

Welcome to 9th Grade Family Orientation!



Thursday, August 27, 2026
6:30 p.m. doors open
7:00 p.m. start
Ballard High School Main Gym

Program

Welcome and Introductory Comments	Abby Hunt, Principal
BHS Library Information	TuesD Chambers, Librarian
LINK Crew and 9th Grade Orientation	David Fort, Assistant Principal
From a Student's Perspective	Student Leaders
Helpful Hints from PTSA	Lauren Schmidt, PTSA Parent Rep
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.
Welcome to Ballard High School!

BHS Frequently Asked Questions 2026

GENERAL

When is New Student Orientation?

New student orientation will occur on the first day of school, September 2nd. Please note that September 2nd is not an early-release Wednesday. New students will pick up their schedules before joining a welcome assembly in the main gym 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 2nd?

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. 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 3rd and September 4th 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 3rd or 4th, 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 on Thursday, October 8th at 6:30pm**. During Curriculum Night, you will follow your student's schedule, meet each teacher, and learn about each class.

Does my student have to pay the ASB fee and how much is it?

Students who wish to participate in a sport or music must pay the ASB fee. 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 ASB fee is \$45, and 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. (ID cards are free and automatically distributed to students a few weeks after picture day). Until student ID cards arrive, there is a digital record of the ASB 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 fill out the free/reduced lunch form available at <https://www.seattleschools.org/departments/culinary-services/>, and have your student see their school counselor for information about assistance with course fees, SAT/ACT testing, etc.

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.

Can students leave campus at lunchtime?

Students 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/>, where we post news, upcoming events, and student announcements. 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/>.

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 allowed?

Students may not use their cell phone during class time.

Does each student get a locker and when do they get one? Do they need to share?

Lockers are distributed on 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 as we adjust 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 lots or in designated Ballard Pool parking spots. Students must park on the street. If your student drives to school, please help remind them of parking rules and etiquette, so BHS can maintain positive relationships with our neighbors.

If I have a question about transportation to school, 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 reach out to 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 10th 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 Lauren Schmidt (volunteer.ballardhs@gmail.com) for volunteer information.

Is there a fee to join PTSA?

Membership is \$25/person (student membership is \$10). Scholarships are available.

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 and school activities. 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 2030 (incoming 9th 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 full schedule for all four years of high school would yield 24 total credits.

Can students earn high school credit for a class taken in middle school?

Yes. If a student took a high school level course (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, or world language) in an SPS middle school, that credit will automatically be populated to their high school transcript. Students who took a high school level class in a private school should talk to their school counselor about including it on their high school transcript. Students have until the end of their junior year to take a middle school credit they do not want off of their high school transcript. Students can see their school counselor for more information.

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, 2027. There will be no school on January 28, 2027 (the day between semesters). Second semester begins on January 29, 2027.

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 visit 9th grade classes 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.

An E counts as zero points in the GPA average.

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.

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.

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

Please see the BHS Course Catalog 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 2030 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 11th-grade 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 October, and will be posted at the following BHS website link: <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/academics/assessments-overview/>

ACADEMIC SUPPORT**What are “The Source” and “Schoology” and how do I access them?**

The Source is an online progress report system available to students and parents/guardians. On the Source you can monitor attendance, view grades and assignment completion, see historical grades and standardized test scores and pay school-related fees. In addition, teachers have Schoology pages for their classes which contain additional details like class assignments, a calendar, and messages to students and parents. Students and families can access and/or create a login for the Source and Schoology pages through the Ballard High School website <https://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/> (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?

When your student is struggling, problem solve with them at home first. Brainstorm how to improve their performance, such as how to make better use of homework time, keeping a daily planner for assignments, and finding a quiet place for homework. Help your student set up an organizational system for where to place completed work to be turned in and assignments to be completed each night. Help them create a system for putting long-term projects into their calendar or planner. Encourage your student to speak to their teachers and ask for assistance and/or to see their teacher for extra help outside of class time. If the student tries these things and is still struggling, encourage your student to reach out to their school counselor for additional help.

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 address) 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 voicemail.

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

You can typically expect a response within three school days. Teachers are teaching most of their working day and may have limited time to return emails. If you do not hear from a school staff member within this time, e-mail or phone again, and feel free to contact your student's 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 unpaid/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 graduation.

Do hours completed the summer before 9th grade count?

Students entering 9th grade may submit 15 hours of service learning from the summer between 8th and 9th grade.

How can my student find meaningful Service-Learning opportunities?

The Ballard website has a Service-Learning page (under the "Resources" tab) that lists volunteer opportunities as well as the documentation form to be submitted once hours are completed.

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

Send an e-mail to ballardhs.attendance@seattleschools.org, 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. Absences must be excused within three days.

If my student is ill for many days, how can I access homework?

The best way to access homework if your student is ill is to check teacher Schoology Pages and the Source, and/or for your student to e-mail the teachers directly. Contacting a fellow student for homework assignments can be helpful as well.

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. The ASB fee and sports fees should be paid at the time the paperwork is submitted. A current sports 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 submit with their paperwork. The physical form must have the date of the exam and state that the student is 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 meet 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 BHS Teen Health Center in the Commons offers free sports physicals (and immunizations as well). Please call 206-584-3177 to schedule an appointment.

Whom should I contact with questions about sports paperwork?

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 Neighborcare Health. 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 student's school counselor, your family doctor or the Teen Health Center.

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, BHS school nurse: eguynes@seattleschools.org

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

School counselors are a great place to start and can help determine who 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 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/>