergency the staff will call 911 and contact parents immediately.

Medication Administered at School
Students are prohibited from bringing any form of medication to school without a completed Parent Authorization Form on file. The forms are available in the office and must be signed and completed by a medical doctor. Restricted medications include prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines and inhalers. Students in possession of unauthorized medications will be subject to suspension and referral to law enforcement in significant cases.

Physical Education
All students are required to be dressed in their P.E. uniforms and participate in P.E. each day. Lockers and locks are provided in the locker room to store street clothes during physical education. Students may wear a white t-shirt and Navy blue shorts or P.E. clothes may be purchased for $20 from the Physical Education Department. Navy blue sweats are recommended for cooler weather. It is the student’s responsibility to lock his/her locker.

Student Lockers
All students will be assigned a locker for temporary storage of textbooks and school supplies. Each locker comes with a combination lock and students are expected to keep their combinations private. The school is not responsible for damages or loss associated with student lockers, including damage to textbooks. Lockers should be emptied on weekends, holidays and rainy days.

School Hours
The school office is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Students attend class from 8:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. (except on Tuesdays). Tuesdays we have a “late start” with students attending class from 9:45 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. (Please see the bell schedule in this handbook for the complete list of class times.) Students should not arrive on campus prior to 8:20 a.m., unless they have made arrangements with a teacher or are enrolled in zero period. On Tuesdays, students should not arrive before 9:20 a.m. unless they are enrolled in a before school activity.

School Insurance
Parents will have an opportunity to purchase accident, health and dental insurance during the first few weeks of school. Please see information in packet.
Complaints and Investigations
At BAMS, we work daily to encourage healthy positive social interaction; however, sometimes students will experience situations where they feel vulnerable. This can negatively change the way students feel about school and impact their education. In these situations, parents and students are invited to contact the school and report what is going on. The school administration will investigate the problem and take action to resolve the matter so that the student feels supported.

Students can report problems that occur anytime during the school day. If a problem occurs in the classroom or concerns an issue that is related to instruction, homework or grades; the first contact must be with the classroom teacher.

Textbooks and Library Books
The library checkout system is computerized and each student will use his/her ID card to checkout materials and textbooks. All books checked out to students are in good to new condition and students are expected to take care of them by using book covers and keeping them dry. When books are returned their condition will be carefully assessed for water damage, excessive bent corners, torn pages, spine damage, and cover damage. Students will be charged for damages and may be required to purchase of a new book per Capistrano Unified School Districts library policy guidelines and Education Code 48904.

Transfers or Withdrawals from School
Parents must contact the school before they want to withdraw their child. They will need to provide a withdrawal date and new school information. All textbooks must be returned.

Classroom Visits
Parents are always welcome at Bernice Ayer Middle School. Classroom visits are arranged with teachers and must be requested at least 24 hours in advance. Arrangements can be made through either a note or phone call. Please do not plan to meet with a teacher unless it is before or after school hours.

Yearbook
All students will have the opportunity to purchase a yearbook. The books are distributed to students during the last days of school. Students are responsible for any damages, vandalism or loss to their personal yearbook.

The school yearbook is prepared by our yearbook class and there will be many opportunities to purchase one during the school year.

Recycling Program
Volunteers will take all newspapers, bottles and cans to the recycling containers at the end of the parking lot in front of BAMS every Monday and Friday from 8:05 to 8:35 AM. The Recycling Club will not meet on days when there is rain.
Newspapers: We ask that newspapers be taken out of any plastic bags and turned in in paper bags. These papers will be stored in the container in our front parking lot. When the container is full we will receive a check for $1,000.
Plastic Bottles and Cans: Please have them sorted into different bags, i.e. plastic and aluminum. On the bag, please write the student’s last name, classroom teacher, and the number of bottles/cans inside the bag.

Ink Cartridges: We no longer recycle cartridges.

**Buses**

Capistrano Unified School District’s Transportation Department is currently registering those students who wish to participate in the Home-to-School Transportation Program. All students riding the bus must purchase a bus pass prior to the beginning of the school year. Bus pass applications are available from the Bus Pass Office located at #2B Liberty in Aliso Viejo. The Bus Pass Office is open Monday - Friday, 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. All bus pass applications will be accepted by mail, fax or email and can be downloaded or printed from the transportation website at www.capousd.org. Applications will not be mailed home. Telephone calls will go out to current bus riders in English and Spanish explaining how to apply for a bus pass and obtain an application. For more information please call (949) 489-7420 or 489-7421. Internet users may also check CUSD’s website at www.capousd.org for bus pass information. **Students are required to obey all bus conduct rules. All school rules apply at the bus stop and on the bus. Bus privileges can be taken away.**
Conferences, Counseling, and Support

**Academic Advisor**
Students are encouraged to talk with the academic advisor regarding academic issues and scheduling.

**Counseling Office**
Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor about social, personal, school, or family problems. These contacts are made at the request of teachers, parents, administrators, or at the student’s initiative.

