

**Policy 6.01: Admissions and Attendance**

**Status:** ADOPTED

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6.01.1 Compulsory Attendance and Entrance Age – All persons between the age of six (6) and seventeen (17) years of age are required by state law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education unless the person holds a certificate of exemption issued by the Superintendent or is otherwise exempt under state law.

Student seeking to enroll in Kindergarten or the first grade must meet the applicable State age guidelines to be admitted for the current school year.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §§16-28-3, 4 (1975)]

6.01.2 Admission to Schools -

- a. *Resident Students* – School-age children who reside within Morgan County, Alabama, and not within the limits of a city operating an independent municipal school system, may be admitted to Morgan County Schools. For purposes of this policy, the residence of the student will be the residence of the custodial parent or legal guardian. If custody of the child is shared, alternating, or unclear, or if the child does not reside with a custodial parent or legal guardian, the domicile or actual physical residence of the child will control, except when there is evidence that the claimed residence of the child is not his/her actual residence, or that the claimed residence is fraudulently given as a means of avoiding or violating admission, enrollment, attendance, and residency standards and requirements.

[Reference: Ala. Code §16-28-3]

- b. *Non-resident Students* – The Board may permit students who do not reside within the Morgan County School District to attend schools within the school system. The Board may establish criteria for admission of non-resident students and may require the payment of tuition as a prerequisite to enrollment. The Board will not provide transportation to and from school or homebound instruction outside of the county limits of Morgan County unless specifically required by law.

The criteria for admission of non-resident students will be outlined in the Student Handbook or like document and will be reviewed periodically.

- c. *Admission Policy for Homeless, Migrants, Immigrants, and English Learner Students and Children in Foster Care* – All homeless, migrant, immigrant, and English Learner students and children in foster care will have equal access to the same free appropriate public education, including public preschool education, provided to other children and youth and will be provided the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and state student performance standards to which all students are held without being stigmatized or isolated.

The enrollment of homeless, migrant, immigrant, and English learner students and children in foster care shall not be denied or delayed due to any barriers that are specifically prohibited by applicable law, which may include the following:

- Lack of birth certificate
- Lack of school records or transcripts
- Lack of immunization or health records
- Lack of proof of residency
- Lack of transportation
- Guardianship or custody requirements
- Lack of social security card

- d. *Homeless Students* –

- i. *Enrollment.* Homeless students will be permitted to enroll without regard to residency status and will not be denied services offered to other students in the school system. Homeless students may also be entitled to other accommodations under federal law.

Homeless students will continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless for the duration of their homelessness, or for the remainder of the academic year if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year. Otherwise, a homeless student may be enrolled in any school in the system that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is living are eligible to attend.

- ii. *Dispute Resolution.* When a dispute arises regarding school placement, the system will immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, pending resolution of the dispute. The school will provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the decision, a statement of the right to appeal, and the procedure for appealing the placement decision. The principal of the school will notify the Board's Homeless Liaison of the dispute.
  - iii. The Homeless Liaison will expeditiously carry out the system's dispute resolution procedures as detailed in the Board's homeless student plan.
- e. *Students in Foster Care* – A student in foster care will enroll or remain in the student's school of origin, unless it is determined that remaining in the school of origin is not in such student's best interest.

If it is not in a student's best interest to stay in the school of origin, a student in foster care may be enrolled in any school in the system that serves the attendance area in which the student is living, even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The school system will immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant academic and other records.

[Reference: 20 U.S.C. §§6311(g)(1)(E)]

- f. *Students Expelled or Suspended from Other School Systems* – Any student who is under suspension or expulsion from another school system or a private, parochial, or other school will not be permitted to enroll until the student has satisfied the conditions for readmission set by the expelling or suspending board or authority in addition to generally applicable admission requirements established by the Board which may include temporary attendance at the alternative school.
- g. *Required Documentation* – Students entering the school system for the first time, regardless of grade level, are not required to submit a birth certificate, but may be requested to submit a birth certificate or another form of acceptable documentation to verify the student's age. A social security number may also be requested, but such request is voluntary and is not a requirement of enrollment.

In addition, students may also be required to submit other registration materials as school officials may reasonably require including, but not limited to, a certificate of immunization or an exemption as prescribed by the Department of Public Health and signed by a private physician or appropriate health department official. The Superintendent may accept alternate forms of evidence or modify otherwise applicable requirements as necessary and appropriate to accommodate migrant, immigrant, limited English proficient or homeless students.

