



# Buffalo Prep

**Family Handbook  
2023-24**

Buffalo Prep  
Main Office  
3485 Main St.  
University at Buffalo  
Buffalo, NY 14214

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## Information For Scholars and Families

Congratulations and welcome to Buffalo Prep! We look forward to working with you in the coming years, and we are always available to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

Buffalo Prep's programs are designed to help you create and achieve your academic and personal goals. The fact that you have been selected to participate in this program shows that you have demonstrated the skills necessary to take on this challenge.

The secret to your success is really no secret at all: you will succeed because you will work hard, and we are here to help you along the way. We will be supportive and helpful, ***but whether you excel depends on your own level of commitment and effort.*** We're excited to partner with you on your educational and aspirational journey!

### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Location:**

High School Prep/Prep Bridge/Main Office: Allen Hall, SUNY at Buffalo South Campus

Middle School Prep: Nichols Middle School

Prep Scholars Academy: D'Youville University

**For all HSP attendance issues/questions:** 716-262-5531

HSP Program Manager: Lysette Vazquez-Moore

**For all MSP attendance issues/questions:** 716-352-4190

MSP Program Manager: Vanessa Boyd

**For all PSA attendance issues/questions:** 716-361-0697

PSA Program Manager: Ericka Rivera

**Office Phone Number:** 716-829-3605

**Website:** [www.buffaloprep.com](http://www.buffaloprep.com)

Please contact Assistant Director/Chief Program Officer Mr. Deveso with any questions or concerns. E-mail [mdeveso@buffaloprep.org](mailto:mdeveso@buffaloprep.org) or call 716-909-3309.

## Buffalo Prep's Core Four Values:

Integrity – Uncompromising adherence to honesty and a code of values.

Excellence – Possessing great qualities in high degree; always going above and beyond; being the very best you can be.

Responsibility – Reliability or dependability; possessing moral and mental accountability.

Leadership – Exhibiting INTEGRITY, EXCELLENCE, and RESPONSIBILITY, and inspiring *others* to be the best they can be.

### Culturally Relevant-Sustaining Philosophy, Culture, and Teaching Practices

With a focus on racially and culturally affirming practices, Buffalo Prep advocates for educational access and equity and provides programming to academically ambitious scholars of color. We strive to nurture our scholars' brilliance while empowering them to engage civically as their authentic selves. We maintain the following three tenets as foundational to all facets of our academic and cultural philosophy:

1. *We believe all young people have innate talents that can lead to success and achievement throughout their lives when given opportunity and when nurtured with high expectations and commitment.*
2. *We believe there is strength in diversity in our schools, neighborhoods and professional communities. We respect differences and nurture diversity and inclusion as a part of our culture and the culture of our partner schools.*
3. *We are committed to maintaining the excellence and rigor of our academic programs.*

To support these beliefs, Buffalo Prep has transformed its programs to embed a culturally relevant-sustaining philosophy, with three pillars at its core: *academic excellence, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.*

### **Culturally Relevant-Sustaining Philosophy, Culture, and Teaching Practices**

*Mediocrity is unacceptable. (Academic Excellence)*

We believe in the inherent excellence of all members of our community. It is our job to collectively challenge each other to always strive to be our best and most authentic selves.

*Our scholars have super powers. (Cultural Competence)*

We believe that our students have incredible resilience and resourcefulness, and that they come to us with vast amounts of community cultural wealth, and given access, they have the power to do anything they put their minds to.

*We can change the world. (Critical Consciousness)*

We believe that each one of us has the capability to be a leader for positive growth and change in our community. As an organization, all of our members pride themselves on sustainable civic action.

Buffalo Prep's academic programming aligns with the organization's strategic plan, utilizing researched-based best practices that include a culturally relevant-sustaining teaching and learning model that celebrates every scholar's inherent gifts and experiences. This model nurtures innovative teaching methods, motivating teachers to affirm scholars' cultural, racial, and ethnic literacies, while evaluating their own cultural positions and knowledge to determine how they can best impact scholar achievement. Culturally relevant and sustaining curricula seek to encourage and incorporate a breadth of heritages, languages, practices, and literacies in the classroom so that scholars see themselves in the material and are empowered.

This asset-based pedagogy intentionally bridges the knowledge scholars bring with them into the classroom with the professional expertise teachers have acquired to structure learning opportunities that afford scholars the chance to demonstrate their (emerging) expertise while displaying a developing knowledge of content.

Our classroom culture is designed to provide scholars and teachers with the necessary tools to construct equity-based learning opportunities that encourage and support a range of participation and displays of knowledge in the acquisition of content knowledge and supporting skills.

