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# NEW FAMILY

## HANDBOOK

### 2025-26



[www.mbusd.org](http://www.mbusd.org)



# WELCOME MESSAGE



**Dr. John Bowes**  
**MBUSD Superintendent**

Dear MBUSD Families,

Welcome to MBUSD! As we prepare for the first day of school, we are excited to welcome your student(s) to our District for the 2025-26 school year. The Manhattan Beach Unified School District is a destination district that focuses on providing excellence in education for all students while also supporting the development of the whole child. Our schools are part of a united community. Manhattan Beach is a special place where our Board of Trustees, families, staff, and community partners care about our students' overall academic success and social-emotional well-being.

This handbook is a resource that provides essential information at your fingertips as you navigate a new school and district. Our District serves approximately 6,150 students enrolled across our one preschool, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. We are one of the highest performing school districts in the state and the nation, and most families who move to Manhattan Beach tell us that the schools are one of their top reasons for moving here.

Our remarkable staff, enriching learning opportunities, and award-winning programs empower our students to reach their full potential. MBUSD is a place where students are preparing to become lifelong learners equipped with the skills for success in the future. We have just under 900 highly qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff, all working together to create the best educational environment possible for each child.

Please be sure to subscribe to our weekly [Superintendent's Newsletter](#), follow us on social media, navigate our informative websites, download the District app, and subscribe to your student(s)' school e-newsletters. MBUSD is known for its strong parent- and community-to-school partnerships. We would love to see you get involved and support our schools through our PTAs, Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF), MBX, and/or our booster organizations. You'll find more information about how to do that in this handbook.

We look forward to offering an enriching educational experience for your student(s) and collaborating with you to ensure the success of our students. May your time in MBUSD be truly exceptional, and, on behalf of everyone, we welcome your family!

John Bowes, Ed.D.

*John Bowes*  
Superintendent

Manhattan Beach Unified School District

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# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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## School Calendar

The school year typically starts the third week of August and ends in mid-June. Students attend 180 days of school. The complete school District calendar is available on the District website. Regular attendance is critical to your child's education. Please do not schedule extended family vacations when school is in session.

[2025-2026 Approved Calendar Link](#)

## School Schedules

Each school has its own bell schedule. To find your school's specific start and end times, visit the school's website.

## Wednesday Schedules

Some MBUSD schools follow a different schedule on Wednesdays. Check your school website for times. When school is shortened on Wednesdays, teachers use the additional time to improve student learning through teacher and staff development and focused school improvement efforts. Grade level and subject teacher teams review student assessment results during this time. This effort helps teachers personalize learning for students.

## Minimum Days

Students attend school on a minimum day schedule (dismissal times vary by site) on the day after Back to School Night, Open House, and on the last day of school. Check your school's website for end times.

There are also elementary school "early release" minimum days during the first eight days of school for TK/K, and during parent-teacher conferences in January and reading assessments in September, December, and May.

Check the your school's website for additional minimum days throughout the year.

## School Lunch

The California Universal Meals program allows us to serve school meals to all students free of charge. Menus and information can be found on the MBUSD Food and Nutrition [website](#). Although meals are free, and an application is not required, low-income families may be eligible for additional school benefits. Please submit an [Education Benefits Form](#) if you feel you may qualify (a new application is required annually).

# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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## Home-School Communication

A strong home-school partnership promotes academic and social growth. Ongoing communication occurs through newsletters, emails, telephone calls, and via your school and District websites. Schools host Back to School Nights in the fall where families learn about the upcoming year. In the spring, student learning is showcased at Elementary and Middle School Open House events.

## Immunizations

California state law requires school-age children to receive specific immunizations in order to attend school.

- For Kindergarten: Polio; Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTaP); Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR); Hepatitis B; and Varicella (Chickenpox)
- For 7th grade: Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis booster (Tdap); and Varicella (Chickenpox)

Vaccinations are available at Torrance Health Center at 711 Del Amo Blvd., Torrance, the CVS Minute Clinic (fees apply) at 2900 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Manhattan Beach, or through your private physician. Fees may apply; please check with your provider or clinic.

