

# BLOUNT

## COUNTY SCHOOLS



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**B U I L D . C R E A T E . S U C C E E D .**

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2025-2026  
PARENT – STUDENT  
HANDBOOK  
AND  
STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT



# BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS

2025-2026  
STUDENT HANDBOOK

**BLOUNT COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
415 5th Avenue East  
Oneonta, Alabama 35121  
(205) 775-1950

DISTRICT I  
Ken Benton  
675 Crosshill Lane  
Warrior, Alabama 35180

DISTRICT II  
Jackie Sivley, Vice-President  
Post Office Box 204  
Blountsville, Alabama 35031

DISTRICT III  
Philip C. Cleveland, Ed.D.  
4398 County Highway 21  
Horton, AL 35980

DISTRICT IV  
Daniel Smith  
241 Easley Church Road  
Oneonta, Alabama 35121

DISTRICT V  
Chris Latta, President  
975 Murphree Road  
Oneonta, Alabama 35121

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## ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

|                      |                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Rodney P. Green      | Superintendent                        |
| Christopher D. Lakey | Assistant Superintendent              |
| Bridgette Murphree   | Elementary Curriculum Coordinator     |
| Cindy Bartlett       | Secondary Curriculum Coordinator      |
| Ken Parker           | Maintenance/Transportation Supervisor |
| Meagan Holt          | Federal Programs Coordinator          |
| Barbara Robertson    | Director of School Nurses             |
| Megan Mitchell       | Child Nutrition Program Director      |
| Kathryn Veazey       | Assessment Coordinator                |
| Brad Williams        | Technology Coordinator                |
| Mary Grace Hicks     | Special Education Coordinator         |
| Phillip Hazelrig     | Human Resources Coordinator           |
| Cindy W. Parker      | Chief School Finance Officer          |



# BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS

## PURPOSE & DIRECTION

### 2023-2028

#### MISSION, VISION, AND BELIEFS

##### MISSION

**BUILD. CREATE. SUCCEED.**

##### VISION

To *Build* partnerships, *Create* opportunities, and prepare students to *Succeed* in life.

##### BELIEFS

• Education is a partnership among schools, families, and communities. • Our schools should be safe and positive learning environments. • Quality instruction provides students the opportunity to learn. • Students should be actively engaged in the learning process. • Education should lead students to set goals, develop a vision for their future, and become productive citizens. • We must respond to identified needs for improvement.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

1

##### ACADEMICS

Ensure that students achieve mastery of grade level standards while simultaneously strengthening instructional practices across all classrooms.

1. Support a K-12 curriculum and instructional framework that aligns with standards, ensuring all students have equitable access to essential learning experiences.
2. Implement standards-based (K-3) and standards-referenced (4-12) reporting.
3. Engage in professional learning opportunities to cultivate effective teaching in every classroom.
4. Establish coaching partnerships to support educators.
5. Use data-informed interventions to address student needs.

Key Performance Indicators: Formative assessments, summative assessments, instructional observations, surveys, graduation rates, college and career readiness indicators

2

##### SAFE & SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS

Prioritize student safety and well-being, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all learners.

1. Strengthen school safety practices through regular drills and updated protocols.
2. Make necessary building updates to enhance security.
3. Enhance child nutrition programs to support healthy growth and development.
4. Expand resources for student mental health and social development.
5. Promote physical wellness by educating students on healthy choices and ensuring access to school nurses for support.

Key Performance Indicators: Observational data, attendance rates, CNP participation, project completion, student incident reports

3

##### PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen partnerships by enhancing communication and connections with all stakeholders.

1. Leverage positive social media promotions to build a strong online presence and engage with the community.
2. Craft powerful print publicity, such as brochures and flyers, to reach broader audiences and raise awareness.
3. Cultivate community support and influence through active engagement with local organizations, businesses, and stakeholders.
4. Expand outreach efforts to parents and families by providing regular updates, hosting informational events, and creating opportunities for involvement and feedback.

Key Performance Indicators: Social media analytics, surveys, community feedback, observational data

# BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

## WORKDAYS FOR TEACHERS

|            |                                  |                       |
|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 8/6/2025   | Local Schools                    | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. |
| 11/10/2025 | Local Schools                    | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. |
| 5/22/2026  | Local Schools – Teacher Planning | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M. |

## INSERVICE MEETINGS

|          |                   |                        |
|----------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 8/4/2025 | Teacher Institute | 8:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M. |
|----------|-------------------|------------------------|

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS

|            |  |                        |
|------------|--|------------------------|
| 8/4/2025   | Local Schools – Professional Development | 12:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. |
| 8/5/2025   | Local Schools – Professional Development | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.  |
| 10/13/2025 | Local Schools – Professional Development | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.  |
| 1/5/2026   | Local Schools – ½ Prof. Dev. ½ Work Day  | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.  |
| 1/19/2026  | Local Schools – Professional Development | 8:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.  |

## OPENING DATE OF SCHOOLS

|          |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|
| 8/7/2025 | Regular full day schedule. |
|----------|----------------------------|

## REMOTE LEARNING SUPPORT

When feasible, the Superintendent may choose for schools to transition to remote learning.

## SCHOOLS WILL BE CLOSED AS FOLLOWS:

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 9/1/2025                | Labor Day Holiday                                 |
| 10/13/2025              | Professional Development                          |
| 11/10/2025              | Teacher Work Day                                  |
| 11/11/2025              | Veterans Day Holiday                              |
| 11/24/2025 - 11/28/2025 | Thanksgiving Holidays                             |
| 12/19/2025              | Half Day for Students End 2 <sup>nd</sup> 9 weeks |
| 12/22/2025 - 1/6/2026   | Christmas Holidays.                               |

### Schools will reconvene for students

### Wednesday, January 7, 2026.

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 1/19/2026            | Professional Development   |
| 2/16/2026            | Presidents Day Holiday (Weather Day)                               |
| 3/30/2026 - 4/3/2026 | Spring Break   |
| 5/21/2026            | Last school day for students/Half Day/ End 4 <sup>th</sup> 9 weeks |

## WEATHER DAYS

\*In the event schools are closed due to weather conditions or for any other reason, days will most probably be made up accordingly:

1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> – Two weather days are built into the school schedule

3<sup>rd</sup> – February 16<sup>th</sup>

Any additional days may be made up on Saturday following any days missed or at the end of the school year (at Superintendent's discretion). Principals are not permitted to dismiss school early without written permission of the Board and/or Superintendent except in times of emergency when the lives and safety of students are endangered.

| <u>First Semester</u>                | <u>Midterm</u>                         | <u>Examination Schedule</u> | <u>Issue</u>                             |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Nine Weeks (41 days) | <u>Progress Reports</u><br>September 5 | October 9-10                | <u>Report Cards:</u><br>October 17, 2025 |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Nine Weeks (47 days) | November 14                            | December 17, 18, 19         | January 9, 2026                          |
| <u>Second Semester</u>               |  |                             |  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Nine Weeks (42 days) | February 6                             | March 12-13                 | March 14, 2026                           |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Nine Weeks (48 days) | April 17                               | May 19, 20, 21              | May 22, 2026                             |

# EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

It shall be the policy of the Board that the school district shall place an equal emphasis on the nondiscriminatory provision of educational opportunities for children and no person shall be denied the benefits of any education program or activity on the basis of race, color, disability, creed, national origin, religion, age or sex. All programs offered by schools within the school district shall be open to all students in compliance with statutory and judicial requirements.

The Blount County Board of Education provides a variety of support services and opportunities for its students. Among them are Special Education, At-Risk Student Support, and Problem Solving Team (PST).

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## **The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies, Title IX, and Section 504:**

Gary Noles

## **The following persons are designated to handle inquiries regarding student mental health issues and connect parents/guardians to community services:**

Jennifer Dean  
District Social Worker

Michelle Smith  
District Mental Health Service Counselor

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## **Asbestos Management Statement**

It is the intention of the Blount County Board of Education to comply with all federal and state regulations controlling asbestos and to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure students and employees a healthy and safe environment in which to learn and work. A copy of the asbestos management plan is available for review at the Blount County Board of Education Maintenance Department office and at the administrative office of each county school.

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**THE INFORMATION IN THE PARENT STUDENT HANDBOOK OUTLINES POLICIES CONCERNING STUDENT REGULATIONS AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS. THE COMPLETE POLICY MANUAL IS AVAILABLE IN EACH SCHOOL AND ONLINE AT [WWW.BLOUNTBOE.NET](http://WWW.BLOUNTBOE.NET). STUDENTS AND PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO READ THIS HANDBOOK AND RETAIN IT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.**

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**PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO YOUR SCHOOL THE NOTICE OF RECEIPT FOUND ON THE LAST PAGE OF THE HANDBOOK.**

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\*Board Policy (including revision dates) is available online at:

<https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/PolicyListing.aspx?S=2086>

## **5.0 Technology Use and Internet Safety**

### **Access to Technology Resources**

The Board permits restricted and conditional access to and use of its technology. Such access and use is limited to employees, students, and other individuals who are engaged in legitimate educational or administrative activities that support the district's instructional goals or operational needs. The Board reserves the right to set conditions on, restrict, or prohibit the use of personally-owned technology devices on school property.

The term "technology" refers to all forms of digital hardware, electronic devices, software, or user accounts. While mobile phones and similar devices may serve functions similar to other technologies, separate rules may apply to their use.

This policy applies to all technology, regardless of ownership, when used on school grounds, during school hours, or at school-sponsored activities. It also applies to Board-owned technology regardless of where or when it is used.

The Superintendent is authorized to establish Responsible Use Policies (RUP) and other rules that govern the use of technology. All individuals using Board-owned technology, personally owned devices on Board property, or personal accounts in connection with their role as a student or employee are expected to follow these rules, whether or not a signed agreement is on file.

### **Restrictions or Loss of Privileges**

Any individual who violates the Board's policies or rules related to technology use may lose access to Board-provided technology resources, be restricted from bringing personal devices onto Board property, and may face disciplinary consequences. Individuals are responsible for their conduct when using technology and are expected to protect their credentials and access information at all times. Specific policies against discrimination and harassment (sexual or otherwise) apply fully to BCS' computer resources, and any violation of these policies serves as grounds for discipline up to and including termination.

### **Ownership of Resources and Expectations of Privacy**

All technology resources, including networks, systems, devices, and accounts, owned, leased, or maintained by the Board remain the sole property of the Board. Authorized personnel may access, search, inspect, or retrieve information from any district technology resource at any time, without notice, to ensure compliance with Board policies, operational needs, or applicable laws.

Users should not expect privacy or confidentiality in the use of school system technology resources. School officials may examine the contents or recent use of personally-owned devices if there is reasonable suspicion that such use violated Board policies or other applicable rules. The Board will comply with legally valid requests from law enforcement or civil courts.

### **Adoption of Rules and Regulations**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop additional or more specific regulations governing access to and use of technology. These may be included in Responsible Use Policies, the Student Code of Conduct, employee handbooks, or other district publications. Whether or not a signed user agreement is collected, all users are expected to follow applicable rules and regulations.

### **Internet Safety**

The Superintendent is authorized to develop and implement rules, procedures, and safeguards to ensure compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and the 2025 Alabama Focus ACT #2025-386. These safeguards will address or provide for the following:

- Instruction for students on safe and responsible online behavior, including appropriate interaction with others on social networking platforms and in chat rooms, as well as awareness of and response to cyberbullying
- Measures to promote the safety and security of students when using email, chat services, and other forms of direct electronic communication
- Use of filtering and blocking technology to prevent access to images that are obscene, constitute child pornography, or are otherwise harmful to minors
- Measures to restrict student digital access to age-appropriate subject matters and materials
- Limitations on student access to harmful or inappropriate material via the Internet
- Protection against unauthorized access to or misuse of district technology resources, including the prevention of hacking and other illegal or prohibited actions involving computer systems, files, or data Prohibit access by students to unlawfully obtained data or information, including hacking, and other unlawful online activity by students



- Prohibit students from accessing social media platforms, except when expressly directed by a teacher solely for educational purposes
- Prohibit access to websites, web applications, or software that exposes students to the disclosure, use, or dissemination of their personal information
- Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal information regarding minors
- Schools will annually educate minors about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms, cyberbullying awareness, and response
- In response to ACT# 2025-386 each student prior to entering the eighth grade will take the required online safety course that addresses the risks of using social media and how to use social media safely
- The course will also be available to students in grades eight through twelve who transfer to the school district or otherwise have not completed the course
- Each school will notify parents of this safety requirement

### **Limitations of Liability**

The Board does not guarantee that its technology services will be uninterrupted or error-free. It is not liable for data loss, service disruptions, or failure to filter all inappropriate content. The use of Board technology is at the user's own risk.