## Attendance

**Attendance** - there is no “one-size fits all” attendance policy. However, classes are intentionally designed so that success will be very difficult without good attendance.

The teachers at Buffalo Prep cover material very quickly. It is not uncommon for one Buffalo Prep class to cover the equivalent of two or three middle school class periods. Additionally, most of the material will be completely new to the scholars. Thus, it is imperative that scholars attend every class and arrive on time.

If a scholar is absent, a parent/guardian must call or text the program phone number (listed in “Contact Information”) to make us aware of the absence. **It is then the responsibility of the scholar to make-up all work missed, including classwork.**

Attendance will be assessed through our Citizenship Rubric (please see below). Poor attendance may jeopardize a scholar’s eligibility to continue at Buffalo Prep.

***Please note that Buffalo Prep classes move VERY quickly. We ask that your child’s academics are the top priority while he/she is part of the program, and that you plan events and appointments around the Buffalo Prep class schedule.***

## Tardiness

During the summer, all scholars are expected to arrive to homeroom between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m. After 8:45, a scholar will be considered tardy.

In the case of tardiness a parent or guardian must call or text the program phone number before 8:45 a.m. (during the academic year, we must receive the call or text at least thirty minutes prior to classes starting).

Tardiness will be assessed through our Citizenship Rubric (please see below)

## Dress Code

Scholars are expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate for and conducive to a serious learning environment. Scholars who are not in compliance with modest appearance, as determined by the Buffalo Prep staff, will be given a cover up or asked to return home to change

clothing. **Please note that, due to safety concerns, flip flops and soccer sandals are not allowed.**

## Field Trips and Special Events

Buffalo Prep scholars may be involved in a number of field trips and other special events. These trips are an integral part of the scholar's learning experience. Students who fail to attend without a valid excuse provided by a parent or guardian will be marked with an unexcused absence.

## Academic Policies

*Please carefully read the Buffalo Prep academic policies.*

### Goals for our assessment:

1. De-commodify the number grade and put the focus on learning
2. Nurture intrinsic motivation for our scholars
3. Increase scholar accountability
4. Communicate more effectively with parents

### Core Principles (from *Grading for Equity*):

1. **Accuracy:** Our grading is easy to understand, and correctly describe a scholar's level of academic performance.
2. **Bias-Resistant:** Our grades are based on valid evidence of a scholar's content knowledge, and not based on evidence that is likely to be corrupted by a teacher's implicit bias or that reflects a scholar's environment.
3. **Motivation:** The way we grade should motivate scholars to achieve academic success, support a growth mindset, and give scholars opportunities for redemption.

### Assessment Practices:

Feedback – several studies have proven that the greatest academic and intellectual growth occurs when the teacher provides feedback WITHOUT providing a grade or rating of any sort. Feedback on all assignments will be about growth and process and allow for scholar questions. Absence of grades DOES NOT mean an absence of assessment.

Metacognition and Ownership of Learning – the ability to set goals and assess one's proficiency at a task is an essential life-skill, far more valuable than most specific subject area learning.

Scholars will be given opportunities to consider their own intellectual desires and their progress toward those goals.

**Process and Progress** – in addition to providing feedback assessment on the final artifact, Buffalo Prep is concerned with process and progress. How has a scholar's effort been? Regardless of starting point, how much has the scholar grown (trajectory vs. finality)? What has a scholar's process and progress been in addition to performance on the final product?

**Summative Assessments** – each class will feature the production of a final product/project/artifact that reflects the information and skills covered during the marking period. Assessments of the final product will be in the form of meaningful feedback.

**Retakes/Redos** - scholars may retake or redo any summative assessment and should be encouraged to do so if the assessment does not meet a standard of excellence. If a scholar chooses to retake/redo an assessment, the most current attempt will replace any previous assessment.

### **Homework**

1. All homework functions as a “practice” for a larger summative assessment.
2. Homework does not receive a grade or count toward a scholar's average.
3. Homework will receive comments/feedback and be returned in a timely manner.
4. Scholars will be accountable for completing all assignments through Prep Excel.
5. Homework will be marked complete, complete/late, or missing.
6. Missing homework will be assessed through the “Citizenship Rubric” (please see below).

***Homework is an extremely important and necessary part of being a scholar of excellence. It is certainly our hope that families will be active partners in the Buffalo Prep learning process. Therefore, your active support and supervision of your child's homework routine will be essential.***

It is important that scholars write down each assignment in a homework planner every day. They will find that being organized is important for completing assigned work. Homework will be very carefully monitored throughout their time in Buffalo Prep.

**Plagiarism/Cheating** - if a scholar is caught cheating, he/she must still complete the assignment. We will very much address the behavior and there will be serious consequences.