## Too Sick for School?

Keeping children home when they are too sick for school protects other students and staff from potential illnesses. Keep your child home until they remain free of the below symptoms for a 24-hour period without the use of fever-reducing medication. In addition, students must be picked up from school as soon as possible if they show any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea; twice in a 24-hour period
- Fever, 100.4 F or above
- Severe cold symptoms
- Flu (active symptoms)
- Conjunctivitis (pinkeye), Scabies, or Strep throat (during initial contagious stage)
- Rash/Contagious Condition

Written instructions from the student's physician stating limitations/restrictions and/or instructions for care while at school will be required for the following:

- A student returning to school with a cast, crutch, or other orthopedic appliance
- A student returning to school after a serious illness requiring five (5) days or more of absence from school, a surgical procedure, or overnight hospitalization
- A student who needs to be excused from physical education/playground activities for more than three (3) days in a row

# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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If your child is too sick to attend, it is important that you call the school's attendance line or use the "report an absence" link on your school's website each morning to report your child's absence. If you do not call the school, the absence will be considered unexcused. Absences must be cleared within three days.

## Medication at School

Schools rely on the cooperation of parents and guardians to safely and effectively administer medication to their students at school if that is needed. Parents/guardians are responsible for the following:

- Supplying all medications
- Transporting all medications to and from school

[This form](#) must be signed by the health care provider and the parent/guardian should your child need medication while at school. Forms are available on the [District website](#) or from your school health office.

## Allergies

If your student has a severe allergy that is potentially life-threatening, you must inform the school your child attends. Severe allergies are serious abnormal reactions of the body that are potentially life-threatening. Schools need documentation of these health conditions and necessary treatment instructions to effectively care for your student.

Please click [here](#) for other required forms related to Asthma, EpiPen/epinephrine administration, and medication at school.

## Comprehensive School Safety Plans

Keeping students and staff safe is a top priority. Each school has a safety plan in case of an emergency. The redacted plans are available to view in the school office.

## Personalized Learning

Personalized Learning is a student-centered approach where teachers use data as well as student interests, strengths, and needs to provide flexible learning opportunities. We incorporate technology and student voice and choice, culminating in student growth and excellence.

## Technology

MBUSD continues its commitment to student-centered instruction through the development of 21st-century skills. Students are introduced to technology in age-appropriate ways, with limited use in the early elementary grades, a 1:1 student-to-device ratio for limited in-classroom uses in 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades, a 1:1 device program at MBMS, and a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program at MCHS. Through modeling, coaching, collaborative meetings, and after-school professional development, we are committed to infusing instruction with appropriate technology-based learning opportunities.

# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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## Bark for Schools

This student and school safety product detects potential problems across Google Workspace and Chrome to help protect students. Bark's powerful AI scans student Google Workspace accounts (including emails, chats, and files) for potential issues like threats of violence, cyberbullying, and more. Bark provides us with insights and timely alerts so we can help keep students safe. This includes 24/7 emergency notifications, image removal software for Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), and exportable student alerts to enhance student safety.

## Makerspace

Makerspace is a hands-on, student-directed learning experience provided through our elementary schools. Capitalizing on the student's intrinsic motivation and curiosity, the program fosters innovative thinking, creativity, and engineering skill development by presenting students with projects that challenge them to develop a concept, create plans for project development, solve problems that arise in building a prototype, make improvements to their plans, and finally achieve their goal of accomplishing the objectives of the project.

## Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics (STEAM)

The MBUSD STEAM program offers a dynamic K through 12 pathway, fostering curiosity and innovation. Students explore science in dedicated elementary labs, engage in robust middle school courses, and pursue focused high school pathways in engineering and biotechnology, building real-world skills through hands-on, inquiry-based learning at every grade level. Elementary Makerspaces inspire creativity and collaboration. Middle school students explore technology, design, and coding through engaging electives. In high school, students deepen expertise, apply knowledge to authentic challenges, and prepare for college and careers in STEAM-related fields.

## Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA)

The MBUSD Visual and Performing Arts program offers a comprehensive K through 12 pathway that nurtures creativity, expression, and artistic growth. Students begin with music and theater experiences in transitional kindergarten, followed by dedicated music instruction and electives from grades 1 through 12. Visual arts instruction begins in TK through the Young at Art program and continues with a variety of electives in grades 6 through 12. Middle and high school students explore performing arts through choir, band, drama, and theater, developing confidence, collaboration, and artistic excellence. First through fifth grade students receive weekly music instruction, which forms a foundation on which students can build when the matriculate to MBMS and then to our GRAMMY®-winning high school program. Music, math, language, and science achievement go hand-in-hand.