While the Board retains ownership of its technology resources, all user-generated content (e.g., email, images, files) is considered to reflect the user's personal views and not those of the district. Parents and students should understand that the Board is not responsible for illegal or inappropriate use of its technology by users.

Blount County Schools will make a reasonable and good faith effort to implement and enforce the procedures and safeguards outlined in this policy. However, due to the rapidly changing nature of technology, complete and uninterrupted enforcement of all provisions at all times may not be possible. References: Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 U.S.C. §254(h) and (1)

### **Data Use and Governance Policy**

The Blount County Schools Data Use and Governance Policy is established to ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Superintendent is authorized to implement and maintain robust data governance practices, which will include:

- Classifying data based on sensitivity and risk
- Implementing physical, procedural, and electronic security safeguards
- Managing and documenting all external data requests
- Recording and monitoring data access by individuals and systems
- Forming a Data Governance Committee to oversee compliance and best practices

These policies apply to all students, Board employees and any individuals authorized to access Board data in the course of their duties. Any unauthorized access, disclosure, or misuse of Board data may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination and/or legal consequences.

### **Wireless Communication Device Policy**

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year the Blount County Board of Education will implement ACT# 2025-386 to be in compliance with State Law in regards to technology used throughout the Instructional Day. No student shall use or operate a personal wireless communication device in any public elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds thereof during the instructional day. If a student is in possession of a personal wireless device it must be turned off and stored off their person in a locker, car, backpack, athletic style duffel bag, or a purse.

The following items are recognized as a personal wireless communication device according to ACT# 2025-386: a cellular telephone, tablet computer, laptop computer, pager, gaming device, smart watch, or any other portable electronic device that has the capability of exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with another electronic device.

A student may use, operate, or possess a personal wireless communication device in a public elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds thereof during the instructional day in any of the following circumstances: the use, operation, or possession is pursuant to the students Individualized Education Plan, a Section 504 Plan, or an Individualized Health Plan, or during an emergency that threatens the life

or safety of the student or another person. A board employee may approve a student to use, operate, or possess a wireless communication device owned by the Blount County Board of Education if it is to be used for educational or learning purposes.

Each school will clearly identify in its master schedule the time of day in which the instructional day begins (first period/homeroom) and ends. Students will have time before and after the instructional day to store or retrieve a wireless communication device from a storage location.

Students and parents must sign a technology Responsible Use Student Contract that outlines the terms of the wireless communication policy. Neither the Blount County Board of Education nor local schools are responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal wireless communication devices.

#### First Offense

Take the phone or other electronic device, hold until the parent/guardian comes to the school and meets with an administrator to discuss the policy and the consequences of further violations of the policy. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign a verification/documentation form of the meeting.

#### Second Offense

Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for seven (7) school days. A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone or other electronic device from an administrator and again sign the verification/documentation form. The administration may assign detention, in-school suspension or Saturday school to the student.

#### Third Offense

- Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for nine (9) weeks of school. The student will also be placed in alternative school for three days.
- A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student that continues to violate this policy after the third offense. A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student who violates the policy and refuses to give the phone or electronic device to school personnel.

#### Social Media

Blount County Schools recognizes the value of social media, both for personal and professional use. However, there are some guidelines that should be addressed when educators use social media. The guidelines and reminders below have been developed to better protect (and inform) BCS employees from charges of inappropriate use. Teachers should not "friend" students on personal social media. Teachers should also be judicious about "friending" students' parents on social media.

Many teachers utilize learning management platforms such as Edmodo to engage and assess 21st Century learners.

#### Unacceptable Social Media Use Includes:

- Updating social media or posting non-instructional content during school hours. Stakeholders expect BCS' employees to be working during the school day; posting on social media during this time gives the impression that teachers are not fulfilling their responsibilities to students.
- Posting pictures with students in them without permission of parents or guardians.
- Using social media as the sole means of classroom communication.
- Posting disruptive content which harms the goodwill and reputation of the students, teachers, school, and system.

Communication between teachers, parents, and students should be of an educational/extra-curricular nature and support the vision, mission, and beliefs of BCS. Other types of personal communication between teachers and students must be avoided.

#### Technology Acceptable Use

Adult-supervised, technology-enhanced activities which are standards-based and educationally driven and which follow all Blount County Board of Education policies should be deemed as acceptable use by students and adults. Some examples of acceptable and/or responsible use may include, but are not limited to the following: visiting approved educational websites; research; online practice quizzes; educational games; reading/writing website programs; student-learning platforms such as Edmodo, Blackboard, or Moodle; using video-enhanced learning, such as Khan Academy, Ted, or YouTube for educational purposes; educational surveys or student response websites; achievement or performance tracking websites; as well as other educational uses.

#### Technology Unacceptable Use

Prohibited Activities --The following activities, items, or materials are prohibited: fraudulent, harassing, embarrassing, sexually explicit, profane, obscene, intimidating, defamatory or otherwise unlawful or inappropriate material may not be viewed, sent, posted, or shared through any form of electronic communication (such as bulletin board systems, newsgroups, chat groups), downloaded from the Internet or displayed or stored on BCS' resources. This includes "Spam" and other non-educational/business related matter. Any user encountering or

receiving materials that violate the Blount County Schools' Responsible Use Policy should immediately report the incident to their teacher or supervisor.

Computer resources may not be used for dissemination or storage of commercial or personal advertisements, solicitations, political material, promotions, religious material, or any other unauthorized significant personal use. Additionally, users should not attempt to circumvent network security or internet access restrictions, torrent/P2P, or use destructive programs, such as viruses/self-replicating codes. Users should not intentionally damage computers, peripherals, or the network in any way.

Violation of a license agreement or copyright, any state, federal or international law, or waste of computer resources--Users may not deliberately perform acts that waste computer resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to sending mass mailings or chain letters, non-educational use of computer resources, playing games, engaging in online chat groups, or otherwise creating unnecessary network traffic.

#### Violation Consequences

Any user who violates this policy may have computer/Internet privileges revoked at any time and without prior notice. Employee violations of this policy may also result in administrative leave, suspension, and possible termination. Student users are also subject to discipline according to the Blount County Student Code of Conduct. Any illegal use will also result in civil and/or criminal liability.

## Section V - Students

### 5.1 Admission

All children between the ages of six and seventeen who reside in the school district will attend school regularly for the full term unless excused for the following causes: graduation from high school, physical or mental illness, or expulsion.

<sup>(2)</sup> All children five years of age on or before September 1 shall be entitled to admission to kindergarten. Effective with the 2016-2017 school year, ACT #2016-297 amends the Alabama Code (1975), §16-28-4, minimum age for admission to first grade-a child who is 6 years of age on or before December 31 or the date on which school begins in the enrolling school system shall be entitled to admission to the public elementary schools at the opening of such school for that school year or as soon as practical thereafter.

In order to **attend** school, all students **enrolled** in Blount County Schools must either provide a certificate of immunization against the diseases specified by the state health office or present a medical or religious exemption certificate.

All pupils enrolling in school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent record of birth. A student who does not meet the above requirements will not be enrolled.

No student shall be denied access to vocational programs or services on the basis of race, sex, national origin, limited English speaking ability, handicapping condition, or economic condition.

No student will be allowed to attend the Blount County Career Technical Center unless enrolled in a high school operated by the Blount County Board of Education or the Oneonta City Board of Education.

Students residing in the Blount County School District applying for admission to school as a transfer student from a church school, private school, non-accredited home school, or from a tutor are subject to being evaluated by means of tests administered by the principal of the school to determine proper grade placement. The tests administered may include achievement tests, end of grade level tests, end of course tests or some combination of these. Initial placement in a grade or course shall be temporary pending the evaluation and determination by the principal of which grades and/or credits for courses are found to be acceptable by the school. Such evaluation and determination must be completed by the tenth school day after enrollment of the student.

#### Admission for Foster Care, Homeless, Migratory, Immigrant, and Limited English Proficient Students

Pursuant to the requirement of Every Student Succeeds Act and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act of 2001, all foster care, homeless, migratory, immigrant, and limited English proficient children in the district will have access to the education and services needed to ensure that an opportunity is available to meet the same academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

The enrollment of foster care, homeless, migrant, immigrant, and limited English proficient children and youth shall not be denied or delayed due to any of the following barriers:

- 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

The district will ensure that foster care, homeless, migratory, immigrant, limited English proficient students are not stigmatized nor segregated on the basis of their individual status. The student will be admitted to the district school in the attendance area in which the student is actually living or to the student's school of origin as requested by the parent, guardian, education decision maker or homeless liaison in the case of an unaccompanied youth, and in accordance with the student's best interest.

In the event of a dispute regarding eligibility or placement of a student as a homeless child, the parent or guardian shall be given notice and provided an opportunity for review of the dispute as prescribed by the State Board of Education's administrative regulations.

In the event of a dispute regarding placement of a student living in foster care, the student will be immediately enrolled in the school requested by the student, guardian, or education decision maker while the appeal is being considered.

Transportation will be provided to and from the student's school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied student, the district's liaison for homeless students. In the event circumstances are not in the best interest of the student to attend the school of origin based on determination by the parent, guardian, or liaison, the student will attend the school in the attendance area of current residence.

## 5.2 Transfer

Students living in Blount County must enroll in the assigned school that serves the designated district where the student and parent or legal guardian resides. Students may transfer to another Blount County School only if there is a change in residence into another designated district by the parent or legal guardian or by approval of the receiving principal.

New and transfer students must show proof of residency before being enrolled in Blount County Schools. Students living outside Blount County will not be admitted to Blount County Schools. Likewise, students whose parent or legal guardian does not reside in Blount County are not eligible to attend Blount County Schools. Also, students must reside with their legal guardian for admission to Blount County Schools.

Should a student's legal guardian move outside the Blount County School District, the student is no longer eligible to attend school in Blount County. An exception may be given for seniors who have already begun their final year of high school if approved by the school principal.

Students who live inside Blount County but outside the Blount County School District may be admitted by the school principal after reviewing the applicant's record of academic achievement, attendance and discipline. Those students approved for admission will be required to pay an additional admission fee after August 18, 1997. The admission fee for out of district students is \$250 for one child, \$350 for two children, \$450 for three or more children and paid to the school's general fund. The admission fee is non-refundable. In addition, these students will be reviewed yearly by the principal and appropriate faculty on the basis of their academics, attendance and behavior to determine whether the student can continue their enrollment.

Those out of district students currently attending Blount County Schools may continue upon approval of the school principal.

Children of employees of the Blount County Board of Education who live out of district may attend Blount County Schools without a fee.

The principal and appropriate faculty should review academics, attendance and behavior yearly.

No out of county transfer shall be enrolled in a Blount County School for the current year if he is no longer in good standing at the school from which he wishes to transfer. Any exceptions must be approved by the Board.

Transfer students will not have completed registration until transcripts of scholastic records and other information on record have been received from the school previously attended.

Resident students of the Blount County School District who are enrolled in school in another school system will not be permitted during a scholastic school year to transfer to and attend any school operated by the Blount County Board of Education without the express written approval of the Superintendent of Education and/or the Board of Education. Students whose requested reasons to transfer to a Blount County Board of Education school include discipline and/or behavior problems will not be accepted for enrollment during the current scholastic school year.

## A. Promotion and Retention Guidelines

Decisions made concerning the promotion and retention of students will be made jointly by the principal and teacher(s)

Effective with the 2023-2024 school year, all students in grades K-3 will receive a standards based report card. Grades will be assigned according to progress on state course of study standards. **Students should demonstrate proficiency on a minimum of 80% of the reported grade-level essential standards in ELA and math.**

Students are promoted from grade to grade on the basis of academic progress and a variety of other factors. Factors may include age, social/emotional maturity, attendance, special services, previous retention, and district and/or state assessments. Progress may be monitored during the school year, in summer school programs, or in other academic programs as may be approved or recognized by the Blount County Board of Education. Retention of a student will be a collaborative decision based on the above criteria.