**Citizenship Rubric** - assessments will only reflect a scholar's knowledge of class material. However, it is vitally important that accountability remains for missing work, poor



attendance, and any other behaviors that negatively impact learning. Therefore, in addition to assessment reports for each core subject area, all scholars will also receive a report that will reflect their non-academic habits/behaviors. This report will hold equal weight in terms of a scholar's status in the program and our tiered accountability system.

### **Making up Assignments After an Absence:**

Self-advocacy is a hugely important skill that we emphasize at Buffalo Prep. When scholars are ill and/or miss classes, it is their responsibility to communicate with their teachers to find out what assignments they missed and when those assignments are due. This is ***solely the responsibility of the scholar***. Buffalo Prep teachers will not track scholars down regarding make-up work.

### **Academic/Behavioral Intervention:**

Buffalo Prep has three levels of intervention for scholars who struggle with academics and/or behavior.

1. **Prep Excel** – Scholars who consistently struggle with their academics/behavior and who display a pattern of missing assignments will be required to attend Prep Excel from 3:00-4:00 instead of participating in clubs. Prep Excel will provide academic support in the form of tutors, faculty mentors, best-practices training, organizational help, and more.
2. **Probation** – If a scholar who has participated in Prep Excel and has been provided resources for academic success continues to perform poorly and/or miss assignments, he/she may be placed on probation. While on probation, the scholar's work will be very closely monitored and parents/guardians immediately contacted if work is not done to Buffalo Prep standard.
3. **Final Contract** – Scholars on probation who continue to perform poorly and/or miss assignments will be placed on Final Contract. Terms of the contract, which include completing all work on time and to Buffalo Prep standards, must be met. If at any time the scholar does not meet the terms of the contract, he/she will be dismissed from Buffalo Prep. Please note that, if a scholar is dismissed, that scholar may lose future eligibility to participate in Buffalo Prep.

***We expect scholars to take responsibility for seeking help as needed and trying to complete all work to the best of their ability.***

Please note that scholars may receive assessments that are poorer than they are used to receiving. **This is normal**; as scholars adjust to the amount and type of work they will have at Buffalo Prep, and work diligently, their assessments will improve.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to monitor any work scholars receive. Scholars are expected to track and save all of their work, as this is a large part of being responsible for their improvement and organization. Parents/guardians should directly contact the teachers (through the contact information provided on class syllabi) to discuss assessments or comments of concern.

**Communication:**

Parents/guardians must provide an accurate e-mail address to be used for Buffalo Prep communications such as the Program Manager’s weekly update, special announcements, and student-specific notifications. Please make an effort to check for Buffalo Prep-related communications regularly.

<h2><b>Code of Conduct</b></h2>
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At Buffalo Prep, all members of the community operate by the “Three R’s”:

1. Respect for self;
2. Respect for others;
3. Respect for the community.

We believe that the primary role of discipline is always to teach and never to punish, should be proactive instead of reactive, and should be restorative in nature.

**We also believe that the scholar plays the most important role in maintaining proper conduct; therefore scholars should consistently self-monitor out of an attitude of respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the community.**

Great conduct and community result from establishing mutual respect and accountability among all members, and not simply forced compliance.

**The Role of Restorative Discipline**

Restorative disciplinary practices focus on resolving conflict and building community through honest conversation and the fostering of positive relationships. It is an inclusive form of discipline which requires all parties to reflect together and consider ways to best engage in positive attitudes and actions individually and as a community.

## **Core Four Values**

Buffalo Prep's conduct policies are rooted in Buffalo Prep's Core Four Values. All members of the community must be familiar with our values and adhere to their characteristics:

*Integrity* - Uncompromising adherence to honesty and a code of values.

*Excellence* - Possessing great qualities in high degree; always going above and beyond; being the very best you can be.

*Responsibility* - Reliability or dependability; possessing moral and mental accountability.

*Leadership* - Exhibiting INTEGRITY, RESPONSIBILITY, and EXCELLENCE, and inspiring *others* to be the best they can be.

*Consequences for violation:* restorative meetings; parent conferences; program dismissal.

## **General Buffalo Prep Rules and Procedures**

### **Common Courtesy**

All members of the community will display common courtesy to all other members. This includes generous use of "please" and "thank you" when making requests, and "excuse me" when interrupting conversations and whenever else appropriate.

*Consequence for violation:* a .25 cent donation to the snack stand or writing the misused/unused word 25 times.