## English Learners (EL)

When enrolling your student in school, California state law requires you to complete a Home Language Survey. If your responses indicate that a language other than English is spoken at home, we are required to assess your student's English proficiency with the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) if they are in kindergarten or above. Your child will take the Initial ELPAC assessment within the first 30 days of school. The results of the Initial ELPAC help to determine whether or not your student will need additional English language support.





# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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MBUSD offers a Structured English Immersion program for English Learners. This is a classroom setting where English Learners receive instruction through an English language acquisition process, in which nearly all classroom instruction is in English but with a curriculum and presentation designed for children who are learning the language. In grades 3-5, MBUSD provides small group supplemental English Language Development (ELD) instruction for 80 min/week with an ELD teacher (Reading Specialist). At middle and high school, there is also an ELD class that students may take to help support their acquisition of English.

## Special Education

MBUSD provides services to all students, including students with disabilities and special needs. We strive for excellence in a student-centered learning environment that includes highly engaging, differentiated instruction, and utilizes all available resources.

## Board of Trustees

MBUSD's Governing Board, also known as the "Board of Trustees," is comprised of five members who are elected by the public to provide leadership and citizen oversight for the District. While ensuring that MBUSD is responsive to the values, benefits, and priorities of the community, the Board works with the Superintendent and sets the direction of the District. Board meetings are open to the public, and a schedule, along with corresponding minutes, can be found on the MBUSD website.

## MBEF

Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF) was founded in 1983 by a group of concerned parents and community leaders who recognized the need to supplement our limited state funding for education. MBEF is a nonprofit organization that relies on donations from parents, local businesses, and community members to fund programs that inspire learning, enrich teachers, promote innovation, and academic excellence.

MBEF invests over \$7 million each year to ensure our students have access to enrichment opportunities in STEAM, Music and the Arts, Physical Education, Reading Enrichment, Guidance Counselors, and Libraries. To learn more about MBEF and its impact, please visit [www.mbef.org](http://www.mbef.org).

## MB|X Foundation

The MB|X Foundation is a nonprofit organization that coordinates numerous secondary Booster Clubs to support athletics and other organized groups by raising money in support of their athletic or extra-curricular activities. Donations received are directed to the Booster Club. MB|X also administers after-school enrichment classes at elementary schools and a high school summer school. To learn more, please visit [www.mbxfoundation.org](http://www.mbxfoundation.org).

# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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## PTA/PTSA

Each school has its own Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) that is actively involved in supporting the education of children. In addition to maintaining site-specific programs, purchasing teaching/classroom supplies, and providing technological and capital improvements on each campus, the PTA/PTSA may also:

- Organize fundraisers
- Serve as volunteers in the classroom
- Support spirit assemblies and other school activities

Each PTA/PTSA is a self-governing organization that operates within the parameters of state law and the national organization ([www.PTA.org](http://www.PTA.org)). To get involved and provide support for the school, visit your school's website and click the “Join our PTA/PTSA” button.

Make sure you sign up for your school PTA/PTSA’s weekly newsletter by clicking on the links below:

- [Grand View](#)
- [Meadows](#)
- [Pacific](#)
- [Pennekamp](#)
- [Robinson](#)
- [Manhattan Beach Middle School](#)
- [Mira Costa High School](#)

## DirectorySpot (Parent and Teacher Contact Information)

Parents who join the PTA can download the DirectorySpot app and access parent contact information, including parent names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers, as well as teacher contact information. Please follow appropriate usage as directed by your PTA.

## Volunteers

California law requires classroom volunteers to complete fingerprinting and turn in a TB screening to the school health office before volunteering in the classroom. See this [link](#) to learn more about becoming a volunteer.

## MBUSD Frequently Used Terms:

### EDP - Extended Day Program

The Extended Day Program provides care before and/or after school at elementary schools. Families are encouraged to register early for EDP. Please inquire in the school office about availability.



# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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## Enrichment Classes

K – 5 students can supplement and enrich their current educational experiences with a variety of fun classes held after school, including Chess, Spanish, Science, Art, and more. For more information, visit [www.mbxfoundation.org](http://www.mbxfoundation.org).

## eScrip

Many elementary schools rely on a SCRIP program to support their fundraising efforts. Register your grocery, department store, and all major credit cards to help schools. Visit [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com) to fund your school site.

## Grades of Green

Grades of Green aims to teach students the many ways in which their every day choices can make a change for the better in our environment. By educating our students on the importance of recycling all waste (including classroom, lunch, and technology) and visiting the library for books (rather than purchasing brand new), we are changing life-long patterns that will make a difference in sustaining our planet.

## International Network Club

The International Network Club welcomes and connects families from all over the world, embracing different cultures and building networks.

## MBEF - Manhattan Beach Education Foundation

MBEF is a nonprofit organization that raises money to improve and enhance education for all students in grades TK-12. The funds raised by MBEF are largely supported by parent donations and are a significant part of the District's annual budget.

## PTA/PTSA - Parent Teacher Student Association

The PTA/PTSA helps fund site-specific needs at schools and sustains the basic operation of the school, cultural arts experiences, and academic enhancements. All families are eligible for PTA/PTSA membership, and member support makes PTA/PTSA supported programs possible.

## TK - Transitional Kindergarten

Transitional Kindergarten is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program available for students who turn four years old by September 1.

## YAA - Young at Art

Young at Art is a hands-on program led by volunteer parent docents that provides enriching experiences for all students (K – 6) through art projects based on exemplary artists and their work. For our elementary students, the Young at Art program takes place in the classroom setting; for MBMS 6th graders, the program is available as an after-school enrichment program.



# INFORMATION FOR EVERYONE

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## Manhattan Beach Community and Safety Information - City of Manhattan Beach

Visit <https://www.citymb.info/> to learn all about the city of Manhattan Beach and available programs.

## Earthquake Preparedness

Visit <https://www.fema.gov/earthquake-safety-home> to learn how to prepare your home for earthquakes. Learn more about the app Shake Alert LA [here](#).

## Community Involvement through Clubs, Sports, and Other Organizations

There are a wide variety of clubs and sports in the Manhattan Beach area. Identifying your child's interest, and registering early opens up the doors to many opportunities. Many opportunities are shared through PeachJar, on MB Parks & Rec, through PTA communications, or through the City of Manhattan Beach.

# INFORMATION FOR ELEMENTARY FAMILIES

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## Registration

[Click here](#) for information about enrollment and registration in MBUSD. In California, a child shall be admitted to a school district's Kindergarten program at the beginning of a school year, or later in the same year if the child will have their fifth birthday on or before September 1 (EC48000[a]). Students are eligible to be enrolled in Transitional Kindergarten (TK) if they will have their fourth birthday by September 1. For first grade enrollment, California law requires a child to be six years old on or before September 1 (EC Section 48010).

### When registering, you will need:

- Birth certificate
- [Immunization record](#)
- Parent/Guardian State Driver's License or Passport - Driver licenses are given through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Find a local DMV office or make an appointment by phone (800) 777-0133 or online
- Verification of Residence (including mortgage or current lease agreement and three, current utility bills)



# INFORMATION FOR ELEMENTARY FAMILIES

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## School Supplies

After you register, contact your school office or PTA/PTSA to learn more about what school supplies could benefit your child's classroom. Supplies may be purchased through your PTA/PTSA or from a retailer.

## Parent-Teacher Communication

We believe building a trusting partnership between families and schools supports positive student outcomes. We encourage parents to reach out to their child's teacher with questions and concerns. Elementary conferences typically occur in the month of January.

## Reading Assessments (Grades K-2)

Teachers meet individually with students after school three times a year to conduct a reading assessment. This helps inform teachers and parents which reading skills and behaviors students have mastered, which ones they are working on, and how to support their growth as a reader.