**Kindergarten – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade performance standards –****M – Meeting the standard****P – Progressing towards the standard****N – Needs improvement to meet the standard****I – Insufficient progress toward the standard****FOURTH GRADE**

- A. <sup>(1)</sup> English Language Arts/Reading: Must successfully complete the English Language Arts program with 60% accuracy.
  - B. Math: Must successfully complete the math program with 60% accuracy.
  - C. Must successfully complete 1 of these 2 subjects with 60% accuracy
    - 1. Science
    - 2. Social Studies
- Supporting Data:
- 1. Assessments
  - 2. Chronological age/previous retention
  - 3. Attendance
  - 4. Special Services

**FIFTH GRADE**

- A. English Language Arts/Reading: Must successfully complete the English Language Arts program with 60% accuracy
  - B. Math: Must successfully complete the math program with 60% accuracy
  - C. Must successfully complete 2 of these 3 subjects with 60% accuracy
    - 1. Science
    - 2. Social Studies
    - 3. English Language Arts/Reading
- Supporting Data:
- 1. Assessments
  - 2. Chronological age/previous retention
  - 3. Attendance
  - 4. Special Services

**SIXTH GRADE**

- A. English Language Arts/Reading: Must successfully complete the English Language Arts/Reading program with 60% accuracy:
- B. Math: Must successfully complete the math program with 60% accuracy.
- C. Must successfully complete 2 of these 3 subjects with 60% accuracy<sup>(1)</sup>
  - 1. Science
  - 2. Social Studies
  - 3. Language

## Supporting Data:

- 1. Assessments
- 2. Chronological age/previous retention
- 3. Attendance
- 4. Special Services

## SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

- A. English Language Arts/Reading: Must successfully complete the English Language Art/Reading program with 60% accuracy.
- B. Math: Must successfully complete the math program with 60% accuracy.
- C. Science: Must successfully complete the science program with 60% accuracy.
- D. Social Studies: Must successfully complete the social studies program with 60% accuracy.

### Supporting Data:

1. Assessments
2. Chronological age/previous retention
3. Attendance
4. Special Services

### Student Classification

Requirements for placement of students in the sophomore, junior and senior classes are as follows:

1. Sophomore Class-A student shall have passed at least four major subjects in the ninth grade and shall have earned six units of credit.
2. Junior Class-A student shall have passed at least eight major subjects since completion of the eighth grade and shall have earned twelve units of credit.
3. Senior Class-A student shall have passed at least twelve major subjects, shall have earned eighteen units of credit, and must be scheduled for sufficient subjects to meet graduation requirements.

Major subjects are English, history, math, science and all subjects required for graduation.

## 5.4 Attendance

Alabama law requires that all children between the ages of six and seventeen be enrolled in and attend school. In addition, new state law amendments (Ala. code s. 16-28-16, as amended by Act 1999-705) provide that all children who choose to enroll in school even if not of compulsory school age, are subject to the school attendance and truancy laws of the state. All students should attend school regularly and be punctual for all classes in order to receive the greatest benefit from the instructional program and develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline, and individual responsibility. There is a direct relationship between poor attendance and class failure. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades and enjoy school more. Students who miss more than 15 total days in a school year are in danger of becoming "chronically absent" as defined by the state and are at a higher risk of negative school outcomes. Students who miss as little as two days each month miss an entire year of instruction over their K-12 school span. This can have a detrimental effect on achievement and future success. Attendance at school shall be one of the factors considered in determining the promotion of a student from one grade to another or in any given course.

Parents and guardians are responsible for enrolling their children in school and ensuring that the children attend school and obey behavior policies adopted by the Board. Parents failing to enroll students and ensuring their attendance and proper behavior are subject to fines and imprisonment under state law. State law also requires that all student suspensions from school must be reported to the local district attorney.

Principals must report to the local superintendent any parent, guardian, or other person having control or custody of a child who fails to require the child to attend school or receive instruction by a private tutor, or fails to properly conduct him/herself at school. The Superintendent or designee is required to report the violators to the district attorney within 10 days.

- A. Compulsory Attendance – Every child between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17) must attend a public school, private school, church school, or be instructed by a competent private tutor for the entire length of the school term except that every child attending a church school is exempt from the requirements of the *Code of Alabama* (1975) 16-28-3; 16-28-5, provided such child complies with the enrollment and reporting procedure specified in the *Code of Alabama* (1975) 16-28-7 of the code. It is the policy of the Blount County Board of Education that children enrolled in a private school, church school, or instructed by a private tutor must provide appropriate documentation to the Superintendent within 10 days after the beginning of school or upon withdrawal from school or upon residency in Blount County.

- B. Absences and Excuses – Every parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child required to attend public school, private school, or church school, shall as soon as practical explain the cause of any absence of the child under his control or charge which was without permission of the teacher. Failure to furnish such explanation shall be admissible as evidence of such child being a truant with the consent and connivance of the person in control or charge of the child, unless such person can show to the reasonable satisfaction of the court that he had no knowledge of such absence and that he had been diligent in his efforts to secure the attendance of such child. *Code of Alabama* (1975) 16-28-15

A good cause or valid excuse, as used in this section, exists when on account of sickness or other condition attendance was impossible or entirely inadvisable or impracticable or when, by virtue of the extraordinary circumstances, the absence is generally recognized as excusable. *Code of Alabama* (1975) 16-28-13

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 conditions as determined by the principal
- Death in immediate family
- Court subpoena
- Legal quarantine
- Absences approved by the principal prior approval (including military leave of parent or guardian)

Documentation supporting an excused absence must be submitted within **three (3) days** after the student returns to school or the absence will be deemed to be unexcused. 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.

**Only seven (7) days or partial days can be excused by parent/doctor notes each semester as a valid excused absence.**

Any absence over seven in a semester will be marked unexcused in the attendance register. If a student has a significant medical diagnosis, parents can submit a Medical Condition Release Form and a physician's letter to the school documenting the medical condition and the necessity of additional absence days. Students with a qualifying medical condition can be granted additional days as determined by the school. Letters and release forms must be resubmitted each school year.

Homebound services may be provided for qualified students as determined by the Board of Education. **Excessive absences may result in a loss of academic credit or referral of the matter to juvenile or other appropriate legal authorities for investigation.**

- C. Make-up Work – Excused Absences

If a student is absent for any excused reason as defined above, the student shall be allowed to make up school work missed during said absence or absences. The student shall be responsible for contacting the teacher or teachers to arrange for make-up work. Said student shall contact the teacher or teachers to make up work within three (3) days after returning from said absence.

- D. Make-up Work – Unexcused Absences

Teachers shall not provide make-up work or examinations for students absent for unexcused reasons.

- E. Academic Incentives – for exceptional attendance

Students may be exempt from semester exams if they have (a) an 85+ average and one absence or less, or (b) a 90+ average in the class with three absences or less.

- F. Academic Sanctions – for excessive class absences

Students that exceed **eight (8) absences** in a semester or **sixteen (16) total absences** in a school year will lose course credit and/or be retained.

- G. Truancy Reporting

**Truancy Definition**

A parent, guardian, or other person having charge of any child officially enrolled in Alabama public schools (K-12) shall explain in writing the cause of any and every absence of the child no later than three (3) school days following return to school. A failure to furnish such explanation shall be evidence of the child being truant each day he is absent. Seven (7) unexcused absences within a school year constitute a student being truant for the purpose of filing a petition with the Court. All children enrolled in Blount County Schools, whether compulsory school age or not, are subject to school attendance and truancy laws of the State of Alabama. All cases of non-enrollment or non-

attendance will be investigated by the Blount County Board of Education Attendance Officer. In cases where there is no valid reason for absence, the attendance officer will give written notice to the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child to require attendance of the child within three days of the date of the notice. If the absence is found to be without valid excuse or reason and intentional, the attendance officer shall be required to bring criminal prosecution against the parent, guardian, or other person having control of the child.  
(16-28-16 Code of Alabama Effective July 1, 2000.)

**1) 1<sup>st</sup> Truancy/Unexcused Absence (warning)**

- Parent/guardian shall be notified (by memo or phone notification) that the student was absent.

**2) 2<sup>nd</sup> Truancy/Unexcused Absence (Principal's Letter)**

- Parent/guardian will be notified by letter that the student was truant and provided a copy of the student's attendance.

**3) 3<sup>rd</sup> Truancy/Unexcused Absence (Attendance Officer Letter)**

- Parent/guardian shall be notified by letter that the student is not in compliance with school attendance laws and policies and advised of the penalties that can be applied and the procedures that shall be followed in the event that other unexcused absences occur.

**4) 5<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence (Early Warning)**

- The parent, guardian, or person having control of the child shall participate in the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program provided by the Juvenile court.
- Attendance at the Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program shall be mandatory except where prior arrangements have been made or an emergency exists.
- Failure to appear at the Early Warning Truancy Prevention program can result in the filing of a complaint/petition against the parent under *Code of Alabama*. (1975), 16-28-12(c) (failure to cooperate), or a truancy against the child, whichever is appropriate.

**5) 7<sup>th</sup> Unexcused Absence**

- The Attendance Officer will file a complaint/petition against the child and/or parent/guardian, if appropriate.

**6) Child under probation**

- The school attendance officer should be notified by the juvenile probation officer of all children in the school system under probation supervision by the juvenile court as consistent with state statute.
- Where a child under probation is truant, the school attendance officer should immediately notify the juvenile probation officer.

**7) Suspensions are unexcused absences, but do not constitute unexcused absence total for truancy purposes.**

**5.4.1 School Attendance and License to Operate Motor Vehicles**  
(Regulations Governing School Attendance Standards and the Operation of Motor Vehicles.)

This policy is to meet the requirements of Alabama Legislative Act 93-368.

The purpose of 93-368 is to require school attendance standards as a prerequisite for a driver's license or learner's permit for the operation of a motor vehicle. School attendance standards are met by enrollment in a school or General Educational Development (GED) program or job training program approved by the State Superintendent of Education.

Requirements of the Act include:

1. Verification of enrollment status by appropriate school personnel on Part I of the Student Enrollment/Exclusion Status form.
2. Notification to the Department of Public Safety when a student has more than 10 consecutive or 15 cumulative days of unexcused absences during a single semester.
3. Exemption for students due to circumstances beyond the control of the student.
4. Implementation of appeals process.

Definition of Circumstances Beyond the Control of the Student:

1. In accordance with Section 16-28-6, Code of Alabama, 1975, circumstances beyond the control of the student are limited to:
  - a. Students who are mentally or physically unable to attend school.



- b. Students who are regularly and legally employed under the provision of the Child Labor Law.
- c. Students who, because of the distance they reside from school and the lack of public transportation, are compelled to walk more than two miles to attend a public school.

Suspension or expulsion from school or imprisonment are not circumstances that qualify for exemption.

The school system Superintendent or designee is the sole judge of whether or not the evidence presented meets the legal requirements of "circumstances that are beyond the control" of the student.

#### Appeals Process

- 1. The appeal of a decision of the Blount County School System regarding the enrollment status of a student shall be submitted to the Blount County School System. To appeal, the student shall submit to the appropriate school principal written notification of intent to appeal within 15 days of the issuance of enrollment status, including a statement of reasons for the appeal.
- 2. Except as otherwise provided herein, the appeals process shall follow the procedures adopted by the Board for student grievances (policy 5.20).

#### Responsibility for Developing Procedures

- 1. Principals shall provide information to students regarding rights, penalties, and guidelines, provided in the Act.
- 2. The process for implementing components of the policy which may include:
  - a. Principals, assistant principals and guidance counselors are approved to certify enrollment and unexcused absences.
  - b. The principal of each school shall assign personnel and specify the record keeping system to record consecutive and cumulative days of unexcused absences each semester.
  - c. Principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent may issue the Student Enrollment/Exclusion Status forms to students.
  - d. Principals shall notify the Department of Public Safety (DPS) of students not enrolled or exceeding 10 consecutive or 15 cumulative days absent during a semester.
  - e. Principals shall advise students that DPS has been notified of the student's absences or withdrawal.
  - f. The Superintendent with the assistance of the county attendance director shall determine whether specific facts and circumstances fall within the "beyond control" exemption.
  - g. Principals shall inform students of the appeals process. (Added July 5, 1994)

This policy is to meet the requirements of Alabama Legislative Act 94-820 which makes provisions for the suspension of driver's licenses for persons under the age of 19 who are convicted of the possession of a pistol on school premises.

