

# **Welcome to 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Family Orientation!**

**Thursday, August 28, 2025  
7:00 p.m.**

**Ballard High School Auditorium**

## **Program**

Welcome and Introductory Comments	Abby Hunt, Principal
LINK Crew and 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation	David Fort, Assistant Principal
From a Student's Perspective	Student Leaders
Helpful Hints from PTSA	Kim Flin, PTSA President
Information from School Counselors Overview of Packet – Helpful Hints	Sonja Petersen, School Counselor
Introduction of Support Staff	Admin Team and Support Staff

Please join us in the Foyer after the program. Staff will be available to answer any remaining questions you might have.

**Thank you for coming this evening and welcome to  
Ballard High School!**

**BHS Frequently Asked Questions 2025**

## **GENERAL**

### **When is New Student Orientation?**

New student orientation will occur on the first day of school, September 3rd. Please note that September 3rd is not an early-release Wednesday. Students should arrive in the Commons to pick up their schedules before joining a welcome assembly and touring their classes with 11th and 12th grade LINK leaders. The first day schedule is available on the school website.

### **What should my student bring on the first day of school on Wednesday, September 3rd?**

On the first day, students should bring several pencils and pens, paper on which they can take notes, and a folder or other notebook with pocket dividers in which to collect class handouts. The student should also bring lunch or money for lunch on the first day. Throughout the day, teachers will instruct students if any materials are required for the class. For instance, some teachers may require a Composition Book to tape assignments into. Once your student receives this information from each teacher on the first day, they can gather the school supplies that they need and create an organizational system for homework. Help your student set up an organizational system so that they know exactly where to place completed work to be turned in, assignments to be completed each night, and how to put long-term projects onto their calendar or planner.

### **Do we need to buy a calculator?**

All students in Algebra 2, Precalculus, Statistics and higher math must have access to a graphing calculator, specifically the TI-84 or TI-84+. If you plan to purchase one calculator for your high school student, we recommend the purchase of a TI-84. Algebra 1 and Geometry students need at least a scientific calculator; we use the TI-30 in class. If students are unable to purchase a calculator, there will be some available for checkout from their math teacher. Math teachers will give more information through their classrooms.

### **When will school pictures be taken?**

September 4th and September 5th during the school day via the students' classes. An info sheet with picture ordering details will be handed to each student as they have their picture taken. If your student is unable to attend picture days on September 4th or 5th, there will be a make-up opportunity scheduled later in the fall.

### **When can I meet my student's teachers?**

Please attend Ballard High School's **Curriculum Night, Thursday, October 9th at 6:30pm**. This is an open house during which you will follow your student's schedule, meet each teacher, and learn about each class.

### **How much does school lunch cost?**

Lunch is \$3.50 and breakfast is \$2.50, unless your family qualifies for free/reduced lunch. Parents can send money to school with the student to deposit into their account. You can learn more about culinary services (and prepay online) at <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/culinary-services/>. SPS partners with MySchoolBucks, an online platform that allows families to pay for school meals.

### **How do we sign up for free/reduced lunch?**

Paperwork for free/reduced lunch will be included in Start of School forms and is also available in the main office. Please return hard copy applications to the Ballard HS lunchroom. You can also access this application online at <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/culinary-services/>. Students who were on free/reduced lunch last year in a Seattle public school must fill out a new form each year, but prior eligibility will be carried over for the first month of school. There are additional benefits available to students who qualify for free/reduced lunch, such as help with some school fees, so if you do qualify, it is good to submit the form even if the student does not plan to eat school breakfast or lunch.

### **Does my student have to buy an Activity Card and how much is it?**

Students who wish to participate in a sport or music must buy an Activity Card. Otherwise, paying this fee is not required, but it is encouraged as this allows students to receive discounts on attending sporting events, buying their yearbooks, etc. The Activity Card is \$35. The Activity Card fee can be paid online via the Source, or in the main office before school, at lunchtime, or after school. Payment of this fee is indicated by a sticker placed on the student's ID card. Student ID cards will arrive a few weeks after picture day. Until student ID cards arrive, there is a digital record of the Activity Card fee being paid, so your student will not miss out on any discounts in the meantime.