## Before and After School

The Manhattan Beach Extended Day Program (EDP), for students TK - 5, provides before and after school care for children attending Manhattan Beach Preschool, Pacific, Meadows, Pennekamp, Robinson, and Grand View Elementary schools. For more information, contact your school office or click the EDP link on the District website. The program features:

- Homework assistance for grades 1-5
- Arts and crafts
- Nutritious snacks
- Safe and secure outdoor play areas
- Open 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- Experienced, dedicated, and professional staff
- Optional Camp days
- Optional Summer Camp

## MB|X Foundation

The MB|X Foundation, in partnership with the Manhattan Beach Unified School District, sponsors and operates After School Enrichment Programs at Grand View, Meadows, Pacific, Pennekamp, and Robinson schools. These programs aim to provide students with the opportunity to supplement and enrich their current experiences in a familiar and safe environment. All classes are held on their respective school campuses. To learn more, visit [www.mbxfoundation.org](http://www.mbxfoundation.org).





# INFORMATION FOR SECONDARY FAMILIES

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## Registration

Information for Mira Costa High School registration can be found [here](#). Manhattan Beach Middle School registration information is available [here](#).

### When registering for any MBUSD school, you will need:

- Birth certificate
- Immunization record - For 7th grade: Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis Booster (Tdap); Varicella (Chickenpox)
- Parent/Guardian's State Driver's License or Passport. Driver's licenses are given through the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Find a local DMV office or make an appointment by phone (800) 777-0133 or online
- Verification of Residence

## Aeries Portal (Grade Information)

MBMS and MCHS parents and students can view student academic progress as well as attendance and other information through the Aeries portal. MBUSD administrators advise signing up to receive weekly updates on your child's progress.

To access Aeries, go to <https://mbusd.asp.aeries.net/student>.

## Manhattan Beach Middle School (MBMS) Electives/Wheel

Students may select a year-long elective or participate in their grade level wheel, comprising three classes that rotate throughout the year. Elective options include but are not limited to: Art, Film, World Language, Coding, Music (Band, Choir, Orchestra), Marine Biology, and STEAM. Wheel options include but are not limited to: Digital Makerspace: App Creators; Math and Art; and Theatre Tech and Design. Some classes require an audition or application.

## Where Everyone Belongs (WEB)

WEB is a middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes 6th graders and helps them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their middle school experience. Our WEB Leaders will meet with 6th graders for MBMS Orientation in August, then continue to forge relationships with students throughout the year. Built on the belief that students can help students succeed, the program trains mentors from the 8th grade class to be WEB Leaders. As positive role models, WEB Leaders are mentors and student leaders who guide the 6th graders to discover what it takes to be successful during the transition to middle school and help facilitate 6th grade success.



# INFORMATION FOR SECONDARY FAMILIES

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## **Mira Costa High School Office Hours (Tuesdays and Thursdays)**

Scheduled throughout the year, office hours give students the opportunity to meet with teachers during the school day. Each class is shortened to allow for morning office hours twice a week.

## **School Counselors and College Career Center (CCC)**

The MCHS Counseling team consists of seven School Counselors, three College and Career Counselors, and a part-time Tobacco-Use Prevention Education (TUPE) Counselor. Each student works with one School Counselor throughout their four years at MCHS.

The MBMS Counseling Team consists of four School Counselors. The MBMS counseling team and administrators support the MBMS WAVE culture to create a culture of belonging and shared expectations, characterized by an inclusive and supportive environment where all individuals feel valued and accepted while collectively supporting commonly understood expectations for behavior and learning.

Our school counselors are assigned to provide holistic and proactive services contributing to each student's educational, vocational, and personal/social development. Students at Mira Costa also have the opportunity to meet during or after school with the College and Career Center counselors to plan for post-graduation.

## **Link Crew (Mira Costa)**

Link Crew is an organization of juniors and seniors who are passionate about helping others. They focus on providing help for incoming freshmen during their first year of high school. Link Leaders serve as mentors to freshmen, offering advice, providing tips, and answering questions.

## **Associated Student Body (ASB)**

ASB at MCHS and MBMS is a formal student organization that supports the students and the school through school events.

At the start of each school year, MCHS students are asked to purchase "ASB" cards that allow each cardholder to participate in activities and/or events throughout the year. The ASB Summer Special is a discounted package that includes a Stampede t-shirt, Yearbook, a string backpack, and ASB Marker. The online ASB store can be found on the Mira Costa website.