Any person over the age of 14 who is convicted of the crime of possession of a pistol on the premises of a public school, or a public school bus, or both, under Section 13A-11-72 of the Alabama Code shall be denied issuance of a driver's permit or license for the operation of a motor vehicle for 180 days from the date the person is eligible and applies for a permit or license for the operation of a motor vehicle. Any adjudication of a person as a juvenile delinquent or youthful offender where the underlying charge is a violation under Section 13A-11-72 of the Alabama Code shall be reported to the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

If a person over the age of 14 years possesses a driver's license on the date of conviction, the Department of Public Safety, within five days of receipt of a notice of conviction from the court, shall send notice to the licensee that his or her driver's license will be suspended for 180 days.

The court shall notify the Department of Public Safety of the conviction of a person over the age of 14 of a crime involving the possession of a pistol on the premises of a public school, or a public school bus, or both, under Section 13A-11-72 and any reversal of the conviction.

Principals or their designees must report to the appropriate juvenile authorities or law enforcement agencies students found to be in possession of a pistol under the provisions of this law.

Graduation from a Blount County High School denotes the completion of a school program designed to meet as nearly as possible the needs of the students. The Alabama State Course of Study shall be adhered to in meeting the program requirements. Time allotment and credit requirements as established by the State Department of Education shall be followed.

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

(Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a))

GRADUATING CLASS OF 2026 and 2027

OPTION A

| Course Requirements  |   |                |
|--|---|----------------|
| English Language Arts  | <b>Four credits to include:</b>   | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | English 9   | 1              |
|  | English 10  | 1              |
|  | English 11  | 1              |
|  | English 12  | 1              |
|  | English Language Arts credit-eligible options may include Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.  |                |
| English Language Arts Total Credits  |   | 4              |
| Mathematics  | <b>Three credits to include:</b>  | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | Geometry or its equivalent/substitute   | 1              |
|  | Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute  | 1              |
|  | Algebra II, or its equivalent/substitute  | 1              |
|  | <b>One credit from:</b>   |                |
|  | Alabama Course of Study: Mathematics or mathematics-credit eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses | 1              |
| Mathematics Total Credits  |   | 4              |
| Science  | <b>Two credits to include:</b>  | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | Biology   | 1              |
|  | A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science)   | 1              |
|  | <b>Two credits from:</b>  |                |
|  | Alabama Course of Study: Science or science credit-eligible courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses         | 2              |
| Science Total Credits  |   | 4              |
| Social Studies   | <b>Four credits to include:</b>   | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | World History   | 1              |
|  | United States History I   | 1              |
|  | United States History II  | 1              |
|  | United States Government  | 0.5            |
|  | Economics   | 0.5            |
|  | Social Studies-credit eligible options may include Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.   |                |
| Civics Exam Requirement  | Students are required to earn a passing score on the Civics Exam.   |                |
| Social Studies Total Credits   |   | 4              |
| Physical Education   | Beginning Kinesiology or Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)  | 1              |
| Career Preparedness  |   | 1              |
| Health Education   |   | 0.5            |
| Arts Education   |   |                |
| Career and Technical Education   |   | 3              |
| World Languages  |   |                |
| Electives  |   | 2.5            |
| Total Credits  |   | 24             |
| * Effective with the graduating Class of 2022, the following requirements shall be fulfilled on behalf of the graduating senior as part of the graduating senior's transition into postsecondary education, training, or the workforce: Submit to the United States Department of Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Certify a non-participation waiver, in writing, to the superintendent of the local education agency if the graduating senior chooses not to complete and submit FAFSA. |   |                |
| **Effective with the graduating Class of 2026, the Alabama High School Diploma: General Education Pathway shall be issued to students who earn the required credits and earn one or more of the college and career readiness indicators approved by the Alabama State Board of Education.  |   |                |

# ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

(Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a))  
GRADUATING CLASS OF 2026 and 2027  
OPTION B

| Course Requirements  |   |                |
|--|---|----------------|
| English Language Arts  | <b>Four credits to include:</b>   | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | English 9   | 1              |
|  | English 10  | 1              |
|  | English 11  | 1              |
|  | English 12  | 1              |
| English Language Arts credit-eligible options may include Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses.   |   |                |
| English Language Arts Total Credits  |   | 4              |
| Mathematics  | <b>Three credits to include:</b>  | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | Geometry or its equivalent/substitute   | 1              |
|  | Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute  | 1              |
| Mathematics Total Credits  |   | 2              |
| Science  | <b>Two credits to include:</b>  | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | Biology   | 1              |
|  | A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science)   | 1              |
| Science Total Credits  |   | 2              |
| Social Studies   | <b>Four credits to include:</b>   | <b>Credits</b> |
|  | World History   | 1              |
|  | United States History I   | 1              |
|  | United States History II  | 1              |
|  | United States Government  | 0.5            |
|  | Economics   | 0.5            |
|  | Social Studies-credit eligible options may include Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE-approved courses. |                |
| Civics Exam Requirement  | Students are required to earn a passing score on the <i>Civics Exam</i> .   |                |
| Social Studies Total Credits   |   | 4              |
| Physical Education   | Beginning Kinesiology or Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)  | 1              |
| Career Preparedness  |   | 1              |
| Health Education   |   | 0.5            |
| Career and Technical Education   | Credits must be earned from an approved CTE Program of Study, resulting in CTE Completer status.  | 3              |
| Electives  |   | 6.5            |
| Total Credits  |   | 24             |
| <p>* Effective with the graduating Class of 2022, the following requirements shall be fulfilled on behalf of the graduating senior as part of the graduating senior's transition into postsecondary education, training, or the workforce: Submit to the United States Department of Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Certify a non-participation waiver, in writing, to the superintendent of the local education agency if the graduating senior chooses not to complete and submit FAFSA.</p> <p>**Effective with the graduating Class of 2026, the Alabama High School Diploma: General Education Pathway shall be issued to students who earn the required credits and earn one or more of the college and career readiness indicators approved by the Alabama State Board of Education.</p> |   |                |

1) Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of 2013-2014 (graduating class of 2017), all students will be under Alabama's One Diploma option. NO additional LEA endorsements will be awarded.

All candidates for high school graduation will be approved by the Superintendent upon the recommendation of the principals.

A course in Driver Training should be taught in every senior high school and may be taken in any grade above the ninth grade. Driver Education is an elective course for which one-half unit of credit may be earned.

## Health Education

Beginning with pupils that enter the ninth grade during school year 1982-1983 all pupils in high schools are required to successfully complete an approved one-semester course in health education before high school graduation, the contents of the course to be determined by the State Department of Education. The one-half unit of health education which is required by legislative act may be offered at any grade level (9-12) provided that the one-half unit shall not be counted toward the units required for graduation if taken below grade nine. (Act No. 853, Regular Session, Alabama Legislature, 1978.) Students who enroll in the prescribed program of study in Health Occupations Education for two years are not required to take the one-semester course in Health Education. (State Board of Education resolution on May 12, 1983 and Blount County Board of Education waiver on August 27, 1993.)

## Physical Education

All students in grades 1-6 must receive at least 30 minutes of physical education daily (no exception; no substitutions).

All students in grades 7 and 8 must receive 50 minutes of physical education daily (no exceptions; no substitutions).

All students in grades 9-12 must receive 1 unit of credit (140 clock hours) of Beginning Kinesiology in order to meet Alabama High School Graduation requirements.

It is recommended that American Government be taught the first semester and Economics the second semester in order that uniformity throughout the state may be observed as much as possible. However, where a hardship is inflicted through the furnishing of textbooks, these courses may be taught simultaneously. The larger schools will be affected most by this necessity. In no case should the order be completely reversed.

Except in a case of bona fide change of residence or other circumstances equally valid for making an exception, a student is not to be graduated from high school unless he has been in continuous attendance therein during the entire high school year immediately preceding the date of graduation. In the event of the transfer from one school to another of a twelfth grade student who wishes to become a candidate for graduation at the end of the year, the school receiving the student should require approval in writing of the transfer and the student's candidacy for graduation from the principal of the school from which the student was withdrawn. The letter of approval together with any necessary memoranda should be filed with the transcript of the student's record from the discharging school. In case of doubt as to procedure or appropriate action in such case, either or both of the principals of the schools concerned should discuss the matter with the State Department of Education.

#### Graduation Activities

Diplomas shall be imprinted with the words Alabama High School Diploma.

It is the intent and desire of the Blount County Board of Education that graduation activities and procedures for awarding the Alabama High School Diploma or Certificate of Completion to each eligible student (including special education students) be integrated and identical with no distinctions/differentiations made in regard to the way the exit document is awarded or presented.

High schools are not authorized to issue a diploma as a result of GED tests or any other tests

#### B. Requirements for Certificate of Completion

Each special education student who successfully completes the prescribed program specified in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP) for high school graduation shall be awarded an Alabama High School diploma and afforded the opportunity to participate in activities related to graduation.

#### Issuance of Diplomas and Certificates of Completion

High School Diplomas and Certificates of Completion shall be issued only upon the authority of the Board of Education and shall be on forms prescribed or approved by the Board. Diplomas and Certificates of Completion shall bear the signature of the Superintendent of Education, Principal of the school, and the President of the Blount County Board of Education.

The "Great Seal of Alabama" shall be on the face of all diplomas and certificates of completion issued by schools under the jurisdiction of the Blount County Board of Education.

Special education students should follow the program guidelines of the State Department of Education.

All schools shall follow the course offering requirements contained in Courses of Study as published by the Alabama State Department of Education.

#### C. Time Allotment Credit Requirements for Secondary Schools

Any subject that is offered in grades 9-12 which meets for a minimum of 140 clock hours of recitation and is successfully completed by the student enrolled in class must carry one (1) unit of credit. The credit must be counted toward graduation as an elective or required unit of credit. Example: One year or one unit of foreign language must be recognized even though the student does not pursue the second year of the program.

Any fractional credit which a student earns may be combined with any other fractional credit and cumulatively count toward graduation or for promotional purposes.

Any number of units (or subjects) earned in an approved summer school/credit recovery program for purposes of eligibility based on AHSAA guidelines may be counted. Units earned in the summer (at

summer school or through credit recovery) for eligibility purposes must be posted to the student's transcript prior to the first fall contest date.

#### D. Requirements for a Graduation Certificate

The Graduation Certificate from a high school denotes that a special education student has not met the requirements of his or her IEP for a diploma. A student being awarded a Graduation Certificate will be allowed to participate in graduation activities.

A graduation certificate shall not be issued as a result of GED tests or any other tests.

#### E. Dating High School Exit Documents

High schools shall hold graduation ceremonies once each year on the date set by the Board for the purpose of awarding diplomas and the certificates of completion.

This same policy on the dating of exit documents shall apply to students completing course requirements after the regular date of graduation.

#### F. Essentials/Life Skills Pathway, and Alternative Achievement Standards (AAS)

In addition to earning 24 Carnegie units, the student must complete the vocational training component of the program of study consisting of the following three components:

School Based Work Assessment. Successful experience and acceptable work performance evaluations in three to six school-based work assessment experiences, six to eight job shadowing experiences, or a combination for a minimum total of 30 hours.

Community Based Work Training. Successful experience and acceptable work performance evaluations in two to four community-based work training experiences with a minimum total of 30 hours.

Cooperative Career/Technical Education. Minimum of 270 hours of successful paid employment.

According to the April 24, 2014 ALSDE Memo FY 14-2057, "Students with disabilities in the 2010-2011 or later cohort who meet all requirements for the AOD should be awarded the Alabama High School Diploma".

Students with Disabilities Now Have Three Pathways for Earning the Alabama High School Diploma: General Education Pathway, Essentials/Life Skills Pathway, and Alternative Achievement Standards (AAS) Pathway.

#### G. Early Graduation/Early Release

With the Early Graduation/Early Release Policy, The Blount County Board of Education seeks to fairly and equitably meet the needs of students who have a legitimate reason to graduate or be released from high school ahead of their cohort while not encouraging the practice or appearing punitive to other students.

Early Graduation: Students may graduate early from Blount County Schools by meeting all requirements for an Alabama High School Diploma as described in the Alabama Administrative Code 290-030-010-6 (11) and when the conditions listed below are met.