**Can we get help with other school fees?**

Yes, if your student qualifies for free/reduced lunch they can also get help with ASB fees, class fees, etc. Please have your student see their school counselor for assistance with course fees, SAT/ACT testing, etc.

**Can students leave campus at lunchtime?**

Students in grades 9th – 12th may leave campus for lunch, but they need to be back in time for their next class.

**What is the best way for me to stay up to date with information about school events?**

Visit the Ballard High School website regularly at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/>, which posts news, upcoming events, and the Daily Bulletin. Also, sign up for the PTSA newsletter. This is a great way to stay up to date on important information about deadlines and opportunities. To sign up for the newsletter, visit <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/get-involved/ptsa/>.

**How does Ballard HS communicate with students & families?**

Refer to the Communication to Families page: <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/about/communication-to-families/> for all the ways Ballard High School communicates with students and families to keep everyone connected and informed.

**What are the general rules of the school?**

All students will review the BHS Student Handbook in the first week of school which outlines school policies and procedures. This handbook will be posted on the school website.

**Is there a dress code?**

Detailed information will be listed in the BHS Student Handbook. In general, if there is a concern about decency or messages on clothing, the assistant principals will speak with the student about this concern and might ask them to change clothes or send them home.

**Are cell phones or electronic devices allowed?**

Students are not to use their cell phone during class time without teacher permission.

**Does each student get a locker and when do they get one? Do they need to share? Whom does my student contact if they do not get a locker?**

Lockers are distributed the morning of the first day of school when students pick up their official schedule. Each 9th grader should be able to have a locker and not need to share. However, this sometimes takes a few weeks to settle out at the beginning of the year because we are adjusting our rolls to reflect students who have moved over the summer or who do not require a locker. If your student has not been assigned a locker by the second week of school, your student should check with custodian Young Wong in the Commons regularly to see if a locker has become available.

**Can students drive to school?**

Yes, but students **cannot** park in the staff parking lot by the tennis courts, in front of the school in the Visitor parking spots, or in designated Ballard Pool parking spots. Students must park on the street.

**If I have a question about transportation to school, such as bus passes, whom should I contact?**

Call the Seattle School District transportation office at 206-252-0900. If you have a question more specific to Ballard High School, please call your student's assigned assistant principal.

**PTSA (PARENT TEACHER STUDENT ASSOCIATION)****When and where is the first PTSA meeting?**

The first general PTSA meeting is **Thursday, September 11th at 7pm**. Please be sure to sign up for communication from the PTSA for announcements and further information.

**If I want to get involved with PTSA right away or if I want to volunteer for school projects, whom should I contact?**

Contact volunteer coordinator Joy Das Gupta ([volunteer.ballardhs@gmail.com](mailto:volunteer.ballardhs@gmail.com)) for volunteer opportunities.

**Is there a fee to join PTSA?**

Membership is \$16/person (student membership is \$10). Scholarships are available. People interested in joining can do so at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/get-involved/ptsa/>.

**Where can I find out about upcoming PTSA activities?**

We encourage you to sign up for the PTSA Newsletter, which lists important announcements regarding PTSA, school activities, and the Daily Bulletin. You can sign up and find more information at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/get-involved/ptsa/>

**CREDITS**

**How many credits are needed to graduate for students in the Class of 2029 (incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders)?**

24 credits are required for graduation for every student at Ballard High School.

**How much credit does each class earn?**

Students earn .5 credit for each semester class. A student with a full schedule who passes all their classes would earn 3 credits per semester, and a total of 6 credits per year. Therefore, a student with a full schedule all four years of high school would graduate with 24 credits.

**What is a quarter and a semester?**

A quarter is nine weeks. A semester is two quarters or an 18-week grading period. Semester grades are the final grades that are posted on the transcript. Quarter grades are not posted on the transcript. First semester ends January 27, 2026.

**If my student does not pass one of their classes, will summer school or credit retrieval be needed?**

Yes. Because students need to earn 24 credits, every credit is needed to graduate in 4 years. Have your student see their school counselor to discuss credit retrieval options.