- h. *Placement of Students* – The Board will determine the placement of newly enrolled students in accordance with state law.

#### 6.01.3 Attendance Zone and Class Assignment -

- a. *Attendance Zone Assignment* – Students will be assigned to the school serving the attendance zone in which his/her parent(s) or legal guardian reside(s). A student whose parent or legal guardian moves from one attendance zone to another during the school year will be transferred to the school attendance zone in which

the new residence is located. The student may be permitted to remain in the school attendance zone that serves the former residence until the end of the semester with the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee. A parent or legal guardian who has documented plans to move to a new attendance area during the first or second grading period of the school year may have his/her child enrolled in the school serving the new residence upon approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

- b. *Class Assignment* – Principals will assign students to classes in keeping with school accreditation standards and any procedures or criteria that may be established at the system or school level.

6.01.4 Absences and Excuses – Students are not permitted to be absent from school without a valid excuse. Absences will be designated as excused or unexcused. Excused absences will be permitted for the following reasons:

- Personal illness
- Hospitalization
- Emergency
- Death in immediate family
- Court subpoena
- Religious holidays
- Absences approved by the principal

Documentation supporting an excused absence must be submitted in a timely manner or the absence will be deemed to be unexcused. Guidelines governing the number and types of documents that will be accepted by the school system to show that an absence is excused will be outlined in the Student Handbook or like document.

Excessive unexcused absences may result in a loss of academic credit or referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation.

6.01.5 Truancy – Parents or guardians are required to ensure that students under their care, custody or control attend school regularly. Habitual or excessive absence from school may require Board officials to refer the matter to juvenile authorities or to initiate truancy proceedings.

[Reference: ALA. CODE §16-28-1, et seq. (1975); Ala. Admin. Code 290-3-1-.02]

#### 6.01.6 Students Charged with Serious Crime

a. *Placement* – If a student is arrested for non-school-related crimes, he or she may be placed in an alternative setting or on an alternative education plan during the pendency of the criminal process against the student. When the Superintendent or a designee learns of pending non-school-related criminal activity of a student, the Superintendent or designee shall work with the student's school's administration to determine an appropriate school placement. Identified students will not be allowed back on any school property until the appropriate placement is determined.

b. *Length of Placement* – The student's placement will run concurrently with the pendency of the criminal charges against the student. If the student is placed at an alternative school for a period longer than the end of the current school year, the student's placement at the alternative school will be reevaluated prior to the commencement of the next school year.

c. *Notice of Serious Criminal Activity* –

1. *By Court or Law Enforcement* – The court or law enforcement may notify the Superintendent or designee of any student's arrest. The Superintendent or designee will notify the principal of the student's arrest.
2. *By Parent* – If a student is charged as an adult or is alleged to have committed a serious crime, as identified below, regardless of age, his/or her parent/guardian should contact the School Principal to determine appropriate school placement during this time.

d. *Examples of Serious Criminal Activity* – For purposes of this policy, a serious crime includes, but is not limited to, any crime for which a student is charged as an adult; any crime committed using Deadly Physical Force or with a Deadly Weapon as those terms are defined in Ala. Code § 13A-1-2; and any crime resulting in Physical Injury or Serious Physical Injury as those terms are defined by Ala. Code § 13A-1-2. The ultimate decision about the seriousness of the crime rests with the Superintendent or designee.

e. *Protection of Special Education Students* – Any decision to assign a student to an alternative setting shall include a review and consideration of the student's exceptional status and any applicable federal and state law requirements or procedures.

f. *Privacy of Student Information* –

1. Any information received by a teacher, counselor, administrator, or other Board employee pertaining to a student's pending criminal activity shall be received in confidence for the limited purpose of rehabilitating the student and protecting students and staff at all schools. Such information shall not be further disseminated by the teacher, counselor, or administrator, except insofar as communication with the child, his or her parent, legal guardian, legal custodian, law enforcement personnel, and the juvenile probation officer of the student is necessary to effectuate the rehabilitation of the student or to protect students and staff at all schools.
2. All information received relating to a student's pending criminal activity shall be kept separate and apart from the student's educational record and shall be accessible only by the Superintendent or designee or the student's principal. Such information shall be destroyed when the student is no longer enrolled in the school district.

**Code Sections:** Ala. Code § 13A-1-2; Ala. Code § 12-15-217

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