1. Students must submit their intent to graduate early in writing to the principal or program director by the end of August of the school year in which they plan to graduate early. This goal should also be evident in the student's four-year educational plan. Students seeking graduation ahead of their age-based cohort must seek superintendent approval.
2. Students who plan to graduate early must follow course sequence/prerequisites.
3. Students who plan to graduate early will not be given preferential treatment in registration and course selection.
4. Students who plan to accelerate their program of studies for the purpose of early graduation may do so if space is available in classes after grade level students have completed registration.
5. Students who complete graduation requirements early will not be permitted to remain at school during the regular school day.
6. A student must be a full time student to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities as defined by the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). Schools may also require part-time daily attendance for extracurricular participation. Therefore, a student who graduates early will not be eligible for extracurricular activities.

7. Students who complete graduation requirements will receive their diploma at the regularly scheduled graduation ceremony or at a Board-approved mid-year graduation. Early Graduation is contingent on final course grades, obtaining the necessary verified credits, and demonstrating College and/or Career Readiness by earning a state-recognized College/Career Readiness Indicator, and fulfilling all other graduation requirements of the Alabama State Department of Education. Students may accelerate their program of studies, with approval from the school, by enrolling in virtual and/or dual enrollment at a postsecondary institution. Early graduates are withdrawn from the school database and records will include a graduation date consistent with the last day of the semester in which final graduation requirements were met. Students may graduate early from Blount County Schools by meeting all requirements for an Alabama High School Diploma as described in the Alabama Administrative Code 290-030-010-6 (11) and when the conditions listed below are met:
  1. The student has completed all graduation requirements.
  2. The student has demonstrated College and/or Career Readiness by earning a state-recognized College/Career Readiness Indicator (CRI).
  3. The student and parents/guardian have completed an exit conference with the school staff for post-secondary planning.
  4. Agreement is reached with regards to date of diploma issuance and ceremony participation. Students may graduate upon completion of the above conditions and be awarded their diploma, or they may choose to receive their diplomas at a mid-year or end-of-year ceremony.
  5. Students who plan to graduate early will not be considered for honors recognitions based on student academic ranking.

Early Release Program: A student may be released from school during the school day and participate in the Early Release Program if he/she meets the following guidelines:

1. The student has completed all graduation pre-requisites.
2. The student has demonstrated College and/or Career Readiness by earning a state-recognized College/Career Readiness Indicator (CRI).
3. The student must be in an approved Technical Education Training Program or a Marketing Education Coop Program, OR
4. The student must be enrolled in the Dual Enrollment Program and complete coursework during the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P. M.
5. Prior to approval, a review of the student's transcript must be conducted with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) by Principal/Counselor.
6. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and Principal must sign the early release form.
7. Students wishing to continue participating in extracurricular activities after Early Release are required by the school to maintain part-time student status and must meet AHSAA attendance rules.

Students considering Early Graduation should verify with their insurance provider concerning a change in coverage, and students who are 18 years old or older may lose social security benefits if not in school on a full-time basis.

### 5.5.1 The Bridge Academy Virtual Program

In order to comply with Alabama Act No. 2015-89 requiring at a minimum (that) beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, the Blount County Board of Education will offer a complete on-line graduation pathway for students in grades nine through twelve. Courses will consist of a rigorous, high-quality online curriculum aligned to the ALSDE-CCRS, as well as other state standards.

**SCOPE AND DELIVERY:** Instruction at The Bridge Academy is delivered through traditional face to-face instruction, non-traditional virtual facilitation, or a blended combination of the two. The system's learning management system (LMS) and other innovative instructional technologies house our course curriculum that allows teachers to facilitate teaching and learning. Each student and his/her parent(s) develop a customized personal education plan with an administrator and/or counselor that allows teachers to utilize the system's instructional policies and procedures, Alabama's College and Career Standards, best practice frameworks, state assessments and PLAN 2020 when developing and building lessons and facilitating classes. All courses are under the Blount County Board of Education accreditation umbrella and approved by the Blount County Board of Education through this policy.

**ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:** The Bridge Academy courses and programs are free for enrolled full-time students meeting residency requirements, as well as for returning students who meet Blount County residency requirements. Virtual student eligibility will be determined based on an application process facilitated by the administrators of The Bridge Academy and the local school. Students must be in good academic standing and demonstrate the potential for success in an online environment as judged by previous academic performance and attendance. Continued participation will be determined by student progress toward course completion. At any point when a student falls behind in the online coursework, a determination may be made that the student should return to the face-to-face setting in order to be successful and graduate on time. Special course considerations must be planned in advance for Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) and National Collegiate

Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility; therefore, it is recommended that student athletes and other students wishing to participate in extracurricular activities remain on a traditional course pathway to ensure eligibility.

**PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND TESTING PROTOCOL:** The Bridge Academy is governed by the policies and procedures of Blount County Schools. All policies adopted by the Blount County Board of Education and all applicable administrative code and laws adopted by the State Board of Education and Alabama Legislature are applicable (to the extent that they are not otherwise waived pursuant to the Alabama Accountability Act of 2013). All policies and procedures adopted by the Blount County Board of Education apply to The Bridge Academy programs unless expressly stated within this policy. All Bridge Academy students will be closely monitored to ensure that they are successfully completing coursework and remaining on their defined graduation pathway. Students who fall behind will be required to attend face-to-face sessions until they are deemed "on-pace" for course completion. Blount County Virtual Career Academy students must participate in state testing for accountability purposes, as well as any local testing deemed necessary by the virtual program administrators.

**ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:** Attendance to the Bridge Academy campus will be based on GPA and weekly academic progress. Students who fail to meet weekly academic progress may be assigned additional campus visits. Any student who fails to attend can be referred for truancy and dismissed from the Bridge Academy.

#### Level 1

- Overall GPA 3.0 or higher
- Weekly visit on Bridge Academy campus (for testing)
- On-line lessons

#### Level 2

- Overall GPA between 2.5 and 2.99
- On-line lessons
- One scheduled weekly visit to Bridge Academy campus (for testing)
- Weekly assignment goal

#### Level 3

- Overall GPA lower than 2.5
- Two scheduled visits per weeks to Bridge Academy campus required
- On-line lessons
- Weekly/daily assignment goal

Level adjustments will only be made after transcripts are evaluated at the end of each semester.

The Blount County Board of Education will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or disability, including limited English proficiency, in its implementation of the Blount County Virtual Career Academy, nor will it enforce this policy in such a manner that would otherwise violate state or federal law or court order.

## 5.6 GRADUATION HONORS

For the Class of 2027 (first-time ninth graders of 2023-2024) and thereafter, the Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Historian for the graduating class of each high school must meet the following requirements:

1. Students must have attempted and received a passing grade in all honors courses offered at their school site. (Transfer students will not be held accountable for honors courses not offered at the transferring school.)
2. Candidates for Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Historian must have been not only continuously enrolled at the same high school, but also have completed course work at their school site for the last three semesters prior to the date of their graduation.

All academic subjects taken (including those taken at the Blount County Career Technical Center) will be counted in class ranking. Grades that are given to support school activities or for being an office, library or teacher's aide/audit will not be counted when calculating grade averages. Honor students will be chosen according to the highest grade point average carried out to the 100th place if necessary to distinguish placement. In the event that two or more students have the same numerical average for any of the top three honors, provided the average has been taken out to the 100th place, then the two (or more) students shall share the honor. Schools may also recognize additional honor graduates using the same student requirements and ranking method.

Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, weighted credits will no longer be added to courses. The only exception will be for schools that are part of the A+ College Ready Advanced Placement Grant Program. AP course at these schools shall be weighted 1.25 if students successfully complete the course and take the corresponding AP exam.

Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of 2013-2014 (graduating class of 2017) all students will be considered for Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Historian Awards based on semester grade point averages calculated from grades nine through eleven and the first semester of grade twelve. All subjects taken (including those taken at the Blount County Career Technical Center) will be counted in calculating grade averages.

Numerical grades will be based on a maximum of 100 points possible. Honor students will be chosen according to the highest grade point average carried out to the 100<sup>th</sup> place if necessary to distinguish placement. In the event that two or more students have the same numerical average for any of the top three honors, provided the average has been taken out to the 100<sup>th</sup> place, then the two (or more) students shall share the honor. (a) Grades that are given for being an office, library or teacher's aide/audit will not be counted when calculating grade averages.

Beginning with the entering ninth grade class of 2013-2014 (graduating class of 2017) schools will recognize students who graduate with a 3.5 or higher GPA as graduating "With Honors." The honors should follow these guidelines:

- 1) Overall GPA for credit-bearing courses should be used in the calculation.
- 2) 3.500 – 3.7999 = "With Honors," 3.800 – 3.999 = "With High Honors," 4.000 and above = "With Highest Honors"
- 3) An Honor Seal may be affixed to the Alabama High School Diploma
- 4) Students graduating with any level of "honors" should be recognized accordingly during the graduation ceremony.

Students transferring from a school system where numerical grades are not given will be assigned numerical grades based on that system's grading scale, if available. If a scale is not available, the Blount County School System scale will be used. In the event of lack of pluses or minuses with the letter grades, the middle numerical grade will be assigned to each letter grade.

Only Carnegie Units received from a state accredited school system and dual enrollment course credit will be accepted for the purpose of calculating the grade-point averages for the top three honors. Credit units transferred from an independent correspondence study, non-accredited private school, church school, private tutor, and/or a home school will not be accepted for the purpose of calculating the averages for the top three honors.

## 5.7 DRESS AND DECORUM

The policy of the Blount County Board of Education is that good grooming and personal appearances are essential elements in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is expected that students dress in such a manner that will ensure health and safety, and not detract from the learning environment. Furthermore, dress and personal appearance are not to be disruptive or interfere with the educational interest and welfare of the students or the purposes of public school education.

Any student violating the dress code may be suspended for the remainder of the school day and may receive unexcused absences in the classes missed. The principal or his/her designated person(s) has the authority to determine inappropriate dress.

Repeat offenders are subject to further disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the principal/designee.

Principals can specify dress code for specific events, i.e. graduation, prom, etc.

### A. Student Dress Code

Students must be neatly dressed, clean, and well-groomed while at school. Clothing must be suited for school activities.

Students in grades K-12 are prohibited from wearing excessively loose clothing including shirts, tops, pants, and shorts.

Pants should be of the appropriate size in the waist and inseam. Pants are not allowed that sag off the hips.

Trench coats are also prohibited.

Students in grades 4-12 are prohibited from wearing short shorts, short culottes, sheer mesh or net clothing, backless clothing, extremely tight pants, tank tops or muscle shirts, shirts with sleeves cut off at the shoulder, or clothing that exposes a bare midriff. Shirts must be buttoned. For students in grades 4-12, clothing, cuts, slits, or tears in clothing should not exceed four inches above the knee. Extremely tight clothing shall be prohibited.<sup>(7)</sup> Leggings and other tightly fitting pants must be covered with clothing that meets the four inch standard stated above.

Clothing or any item attached to or worn on clothing or on a person's body, with pictures, symbols, or writing conveying a message about alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, having a sexual connotation, containing any obscenity, or containing any foul or abusive language is prohibited on the school campus. No writing on back (seat) of pants, jeans, shorts, sweatpants, etc. for K-12 grade male and female students, including cheerleaders and all athletes.

Shoes or sandals must be worn.

Hats, headwear or head coverings, and sunglasses are not to be worn inside school buildings.



Students will be prohibited from wearing any apparel which is inappropriate or disruptive to the learning environment as determined by the principal.

**B. Backpacks**

No restrictions on backpacks.

**C. Hair**

Students' hair should be kept clean, neat and well-groomed and of a length not dangerous around equipment (hair must be secured around equipment). Spiked hair, Mohawks, designs cut in hair, or hair that disrupts the educational process will not be allowed. Hair, including highlights, that is not a natural shade of hair color is unacceptable, i.e. pink, blue, green, purple, etc.

**D. Tobacco**

Use or possession of tobacco in any form including vapor and/or electronic cigarettes is expressly prohibited on school premises and school buses including trips at all times, regardless of whether school is in or out of session.