**When do students learn about credits?**

Counselors meet with all 9th graders to teach students about graduation requirements and start their High School and Beyond Plan. We go over this information again when students select classes for the following year. Students may request a credit update at any time from their counselor.

**What is the grading scale?**

A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, E.

**Does an E count in the GPA?**

Yes. An E counts as zero points in the GPA average.

**Do Honors and AP classes count for extra points?**

Honors and AP classes receive points for the purpose of class rank only, but this does not affect the GPA.

**What is considered a passing grade?**

A grade that is 60% or higher (D) is considered a passing grade.

**What are Seattle Public Schools' grading requirements?**

- SPS educators will provide **biweekly check-ins** with students and families for students at risk of earning an Incomplete, No Credit, or a failing grade.
- SPS educators will allow **retakes** and assignment revisions to the extent possible. Please see your student's course syllabus for further details.

- SPS educators will not give any grades lower than **50%** on any assignment or assessment even for a missed assignment.

### **Where can I find information about course offerings and special academic programs?**

Please see our Course Catalog. The Course Catalog is on our website at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/> under “Academics.”

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

### **Which state tests will my student take and when?**

Students in the class of 2029 will take the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) in English Language Arts and in Math the spring of their 10th grade year. Students will take the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) in the spring of their junior year. Additional and updated information can be found on the OSPI website at the following link: <http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/StateTesting/>

### **What other standardized tests might my student take at Ballard?**

Students will have the opportunity to take the PSAT/NMQT in October of their junior year. SPS offers an SAT exam for seniors in the fall during the school day. If your student takes an AP class, AP testing occurs in May. An overview of Ballard’s Testing Schedule will be available in early October, and will be posted at the following BHS website link: <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/academics/assessments-overview/>

## **ACADEMIC SUPPORT**

### **What are “The Source/PowerSchool” and “Schoology” and how do I access them?**

The Source/PowerSchool is a progress report system on which teachers can choose to post grades and assignments for their students and parents to see. Students and parents can use the Source from home to monitor their student’s attendance and completion of assignments. In addition, teachers have Schoology Pages for their classes which often contain updated class assignment information, materials, and messages to students and parents. The best way for students to access and/or create a login for the Source and Teacher Schoology Pages is through the Ballard High School website <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/> and click on “Student Family Portal” at the top of the page.

### **How often should I check the Source?**

Most teachers update the Source approximately every two weeks. You are welcome to check as often as you feel necessary, but you may see the most accurate data if you check the Source every two weeks. If you wish to monitor attendance closely, you can check the Source more frequently.

### **How can I help if my student is struggling in a class?**

The goal is to help your student learn problem-solving skills and to give them the confidence that they can solve their problems on their own in the future. Talk with your student. Brainstorm with them how to improve their performance, such as making good use of homework time at home, keeping a daily planner for assignments, and finding a quiet place for homework. Help your student set up an organizational system so that they know exactly where to place completed work to be turned in and assignments to be completed each night. Help them with how to put long-term projects into their calendar or planner. Encourage your student to speak to the teacher to ask for assistance in figuring out why they are not doing well. The student should also seek tutoring either from the teacher or from another source. If the student tries these things and is still struggling, the parent may choose to e-mail the teacher to gain insight into what might be helpful. The student can also speak with their school counselor and the parent may choose to call the counselor for assistance.

### **How do I contact a teacher?**

E-mail generally works best. E-mails can be accessed directly on The Source (just click on the teacher’s e-mail) or on the Ballard website. If you do not have internet access, call the Main Office at (206) 252-1000 and ask to be connected to the teacher’s voice mail.

**How quickly should I expect a response from an e-mail or a voice mail to school staff?**

You can typically expect a response within three school days. Teachers are teaching most of their working day and so may not be able to return your e-mail until the following day or two. If you do not hear from a school staff member within this time, e-mail or phone again, and please feel free to contact the principal or assistant principal for assistance.

**What tutoring resources are available?**

Please look for announcements on the school website.

**SERVICE LEARNING****What is Service Learning and how many hours are required for graduation?**

Service Learning is volunteer work done by students in their own time for a non-profit agency or organization, preferably in an area of interest to the student. 60 hours of Service Learning are required by the time of graduation.