### **Asset vs. Deficit Speech**

We as a community believe in the inherent assets that each member brings. Therefore, deficit language such as "I can't," "I quit," "It's too difficult," etc. is not part of our culture and therefore is not accepted. Instead, it should be replaced with language that emphasizes our assets, such as "I can do this, but I might need some help," "I got this," "I'll figure it out," "This is difficult, but we'll all get through," etc. At Buffalo Prep, we do not use excuses. We seek help and we overcome!

*Consequence for violation:* a .25 cent donation to the snack stand or writing the phrase in question 25 times.

## **Cleanliness**

All members of the community must care for our physical space. Scholars should be particularly mindful of classroom and common areas and dispose of all garbage properly. It is the responsibility of all community members to maintain cleanliness and a sense of respect for our shared space, regardless of whether or not we “caused” the trash. It is everyone’s responsibility to take care of everyone else!

*Consequences for violation:* delayed dismissal time for clean-up; restrictions on time and space for food and drink consumption.

## **Hallways and Shared Spaces**

At any given time, there are many activities being conducted at Buffalo Prep. Therefore, in the hallways and other shared spaces scholars are expected to maintain a sense of order (no running, pushing, disrupting classes, etc.) and a level of quiet conversation, just above a whisper.

*Consequences for violation:* scholars will line up in silence between classes.

## **Computer Use**

Computers may only be used for recreation during lunch time, and only by scholars who have completed all work. The use of social media on Buffalo Prep’s computers is forbidden.

*Consequences for violation:* supervised computer usage; loss of computer privilege.

## **Classroom Rules**

**All teachers have the right to establish rules specific to their classrooms.** However, the following rules will be adhered to in all Buffalo Prep classes:

1. Scholar voice will be used in establishing the norms for conduct and consequence in each class.
2. An adult with her/his hand raised, indicates that scholars should stop talking.

## **Use of Cell Phones**

Cell phones may only be used during lunch time or when specific permission is given by an adult. No exceptions. Scholars who would like to use phones outside of these situations, must first ask for permission.

*Consequences for violation:* First time – the cell phone will be confiscated for the day and returned at the end of the day with a warning to the scholar. Second time – the cell phone will be confiscated for the day and only returned to the scholar’s parent/guardian. Third time – for the remainder of the program, during Prep hours the cell phone will be kept in the possession of program director.

### **Door Dash/Food Delivery**

Food delivery will not be accepted (including parents/guardians, other family, friends, delivery services, etc.). Lunch will be provided to scholars who do not bring one.

**Every reasonable effort will be made to encourage all scholars to contribute positively to our culture of respect and collegiality. However, if a scholar consistently makes poor behavioral choices in spite of restorative intervention, he/she will be dismissed from the program.**

### **Drop Off/Pick-Up Policy**

Scholars may be dropped off between 8:00 and 8:45 a.m. **Please do not arrive earlier than 8:00 a.m., as there will be no adult supervision.** Dismissal is promptly at 4:00 p.m. Please be on time to pick up your child as the adults at Buffalo Prep have other commitments on most days. If you are going to be late for pick-up, please call the direct program line (please see “Contact Information” above).

### **Photography/Media Release/Social Media/Website**

Throughout the year, there may be times when Buffalo Prep’s faculty and staff, the media, or other organizations, with the approval of Buffalo Prep administration, will photograph or videotape scholars, interview scholars for Buffalo Prep-related stories, or share scholar works. Those photographs, videos, interviews, or scholar works may appear in Buffalo Prep publications, websites, social media, or newsletters; in the news media; or other education-related organizations’ publications. To opt out of publicly used photos for your child for materials, Buffalo Prep’s social media accounts and Buffalo Prep’s website, please sign and return the Buffalo Prep Photography/Media Opt Out form.

## Class Cancellations

Class cancellations will be announced on the following radio and television stations: **WGRZ (Channel 2)**. You can also call the direct program phone number or the Buffalo Prep office (829-3605) if you have any questions.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Where does the program take place?**

High School Prep – Allen Hall on University at Buffalo South Campus

Middle School Prep – Nichols Middle School

Prep Scholars Academy – D’Youville University

### **When does the program take place?**

Summer programming is in session every weekday from 8:30-4:00 from July 3 through August 4 with the exception of July 4 (Independence Day Holiday).

### **What supplies will my child need?**

Buffalo Prep will provide all necessary supplies for all classes.

### **Will breakfast/lunch be provided?**

Scholars may choose to bring their lunch. If a scholar does not bring a lunch, a BPS lunch will be provided. BPS breakfast is also provided daily.

### **Where should I drop off/pick-up my child?**

High School Prep – please use the Allen Hall traffic loop.

Middle School Prep – please enter campus on Amherst St. and use the traffic loop for drop off.

Prep Scholars Academy – please use the parking lot on Fargo on the west side of the traffic circle.