**1<sup>st</sup> Offense**

One day Out Of School Suspension or Two days of In School Suspension (student must complete three educational packets/courses on vapes/tobacco before returning to regular classes). A parent/guardian will have to meet with a school administrator and sign the Notification Form For: Nicotine Products, E-Cigarettes, Vapes, & Tobacco Products.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Offense**

Ten days at the Blount County Alternative School plus attend the Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco Prevention Program at the Professional Development Center in Cleveland (a parent/guardian will be required to attend the Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco Prevention Program with the student). The Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco Prevention Program will be taught on Saturday mornings. Failure to attend the Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco Prevention Program will result in an additional three day placement at the Blount County Alternative School. Those who fail to attend the Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco Prevention Program on the original date will also be enrolled into the next available class. The address for the **Professional Development Center is 62561 U.S. Highway 231 Cleveland, AL 35049**. A parent/guardian will have to meet with a school administrator and sign the Notification Form For: Nicotine products, E-Cigarettes, Vapes, & Tobacco Products.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Offense**

Out of School Suspension pending a disciplinary hearing.

- Students who are serving a Two-day In-School Suspension placement on the first offense will be excluded from extracurricular activities on one of the two days during the suspension.
- Students will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities while serving an Out of School Suspension or an Alternative Placement for any nicotine or tobacco offense.
- Students will receive a "0" for any grades taken during the Out of School Suspension time period.

**Students who have or use E-Cigarettes, Vapes, or other products that contain THC or test positive for THC will result in an automatic suspension pending a disciplinary hearing. Students will also have to attend the Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco Prevention Program.**

**E. Drugs and Alcohol**

Students in the possession of or under the influence of any illegal drugs or in the possession of drug paraphernalia (those drugs and paraphernalia prohibited by Federal and State of Alabama Laws) or alcoholic beverages will be suspended and subject to expulsion from school as well as subject to legal action by the appropriate legal authorities. Any student having in his/her possession any drug, prescription or non-prescription and/or gives away, sells, or attempts to give away and/or sell medication, non-prescription or prescription, will be subject to suspension or expulsion.

**F. Profanity and obscenity will not be tolerated**

**G. Weapons**

Students are prohibited from bringing to the school campus, having in their possession or in their lockers, any lethal weapons or facsimile, including but not limited to firearms, bombs, fireworks, explosives, knives, hunting knives, bayonets, razors, razor blades, letter openers, ice picks, and hat pins.

Any student who is found guilty of having a lethal weapon may be expelled by the Board.

In addition to the above policy on weapons, the following policy statement is required by Act 94-817 as it amends Section 13A-11-72, Code of Alabama 1975.

Subject to the exceptions provided in Section 13A-11-74, Code of Alabama 1972, no person shall knowingly with intent to do bodily harm carry or possess a deadly weapon on the premises of a public school.

Possession of a deadly weapon with the intent to do bodily harm on the premises of a public school in violation of the subsection printed above is a Class C felony.

The term "deadly weapon" as used in this Act means a firearm or anything manifestly designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting death or serious physical injury, and such term includes, but is not limited to, a bazooka, hand grenade, missile or explosive or incendiary device; pistol, rifle, or shotgun; or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, stiletto, sword or dagger; or any club, baton, billy, blackjack, bludgeon, or metal knuckles.

The following policy relative to weapons (firearms) is necessitated by the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 and by Act of the Alabama Legislature, 1995:

Any student who, after due process has been accorded, is found to have brought a weapon (firearm) to school will be expelled by the Board for a period of not less than one year (365 days) subject to a case by case exception that may be granted by the Superintendent of Education for the purpose of disciplining students with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Furthermore, any student who brings a firearm or weapon to school must be referred by the principal to the criminal justice or juvenile delinquency systems.

The one-year expulsion requirement applies to students who bring weapons to any setting that is under the control and supervision of the Board including events held off the school campus and including school buses and other means of transportation that are under contract with the school or Board.

Nothing in this policy shall be constructed to prevent the Board from providing a student who has been expelled from the student's regular school setting educational services in an alternative setting.

Expulsion means removal from the student's regular school program at the location where the violation occurred.

Alternative setting means one that is clearly distinguishable from the student's regular school placement.

A "weapon" or "firearm" means a firearm as defined in Section 921 of Title 18 of the United States Code.

According to Section 921, the following are included within the definition:

- any weapon which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of any explosive.
- the frame or receiver of any weapon described above
- any firearm muffler or firearm silencer
- any explosive incendiary, or poison gas
  - (1) bomb,
  - (2) grenade,
  - (3) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces,
  - (4) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce,
  - (5) mine, or
  - (6) similar device
- any weapon which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter.
- any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in the two immediately preceding examples, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

According to Section 921, the following are not included in the definition:

- an antique firearm
- a rifle which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational, or cultural purposes
- any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon
- any device, although originally designed for use as a weapon, which is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device
- surplus ordnance sold, loaned, or given by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to the provisions of Section 4684 (2), 4685, or 4686 of Title 10.

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms does not include Class-C common fireworks in the definition of weapon.

#### **H. Earrings**

Boys are prohibited from wearing earrings to school. Girls are permitted to wear earrings in the ear to school. Students are prohibited from wearing any other body-piercing jewelry to school.

#### **I. Wireless Communication Devices**

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year the Blount County Board of Education will implement ACT # 2025-386 to be in compliance with State Law in regards to technology used throughout the Instructional Day. No student shall use or operate a personal wireless communication device in any public elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds thereof during the instructional day. If a student is in possession of a personal wireless device it must be turned off and stored off their person in a locker, car, backpack, athletic style duffle bag, or a purse.

The following items are recognized as a personal wireless communication device according to ACT# 2025-386: a cellular telephone, tablet computer, laptop computer, pager, gaming device, smart watch, or any other portable electronic device that has the capability of exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with another electronic device.

A student may use, operate, or possess a personal wireless communication device in a public elementary or secondary school building or on the grounds thereof during the instructional day in any of the following circumstances: the use, operation, or possession is pursuant to the students Individualized Education Plan, a Section 504 Plan, or an Individualized Health Plan, or during an emergency that threatens the life or safety of the student or another person. A board employee may approve a student to use, operate, or possess a wireless communication device owned by the Blount County Board of Education if it is to be used for educational or learning purposes.

Each school will clearly identify in its master schedule the time of day in which the instructional day begins (first period/homeroom) and ends. Students will have time before and after the instructional day to store or retrieve a wireless communication device from a storage location.

Students and parents must sign a technology Responsible Use Student Contract that outlines the terms of the wireless communication policy. Neither the Blount County Board of Education nor local schools are responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal wireless communication devices.

**First Offense:**

Take the phone or other electronic device, hold until the parent/guardian comes to the school and meets with an administrator to discuss the policy and the consequences of further violations of the policy. The parent/guardian will be asked to sign a verification/documentation form of the meeting.

**Second Offense:**

Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for seven (7) school days. A parent/guardian must pick up the cell phone or other electronic device from an administrator and again sign the verification/documentation form. The administration may assign detention, in-school suspension or Saturday school to the student.

**Third Offense:**

Take the phone or other electronic device, hold for nine (9) weeks of school. The student will also be placed in alternative school for three days.

\*A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student that continues to violate this policy after the third offense. .

\*\*A disciplinary hearing will be held for any student who violates the policy and refuses to give the phone or electronic device to school personnel.

**Cell Phone/Digital Device in a Testing Setting by Students**

The possession of a wireless communication device (a cellular telephone, tablet computer, laptop computer, pager, gaming device, smart watch, or any other portable electronic device that has the capability of exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with another electronic device) is strictly prohibited in the testing setting. Local education agency (LEA) school personnel will collect such devices before students can enter the testing room.

If a device is in the possession of a student in the testing setting, testing for the student will cease, the device will be confiscated, the student will be dismissed from testing, and the student's test will be invalidated. Additional disciplinary action may be taken by the LEA.

**J. Laser Pointers**

Students are prohibited from bringing, possessing, or otherwise using laser pointers or other devices that emit laser light at school or school sponsored activities. However, students may participate in science lab exercises or other activities using lasers when under the direction and supervision of a teacher.

**K. Gang Symbols**

Clothing or paraphernalia related to or associated with gang affiliation or activity is prohibited. Any symbol of gangs, gang activity or gang membership may not be worn or displayed by students at school or while

participating in any school activity including field trips.

**L. Rules for Specific Activities**

With approval of the principal, activity sponsors may establish different rules for dress and grooming as a prerequisite for membership and participation in specific activities except that nothing in this policy is meant to imply that those things prohibited in this policy manual shall be permitted except for students required to wear uniforms.

**M. Required Actions for Drugs, Alcohol, Weapons, Physical Harm, or Threatened Physical Harm**

The school principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when a person violates Board policies concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person. If any criminal charge is warranted, the principal is authorized to sign the appropriate warrant. If a student violates these policies, he or she shall immediately be suspended from attending regular classes and hearing scheduled within five (5) school days before the Board of Education.

If a student is found to have violated a Board of Education policy concerning drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, the student may not be readmitted to the public schools of this state until criminal charges, if any, have been disposed of by appropriate authorities and the student has satisfied all other requirements imposed by the Board as a condition for readmission.

Any student determined to be guilty of an offense involving drugs, alcohol, weapons, physical harm to a person or threatened physical harm to a person, may be readmitted to the public schools of this state upon such conditions as the Board of Education shall prescribe for preservation of the safety or security of students and employees of the Board, which may include, but are not limited to, psychiatric or psychological evaluation and counseling.

The decision to suspend or initiate criminal charges against a student, or both, shall include a review and consideration of the student's exceptional status (students with disabilities), if applicable under Chapter 39, Code of Alabama 1975, or appropriate state and federal statutory or case law. (Act 94-784 as it amends Section 16-1-24.1, Code of Alabama 1975)

**N. Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination**

The Blount County Board of Education is committed to protecting its students and employees from bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any type. The school board believes that all students and employees are entitled to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free school experience. Bullying, harassment, or discrimination will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action. This policy shall be interpreted and applied consistently with all applicable state and federal laws. Conduct that constitutes bullying, harassment or discrimination, as defined herein, occurring on school property during the school day or at school-sponsored events is prohibited. The use of school equipment for the purpose of these actions is also prohibited.

**Section 1: Bullying, Intimidation, Violence, and Threats of Violence Prohibited.**

No student shall engage in nor should any be subjected to bullying, violence, threats of violence or intimidation by any other student that is based on any of the specific characteristics set forth in this policy. Students who violate this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary sanctions as specified in the Student Code of Conduct, subject to the investigating school administrator's authority and decision.

**Section 2: Definitions**

In this policy, these terms shall have the following meanings:

- (a) "Bullying" means a continuous pattern of intentional behavior on or off of school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function including, but not limited to, cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical actions that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has a particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in this policy. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:
  - Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or damage to his or her property.
  - Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
  - Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
  - Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored function.

Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

(b) "Hostile environment" means the perception by an affected student that the conduct of another student constitutes a threat of violence or bullying and that the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person, under the circumstances, would agree that the conduct constitutes bullying, threat of assault, or assault.

(c) "Violence" means the unjustified infliction of physical force by a student with the intent to cause injury to another student or damage to the property of another student.

(d) "Threat" means a statement of an intention to inflict pain, injury, damage, or other hostile action to cause fear of harm. The intention may be communicated through an electronic, written, verbal, or physical act to cause fear, mental distress, or interference in the school environment. The intention may be expressly stated or implied and the person communicating the threat has the ability to carry out the threat.

(e) "Threat of violence" means an unjustified expression of intention to inflict injury or damage that is made by a student and directed to another student.

(f) "Intimidation" means an unjustified threat or other action that is intended to cause fear or apprehension in a student.

(g) "Student" as used in this policy means a person who is enrolled in Blount County Schools public school system.

### Section 3: Description of Behavior Expected of Students

(a) Students are expected to treat other students with courtesy, respect, and dignity and comply with the Code of Student Conduct. Students are expected and required (1) to comply with the requirements of law, policy, regulation, and rules prohibiting bullying, violence, or intimidation; (2) to refrain from inflicting or threatening to inflict violence, injury, or damage to the person or property of another student, and (3) to refrain from placing another student in fear of being subjected to violence, injury, or damage when such actions or threats are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any personal characteristic of the student that is identified in this policy.

(b) Bullying, intimidation, violence, or threats of violence are prohibited and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary consequences and/or sanctions if the perpetrator of such action is found to have based the prohibited action on one or more of the following personal characteristics of the student:

- Race
- Sex
- Religion
- National origin
- Disability

### Section 4: Consequences for Violations

A series of graduated consequences for any violation of this policy will be those outlined in the Code of Student Conduct or any rule or standard adopted under authority of this policy.