**Do hours completed the summer before 9<sup>th</sup> grade count?**

Students may fulfill up to 15 hours of their service learning graduation requirement during the summer between 8th and 9th grade as long as it meets the criteria set by the school.

**How can my student find meaningful Service Learning opportunities?**

Ballard HS maintains a Service Learning bulletin that contains a monthly list of Service Learning opportunities. This bulletin can be found on the BHS website under the tab "Resources and Services."

**ATTENDANCE****If my student is ill, what do I do to excuse the absence?**

Send an e-mail or a note bearing your signature, phone number, reason for absence, and dates of absence with your student the first day they return to school. The student must turn in this note to the Attendance Office within three days if the absence is to be excused.

**If my student will be ill for many days, how can I access homework?**

The best way to access homework if your student is ill is to check the Schoology Pages and the Source, and/or e-mail the teachers directly. Also, encourage your student to contact a fellow student for homework assignments.

**How does attendance impact student learning?**

Students are less likely to pass a class if they miss too many instructional days or if their absences are unexcused and therefore they cannot turn in make-up work for credit. Per state law, students who are excessively truant, meaning 20 consecutive days of unexcused absence, are dropped from Ballard High School.

**ATHLETICS****What does my student have to do in order to play a sport?**

Fill out sports paperwork via FinalForms, online at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/student-life/athletics/> and submit by the deadlines stated in the paperwork, including proof of insurance and physical. The ASB Activity Card and sport fees have to be paid at the time the paperwork is handed in. Paperwork will not be accepted without the fee payment. A current physical is required. Physicals are good for two years but physical information from middle schools does not follow a student to high school. Students either need an updated physical or a copy of a physical done within the last two years to hand in with their paperwork. The physical must have the date of the physical and state they are cleared to participate in sports. Students must also be academically eligible to participate in sports, including passing at least 5 full credit classes with at least a C average. Students should check with their coaches early and often to make sure they are meeting these eligibility requirements. More athletics information can be found at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/student-life/athletics/>

**If our family qualifies as low-income, can we get assistance for this fee?**

Yes. If your family qualifies for free/reduced lunch, the fees are reduced. See your sports paperwork for details.

**Are there free sports physicals available?**

Yes. The Ballard Teen Health Center in the Commons offers free sports physicals (and immunizations as well). Please call 206-781-6400 to schedule an appointment.

**Whom should I contact with questions about sports paperwork or to get the contact number of a coach?**

Please contact the Athletic Secretary at 206-252-1147.

**HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT**

**What is the Ballard Teen Health Center?**

The Ballard Teen Health Center is located in the Commons and is a collaboration between Ballard High School, Public Health-Seattle/King County, and Swedish Medical Center. Staff includes a nurse practitioner, a mental health counselor, and a patient-care coordinator. Students may be seen by appointment. Services are free. The Teen Health Center is committed to helping adolescents achieve wellness and success in all aspects of life. Information is available in the Teen Health Center and online at <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/> under “Resources.”

**If I am concerned that my student may be depressed or need emotional counseling, whom should I contact?**

Contact your family doctor for a possible referral. You can also contact the Teen Health Center or your student’s school counselor.

**If my student has a health-related problem such as a chronic illness, injury, or severe allergy which might affect my student at school, whom should I contact?**

Please contact Beth Guynes, school nurse: [eguynes@seattleschools.org](mailto:eguynes@seattleschools.org)

**If I have a general concern but do not know whom to call, whom should I contact?**

Please contact your student’s school counselor. School counselors can help determine which person would best be able to help you.

**If I am concerned that my student may be using drugs or alcohol, whom should I contact?**

Please contact your family doctor for referrals to maximize insurance possibilities. You may also call the school nurse or the Teen Health Center for a referral list of local agencies that provide drug testing, counseling, and outpatient or in-patient referrals.

**If I am concerned that my student is being harassed or bullied, including cyber-bullying or social media, whom should I contact?**

Harassment and bullying are serious issues and are not to be tolerated. Please contact the student’s assistant principal immediately to make a report. Reports can also be made online by completing a form with the office of civil rights: <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/student-civil-rights/hib/>