**Parent Teacher Conferences**
Our teachers work together to prepare and deliver your child’s education. They accomplish this through planning instructional activities as well as coordinating assignments. The members of the team are present in any conferencing plans regarding your child’s education. This grouping will ensure good communication between you and your child’s teachers.

**Student Review Team**
The Student Review Team consists of the school administrators, counselors, psychologist, special education teachers, and general education teachers. Students are referred to this team by teachers, counselors, administrators, or parents when they are having academic, behavioral, social or emotional problems. Team members ask all the student’s teachers for input; review records; grades; test scores; contact parents; and interview the student. Team members then collaborate to determine the most appropriate interventions to help the student.

**Home Support and Services**
During early adolescence many students may test the system at home and at school. Early adolescents need a supportive and secure environment in which to thrive, one that allows for some experimentation with ideas and relationships within the parameters of what is safe and responsible. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they need support in maintaining a safe and supportive environment at home. There are many city, county and state resources that serve youth and families for this purpose. The school and school district have years of experience in helping families access these resources and it has been a great support for parents.

**Special Education Program**
The Educational Specialist coordinates and supports services for students in the Special Education Program. All students in the Special Education program have personal learning goals and accommodations that are published in a document called an Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Students qualify for an IEP through a series of assessments and observations completed by parents, teachers, Education Specialists and the School Psychologist.

Students that qualify for an IEP have profound learning disabilities and educational deficits. Many students experience challenges in school; however, very few have problems that will require them to be enrolled in Special Education.
If you are concerned that your child has a learning disability or needs more support, please contact his/her teachers. There are many effective ways to help students outside of Special Education. Major improvements are made when parents, teachers and students create interventions that combine efforts in the classroom and home environment.

**Speech/Language Program**
The Speech/Language Pathologist provides services to students who are identified as requiring remediation in the following areas: articulation, language acquisition, comprehension and expression, voice disorders and fluency difficulties. Services are provided to students who are in Special Education and have speech services as part of their IEP.

**Student Recognition and Awards**

**Quarterly Awards**
- Superintendent’s Honor Roll (GPA 3.83 - 4.0) noted on transcripts
- Principal’s Honor Roll (GPA 3.5 - 3.82) noted on transcripts
- Honor Roll Plus Students, who achieve a 3.5 GPA or better for the quarter and have also not earned D or F grades or “N” or “U” citizenship marks at the grading period, will participate in a quarterly reward activity.

**Yearly Awards**

**6th Grade Awards**
- Perfect Attendance (all 3 years)
- Academic 4.0 Award (for all 3 years or 6th grade only)
- Superintendent’s Honor Roll (3.83 – 4.0 for 3 years or 6th grade only)
- President’s Award for Educational Excellence
- Student of the Year (by subject area)
- Breaker Pride Award
- Other Special Awards (see Community Sponsored Awards)

**6th and 7th Grade Award**
- Academic 4.0 Award
- Superintendent’s Honor Roll (GPA 3.83 - 4.0)
- Principal’s Honor Roll (GPA 3.5 - 3.82)
- Perfect Attendance
- Other subject/specialty awards

**Community Sponsored Awards**
- Rotary Award for “Breaker of the Year”
- American Legion Award for “School Service”
- City of San Clemente for “Community Service”
Bi-Monthly Awards
- Breaker Award
  Students, who exemplify the Character Counts "Pillar of the Month", are nominated by faculty from their Advisement classes (Period One), on a monthly basis. The Six Pillars include: Trustworthiness, Respect, Fairness, Responsibility, Citizenship, and Caring.
- Wave Runner Award
  Students, who exemplify academic excellence, talent, or improvement, are nominated by faculty and staff from any period of the day on a monthly basis.

Both Breaker and Wave Runner Award winners are announced over the morning broadcast on the last Friday of the month. Students have their pictures taken and are presented with certificates and rewards.

School Service and Activities

ASB
ASB, an elective, is the Bernice Ayer Middle School student government. Members of this class have the responsibility of representing BAMS in the development and implementation of school policies and activities. It also sponsors the major fund-raising drives to provide monies necessary for special school-wide events. In addition, these students encourage school spirit and organize school activities. Student leaders are elected by the students at the end of the school year prior to their taking office. Requirements for Associated Student Body (ASB) candidates are as follows:
  — Candidates for the ASB offices must be in 7th or 8th grade.
  — Candidates for class offices are selected at the 7th and 8th grade level.
  — Candidates must have maintained a 2.5 (C-) grade point average and have a satisfactory average in citizenship in all classes for the entire previous school year.
  — Candidates must file a petition for office with the advisor on the specified date.
  — Candidates and their parents or guardians are required to sign an agreement to abide by the ASB rules and regulations.
  — Candidates shall give a campaign speech to the entire student body prior to the election. Speech length will be determined by the number of candidates.
  — Candidates must take, as an elective, the ASB class for the entire year they are in office.