### Section 5: Reporting, Investigation, and Complaint Resolution Procedures

(a) Complaints alleging violations of this policy may be made on a Board-approved complaint form available in the handbook, on the website, or at the school's office. The complaint must be delivered to the principal or the principal's designee either by mail or personal delivery. Incidental or minor violations of the policy may be presented and resolved informally. The complaint form developed to report violations of this policy will include a provision for reporting a threat of suicide by a student. If a threat of suicide is reported, the principal or the principal's designee is authorized to inform the student's parent or guardian of the report unless at the discretion of the school principal or the principal's designee the apparent cause of the threat of suicide is child abuse or other significant harm from a parent or guardian.

(b) Upon receipt of the complaint, the principal or the principal's designee will determine if the complaint alleges a serious violation of this policy. If the principal or the principal's designee determines that the complaint alleges a serious violation, the principal or the principal's designee will undertake a reasonably prompt investigation of the complaint. The investigation will entail the gathering of relevant facts and evidence taking into account the circumstances of the complaint. If the investigation establishes a violation, appropriate disciplinary sanctions may be imposed on the offending student(s). Other measures that are reasonably calculated to prevent a recurrence of the violations(s) may also be imposed by the principal or the school system.

(c) Acts of reprisal or retaliation against any student who has reported a violation of this policy or sought relief provided by this policy are prohibited, and are themselves a violation of this policy. Any confirmed acts of reprisal or retaliation may be subject to disciplinary sanctions that may include any sanction, penalty, or consequence that is available to school officials under the Code of Student Conduct. A student who deliberately, recklessly, and falsely accuses another student of a violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct.

#### Section 6: Promulgation of Policy and Related Procedures, Rules, and Forms

This policy and any procedures, rules and forms developed and approved to implement the policy will be published on the website of each local board of education and school, shall be available at each school office, and shall be included in the student handbook that is distributed to each student at the beginning of each school year.

### **O. Jason Flatt Act State of Alabama Youth Suicide and Prevention**

#### Section 1. Prevention of Suicide

The Jason Flatt Act was passed in order to equip Alabama school districts and their personnel to recognize and act on signs of suicide risk in order to provide prevention, intervention and postvention with students at risk, their families and the communities who may be affected. This act, which amends 16-28B-8 of the Code of Alabama 1975, includes prevention of harassment and violence.

Section 2. The Jason Flatt Act includes several elements which should be interpreted as Policy.

The school system will:

- (1) Foster individual, family, and group counseling services related to suicide prevention.
- (2) Make referral, crisis intervention, and other related information available for students, parents, and school personnel.
- (3) Foster training for school personnel who are responsible for counseling and supervising students.
- (4) Increase student awareness of the relationship between drug and alcohol use and suicide.
- (5) Educate students in recognizing signs of suicidal tendencies and other facts and warning signs of suicide.
- (6) Inform students of available community suicide prevention services.
- (7) Promote cooperative efforts between school personnel and community suicide prevention program personnel.
- (8) Foster school-based or community-based, or both, alternative programs outside of the classroom.
- (9) Develop a strategy to assist survivors of attempted suicide, students, and school personnel in coping with the issues relating to attempted suicide, suicide, the death of a student, and healing.
- (10) Engage in any other program or activity which the local board determines is appropriate and prudent in the efforts of the school system to prevent student suicide.
- (11) Provide training for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students on the local board policies to prevent harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence.
- (12) Develop a process for discussing with students local board policies relating to the prevention of student suicide and to the prevention of harassment, intimidation, violence, and threats of violence.
- (13) Provide annual training for all certified school employees in suicide awareness and prevention. This training may be provided within the framework of existing in-service training programs or as a part or required professional development offered by the local school system.

### **P. Articles/Items Prohibited in Schools**

Knives, sharp objects, fireworks, firearms, or weapons of any kind are prohibited.

If brought to school, prohibited items will be impounded and may not be returned. The Blount County Board of Education or the school will not be held responsible for any confiscated items.

### **Q. Lockers**

School lockers are used by students on a permissive basis only. The lockers remain the property of the school and may be opened and searched as the need arises. A locker which has a lock placed on it may be opened upon demand of school authorities after reasonable notice.

#### 5.8 Transportation

##### A. Personal Vehicles

A student driving an automobile to school must be a licensed driver and must park in the place designated by the principal. Vehicles are not to be moved during the school day without the permission of the principal and are not to be moved at the end of the day until all buses are loaded and off the school grounds unless an exception is made by the principal. Students will not be allowed to loiter in or around parked cars during the school day.

Speed limit on all school grounds is 5 (five) miles per hour.

School officials, standing in loco parentis, may search any vehicle brought on campus by a student when such officials have reason to believe the student may have possession of any substance, item, or material which could endanger that or another student or could interfere with the educational process of the school.

The principal has the authority to designate faculty, employee, bus, student, and visitor parking zones if the need for such zones exists.

Any student who fails to abide by any of these regulations can be refused permission to drive a vehicle to school.

#### B. Public Vehicles

In accordance with the law, the bus driver shall stand in the place of the parent or guardian when exercising authority and control over the pupils who ride the bus while they are in transit to and from school. This means that the driver is responsible for the good conduct of all pupils while they are on the driver's bus and they shall make sure the students behave themselves properly and observe all safety rules and regulations.

A pupil who is willfully disobedient, fights, or destroys property while on a school bus may lose transportation privileges and may be excluded from the bus. Public transportation is a privilege and a convenience and is conditioned upon good behavior.

#### C. Students who attend the Blount County Career Technical Center

Students who attend the Blount County Career Technical Center will be required to ride school buses to and from the center, unless other arrangements are approved by the Center Director and the local principal.

### 5.9 Safety Supervision

Pupil safety shall be a major concern of the principal and faculty.

#### A. Playground

The principal and concerned faculty will arrange for supervision of the playground during school hours.

#### B. Before and After School Hours

Faculty members will be on campus fifteen minutes before school opens and fifteen minutes after school dismisses. Parents should be aware of this when allowing students to arrive early or remain late.

A designated faculty member will supervise planned school activities which take place after school hours.

#### C. Illness

Parents or other designated persons will be contacted in case of student illness.

#### D. Fire and Tornado Safety

Fire and tornado drill signals shall be uniform throughout the school system for every school. These signals shall consist of the following:

1. Tornado-Continuous series of three short bells signifying the three syllables of tornado
2. Fire-One long continuous bell just as a fire siren is continuous

3. Schools must have a backup alarm system in case of power failure. An example of a backup alarm is a hand-rung bell.

#### 5.10 School Athletics

A. Athletic events shall be limited to one night per week prior to a school day (an exception will be made for Thursday night varsity football games). A student will be allowed to participate only one night of competition before a school day each week. Any exceptions made to athletic schedules should be approved by the Superintendent.

1. Total number of games played each night will be limited to five.
2. Girls and boys teams will be limited to junior varsity and varsity teams. The varsity team may consist of students from grades 9-12, the junior varsity team may consist of students from grades 7-11. Basketball teams shall be limited to a varsity team, junior varsity team, and junior high team
3. The county basketball tournament shall be played the one to two weeks prior to the area tournament for boy's and girl's teams, if possible.
4. Times for boys and girls varsity games will be eight minutes per quarter and junior varsity games will be six minutes per quarter.
5. The junior high football games and the junior varsity football games will be played on the same night, if possible.
6. A student can cheerlead on one (1) nights before a school day each week.

Students who participate in school athletics will be governed by the regulations set forth by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.

Reasonable precaution and safeguard for the welfare of athletes will be taken.

Transportation for team athletes and cheerleaders to and from scheduled events will be provided by the school, if possible.

Locally scheduled athletics during the instructional day (360 minutes) are limited to once per semester for a hosting school. Athletic activities for students below grade seven (7) are limited to intermurals. Tackle football for students below grade seven is prohibited.

- B. The Board recognizes the Blount County Girls' Athletic Conference, an organization for coaches of girls' sports, and the Blount County Coaches Association, an organization for coaches of boys' sports, in Blount County. The organizations are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations of the Alabama High School Athletic Association and to the policies of the Board of Education.
- C. The rules and regulations of the Alabama High School Athletic Association and of the two county coaches organizations are not to be considered policies of the Blount County Board of Education.
- D. The athletic program of each school is subject to the approval of the principal.
- E. The principal of the school hosting the Blount County Basketball Tournament shall have the authority to select the association of game officials for officiating the annual County Basketball Tournament. The association to be used during the tournament may or may not be an association used by the host school for regular season games. The host school shall be responsible for obtaining a contract with the chosen association for officiating the tournament.

#### 5.10.1 Blount County Board of Education Policy on Extracurricular Activity Participation-Academics First

The Blount County Board of Education recognizes the value of all extracurricular activities as they relate to the total education of students. The Blount County Board of Education also recognizes and supports high academic standards and the necessity of developing a framework to annually assess each student involved in extracurricular activities and his/her progress toward graduating from high school on schedule with his/her class. This Board of Education also recognizes that the Class of 2000 and subsequent classes will be required by State Board of Education resolution and the Alabama Administrative Code to earn a minimum of 24 credits in Grades 9-12, with four (4) credits each in science, mathematics, social studies, and English.



The Blount County Board of Education prescribes the following regulations for eligibility by students in this school system to participate in all extracurricular activities:

1. Students entering Grades 10-12 must, for the immediately preceding school year, have a passing grade and earn the appropriate number of credits in each of six (6) Carnegie units of credit, including four (4) credits from the four (4) core subjects composed of English, science, social studies and mathematics.
2. Physical education may count as only one (1) unit per year.
3. Any number of units (or subjects) earned in an approved summer school/credit recovery program for purposes of eligibility based on AHSAA guidelines may be counted. Units earned in the summer (at summer school or through credit recovery) for eligibility purposes must be posted to the student's transcript prior to the first fall contest date.
4. Eligibility will be determined before the start of each new school year. A student that is academically eligible at the beginning of the school year remains eligible for the remainder of that school year so far as grades are concerned. Students declared ineligible at the beginning of a school year may regain their eligibility at the end of the first semester by meeting the academic requirements listed above during their last two semesters in attendance and summer school, if applicable. The restored eligibility of any student must be determined no later than the fifth day of the second semester. Bonafide transfers may be dealt with according to rules of the Alabama High School Athletic Association for sports and rules to be developed by this Board of Education as they pertain to other extracurricular activities.
5. Each eligible student must have a minimum composite numerical average of 70 on the six (6) Carnegie units from the preceding year, including summer school. Summer school work passed may substitute for regular schoolwork repeated in computing the 70 average.
6. Each eligible student involved in athletics must meet the definition of a regular student as defined by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.
7. Any student who earns more than four (4) credits in the core curriculum in any given year or who accumulates a total in excess of the required four (4) per year may be exempt from earning the four (4) core courses in the succeeding year as long as that student remains on schedule for graduation with his/her class.

Students entering Grades 8 and 9 must, for the immediately preceding school year, have a passing grade in five (5) subjects with a composite numerical average of 70 with all other rules applying the same as to students in Grades 9-12.

Students promoted to the seventh grade for the first time are eligible.

Extracurricular activities associated with athletics are defined as those recognized and sanctioned by the Alabama High School Athletic Association, and other extracurricular activities are defined as those that are sanctioned by a public school which are not related to a student's academic requirements or success in a course(s). Regular curricular activities are defined as those that are required for satisfactory course completion. School sponsors are required to submit a request for each curricular activity that occurs outside the regular school day and/or school to the principal, superintendent and the local Board of Education for approval. Each request for full participation by all students, regardless of academic standing, in a curricular activity shall be granted if the principal, superintendent, and the local Board of Education approve participation in the activity as an extension of a course(s) requirement(s) and it is an event sanctioned by a state/national subject matter association. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this policy, student participation in extracurricular activities offered by the school through math, science, band, choral music, and other courses at events such as athletic events (pregame, game, halftime, or other breaks), club conventions, parades, amusement park trips and competitions, trips by tour companies, performances at various meetings, etc., are extracurricular, and students academically ineligible under this policy shall not be allowed to participate.

This policy is effective for all students in grades 8-12 beginning with the 1999-2000 school year with their eligibility determined by grades earned during the 1998-99 school year and 1999 summer school, and shall remain in effect for each succeeding year in the same format as described herein.

This is a minimal policy of Blount County Schools. Other more stringent guidelines may be required by individual extracurricular disciplines.