Extra-Curricular Activities
We want every student to enjoy the specially planned activities throughout the school year. Every student is required and expected to maintain appropriate behavior in order to attend the activities. Extra-curricular activities include dances, concerts, talent shows, assemblies, grade level activities, and specific field trips. In order to be eligible for these activities, students must not have been suspended the day of the event or been truant from school on the day of the event. Being excluded from an activity is a possibility for a student who is not meeting behavioral expectations. The student and their parents will be notified well in advance of the event should the student be excluded. The Bernice Ayer Middle School faculty would like students to understand that diligent academic work and appropriate behavior has its rewards.
Dances
Dances are sponsored by ASB. Dances are scheduled immediately after school. However, the final 8th grade dance will take place in the evening during the school year. For supervision reasons, students who attend dances must stay to the very end and be picked up within 15 minutes from the end of the dance. You will be informed of specific dates by student flyers. Students must be in attendance the entire school day in order to attend the dance. Only BAMS students may attend dances. Dances will be from 3:30 p.m. - 5:15 p.m., unless noted. Students must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. Students must stay at the dance the entire time unless a parent arrives to pick up the student.

Parent Involvement

PTSA
All parents are encouraged to join the PTSA, which supports many of the student activities. All parents are welcome to volunteer their time and effort whenever possible to help maintain the PTSA’s vital role and contributions to BAMS.

School Site Council
The School Site Council (SSC) is an advisory group composed of elected parents, students and teachers. The SSC meets with the administration twice a year to discuss policy changes, improvements for the school, and implementation of the School Improvement Plan. The council is consulted on matters relative to the goals and objectives of the school as outlined in BAMS school plan. Interested parents are always welcome to attend the meetings.

Parenting Classes:
Our school counselor will be providing information on parent training workshops in South County throughout the year that offer support regarding current child-rearing and social issues, such as homework, responsibilities at home, discipline and drug education. Information about these workshops will be included in school announcements and can be obtained from the main office.

Parent Helpful Hints

Who does what?
Please refer to our website for links to parent resources:  http://bams.schoolloop.com.
If you need information regarding your child’s work or behavior in a class, please email teachers directly. In order to reach a teacher for a telephone or in-person conference, you may leave a message with the receptionist, giving your child’s name and your name and telephone number. The teacher will be able to call you before or after school or during his/her preparation period.

If you have any questions regarding your child’s overall progress with all of his/her teachers, please contact the Guidance Secretary, to arrange for a teacher meeting.

If you have questions regarding the school discipline policy, discipline consequences or a safety issue, call the Assistant Principal.
If you are not sure with whom to speak, call the receptionist and she will refer you to the person best able to assist you. Remember, most problems stem from poor communication or lack of communication, so your first contact most likely will be the teacher.

**Communication**
Information is announced to the students each day via a live television broadcast. All teachers then post the bulletin on the classroom wall.

Parents with email addresses receive ListServe messages at least weekly. It includes articles about upcoming events, students and staff. Please contact the office if you are not receiving the messages. District information is also available through the CUSD website: [www.capousd.org/](http://www.capousd.org/)

General school information is available at our website, including a link to teacher email accounts: [http://bams.schoolloop.com](http://bams.schoolloop.com).

**School Supplies**
Suggested school supplies include: a three-ring binder, dividers, paper, plastic pencil pouch, #2 pencils, blue or black ball-point pens, red ball-point correcting pens and lunch or lunch money.

**Traffic**
Please be aware of the safe area to drop off and pick up your children. The BAMS parking lot on Sarmentoso is the best place to drop off and pick up passengers. Please enter the school parking lot and use the car lane.

- Do not park in red zones
- Do not drop off students in the pass-thru lane
- **Put vehicle in park** while waiting in pick up zones
- **Drive slow at all times** in the front and back lots
- Pick up students from the **curbside only**

**Medical Screenings**
One of the first things teachers look for when a child complains about academic problems is their vision. Please make sure that your child has had an eye examination by a qualified eye care professional every other year. Eighth graders have a vision and hearing screening during the school year.

**Field Trips**
Field trips will be scheduled throughout the year for educational, cultural, and entertainment values. Please sign the permission slip that your child will bring home and have him/her return it to the school. Keep the part that gives you the important date(s) and pick-up times.