## 5.11 Extracurricular Activities

- A. If a student is absent from school for more than one-half of a day, that student will not be allowed to perform, play, or practice with his or her particular extracurricular activity on the day of the absence. This will involve all students and all extracurricular activities. If a student has to be absent from school, this student must seek approval of the principal in advance if he or she wishes to participate in the extracurricular activity. Upon the student's request, the principal shall make a decision about the student's participation. The principal shall make this decision after deliberation with the coach, sponsor, or director of the student's extracurricular activity.
- B. All extracurricular activities must have a teacher-sponsor. These club activities will be held on school property unless exceptions are approved by the Board.
- C. Responsibility for student transportation to and from the origin of departure for a school extracurricular event is assumed by the parent or legal guardian.
- D. Local school (extracurricular) activities will not interfere with regular classes at the vocational center.
- E. Club Initiation and Hazing. Club initiation activities will not extend to the area of physically detracting the body of the initiates. This policy is expressly directed toward, but is not limited to, unorthodox haircuts, body painting, and other such activities which are not conducive to the pursuit of academic excellence. (1)

## 5.12 Marriage

Married students are subject to the same rules and regulations as other students.

## 5.13 Discipline

The discipline of highest educational value is self-discipline on the part of individuals.

In cases where discretion and forethought have been used, it is the duty of the principal to support teachers in everyday disciplinary actions. In cases where the support is not forthcoming, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and/or the Board will supply the needed support.

- A. Grades may not be lowered as a disciplinary measure.
- B. Corporal punishment must be administered by the principal, assistant principal or teacher.

The corporal punishment must be witnessed by another adult which must be a principal, assistant principal or another teacher.

Corporal punishment must not be administered in front of other students.

Corporal punishment must be reasonable and not severe enough to cause bodily injury. Corporal punishment must not be cruel or inhumane and must never be administered with malice. Corporal punishment must be documented stating the name of the student, the reason for the punishment, the type of the punishment, the signature of the person who administered the punishment, the signature of the witness, and the date of the punishment. This documentation must be retained until the student graduates or achieves the age whereby he/she should have graduated for a student who ceases to attend school.

- C. After-School Detention  
Schools may implement a policy of after-school detention as a means of discipline.
- D. Suspension

Suspension may be used as a discipline measure when other efforts have failed to modify a student's behavior in school. Suspension may be used to protect the safety of others, the learning environment, property, and the education of others. A student may be suspended for violating Board policies.

The principal or designee may suspend any student for the above reasons. The suspension period must not be longer than for five school days.

The student must be given an oral or written notice of the charges against him, and if he denies them, an explanation of the evidence and an opportunity to present his version.

A suspended student will not be allowed to participate in any school extracurricular activities during the suspension period.

A hearing should immediately follow the misconduct, but if prior notice and hearing are not feasible, as where the student's presence endangers persons or property or threatens disruption of the academic process, thus justifying immediate removal from school, notice and hearing should follow as soon as practicable. The hearing must be held within three school days following the suspension.

Reasons for which suspension action may be taken against a student include but are not limited to such acts as:

1. Use of obscene or abusive language
2. Willful disobedience to persons acting in an official capacity.
3. Possession of obscene or pornographic literature and other material.
4. Taking another's property under duress, by threat, by stealing or by other fraudulent means.
5. Fighting or engaging in violent behavior.
6. Possession of, consumption of, or intoxication due to use of restricted or controlled drugs or alcoholic beverages, chemicals and chemical substances. Also, possession of any drug paraphernalia.
7. Unauthorized presence during the school day at any school or on school property where not enrolled.
8. Violation of the policy on medication.
9. Continuous disruption of classroom procedures.
10. Use of tobacco in buildings or on buses or smoking on the campus.

Written accounts of suspension must be filed in the school office and a copy sent immediately to the Superintendent.

Immediately after suspension, a written notice of suspension will be mailed or sent to the parent or guardian. A parent or guardian must accompany the student on his return to school unless the principal specifically exempts such requirement.

#### E. Expulsion

A student may be expelled for any act that is detrimental to the education process, the school program, the condition of the public school buildings, the condition of the public school buses, or the rights of others to pursue an education. Any student who, after due process has been afforded, is found to have brought a weapon (firearm) to school will be expelled by the Board for a period of one year but no other expulsion may extend beyond the end of the school year during which act(s) leading directly to the expulsion occurred unless such act(s) occurred during the last 6 weeks (30 school days) of the school year. An expulsion made during the last 6 weeks (30 school days) of a school year may extend into the next succeeding school year.

No student will be expelled without a proper hearing before the Board of Education with the decision being made by that body with due consideration for the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Any student who is the subject of any expulsion action will be granted every right of due process including a hearing, the right to hear the alleged charge(s), the right to question all evidence, the right to speak and offer evidence in his own behalf and the right to have a full explanation of the applicable Board policy used to charge the student.

Expulsion action may be taken for violation of any Board policy.

A written report of the pertinent facts concerning the case shall be filed in the office of the Superintendent. Immediately after expulsion, written notice of expulsion should be sent to the parent or guardian.

An expelled student may petition the Board that he be reinstated at the beginning of next semester. The principal and the Superintendent shall make recommendations on such requests to the Board.

An expelled student will not be allowed to participate in any school extracurricular activities and shall not be allowed to attend any school functions unless such functions are open to the public. The expelled student shall be subject to the same rules, regulations, and laws that apply to the public.

#### F. Suspension and Expulsion Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities

(A)Blount County Board of Education will follow the following procedures in disciplining students with disabilities

**Suspension:**

All suspensions should be for a specified number of days, not to exceed three (3) full school days or maximum specified by the Board and statutory regulations. Any deviation from said pattern shall require the authorization from the Superintendent of Schools. Provided the student is suspended, following a hearing which affords the applicable due process criteria, the principal shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian in writing on forms prescribed by the school system of the action taken, cause or causes for such action, effective dates of suspension and/or specified requirements to be met prior to re-admission.

Ten or more days of suspensions during any given school year will necessitate the convening of the IEP Team to conduct a manifestation determination, as it may result in a change of placement .

**Expulsion:**

A student with disabilities may not be expelled from school for any misbehavior that has a direct and significant relationship to that student's area of disability. If the Individual Education Planning Team (IEP) determines that the behavior in question does not have a direct and significant relationship to the student's area of disability, the education agency may expel the student; however, a complete cessation of education services is not permissible. Expulsion constitutes change in placement which requires due process through the IEP Team action.

Student Status During Proceedings-If administration or judicial remedy is requested as a result of disagreements with any disciplinary action which would result in a change of placement, the student with disabilities involved in the issue must remain in his/her present educational placement. If the education agency believes the student with disabilities poses an immediate threat to the safety of himself/herself or others, the education agency may request injunctive relief to have the student temporarily removed from the present educational placement until the issue is resolved. The emergency suspension shall be followed, as soon as practical, by an IEP Team meeting action, if a long term suspension or expulsion is contemplated.

**G. Classifications of Violations and Sanctions**

It is fundamental that orderly schools have clearly defined behaviors to which students must conform. Nonconformity to these behaviors becomes violations of the code of student conduct. Violations are grouped into four classes (Class I, Class II, Class III, and Class IV) which range from the least to the most serious. Appropriate school personnel shall investigate, verify and determine classification of student conduct on a school campus, at school-related events, or while being transported to or from school-related events.

Below is a listing of each class of violations and possible sanctions. As the violations increase in seriousness, the severity of the possible sanctions increases.

Students who are assigned to the Alternative School for more than 15 school days will be offered a discipline hearing in accordance with ACT #2024-262 which will be effective October 1, 2024.

**CLASS I VIOLATIONS**

- 1.01 Distraction of other students
- 1.02 Intimidation of a student
- 1.03 Unexcused tardiness-reporting late to class
- 1.04 Non-direct use of profane language or obscene manifestations (see 2.08)
- 1.05 Non-conformity of dress code (inappropriate gang related dress)
- 1.06 Disruption on a school bus
- 1.07 Inappropriate display of affection-including, but not limited to, embracing and kissing
- 1.08 Refusal to complete class assignments-including continued failure to bring materials to class
- 1.09 Failure to follow appropriate directives from a board of education employee (Administrator, teacher, counselor, teacher's aide, substitute teacher, bus driver etc.)
- 1.10 Unauthorized use of school or personal property (radios, CD players, electronic games, iPods, MP3 players, laser light pointers, etc. )
- 1.11 Littering of school property
- 1.12 Inappropriate displays of behavior-horseplay, shoving, tripping, rudeness-in hall, classroom, lunchroom, assembly, pep rally and/or other school-sponsored function

**Multiple incidents of Class I violations will result in Class II sanctions.**

\*Any other violation which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within this category after investigation and consideration of extenuating circumstances.

**CLASS I DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

Administrative responses for Class I violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Conference with student
- Verbal reprimand
- Written assignments
- School/Community service
- Withdrawal of privilege(s)
- Parent Conference(s)
- Temporary removal from class (including prohibiting student from attending special events, i.e. field trips)
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Corporal Punishment
- Bus suspension
- Saturday School
- Other sanction(s) deemed necessary or appropriate by school administration

**CLASS II-VIOLATIONS**

- 2.01 Insubordination, defiance, disrespectful of board of education employee's authority; any verbal or non-verbal refusal to comply with a lawful direction of board of education employee
- 2.02 Vandalism/property damage-Intentional damage to public property ( i.e. desks, tables, bus seats); or real property of others; in all cases student shall make monetary restitution for damages.
- 2.03 Theft of property \$50.00 or less
- 2.04 Gambling- any participation in games of chance for money and/or other things of value such as flipping coins, matching etc.
- 2.05 Possession of stolen property with the knowledge that it is stolen
- 2.06 Threats/extortion/harassment/bullying.
- 2.07 Trespassing/Illegal school entry- Breaking, entering or remaining in a structure or conveyance without jurisdiction and/or supervision during the hours the premises are closed to the public
- 2.08 Direct use or repeated non-direct use of profane language, obscene manifestation (verbal, written, electronic, gesture directed toward another person – (see 1.05) and/or possession of inappropriate or pornographic material
- 2.09 Malicious mischief or graffiti on school property or buses
- 2.10 Unauthorized absence from school and/or class/skipping
- 2.11 Written or verbal proposition to engage in sexual acts
- 2.12 Touching of another person (offensive touching or touching with sexual connotation)
- 2.13 Possession of and/or use of matches or lighters
- 2.14 Possession of/or use of electronic pager, laser light pointer, unauthorized communication devices (includes but not limited to iPods, MP3, electronic games, cell phones, BlackBerrys, two way radios, tape and CD players).
- 2.15 Providing false information to a board of education employee-intentionally providing false information to a school board employee including giving false student information or concealment of information directly relating to school business. This includes forgery of school notes, re-admittance slips, tardy slips, excuse slips, report cards, hall passes, field trip forms, notes from parents or guardians, or any other material required by the school.
- 2.16 Dishonesty and cheating
- 2.17 Unsafe/unlicensed driving on school property or other violations of the school parking/driving rules, sitting in vehicle, going to vehicle without permission.
- 2.18 Engaging in any act that is deemed harmful, including acts of aggression and practical jokes
- 2.19 Harassment-speech or other expression (written, electronic or gestures) intended to insult or stigmatize others on the basis of their sex, race, color, disability, religion, sexual orientation or national and ethnic origin. (Use of racial insults or slurs)
- 2.20 Violation of Medication Policy-(possession and/or use of prescription or non-prescription medication, inhalants, or over the counter products without following proper procedure.)
- 2.21 Multiple Class I Violations will result in Class II sanctions.

**Multiple incidents of Class I and Class II violations will result in Class III sanctions**

\*Any other violation the principal deems reasonable to fall within this category after investigation and consideration of extenuating circumstances

## CLASS II DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

Administrative responses for Class II violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Temporary removal from class (including prohibiting students from attending school functions such as field trips etc.)
- Detention
- In-school suspension
- Corporal punishment
- Saturday school
- Out of school suspension
- Alternative education program
- Referral to outside agency
- Expulsion
- Other sanction(s) deemed necessary or appropriate by school administration

Subsequent violations may result in suspension up to five (5) school days plus additional disciplinary action as warranted. Special circumstances may warrant referral to the Alternative School, or the filing of a CHINS, Delinquent, or Dependent Complaint or Petition in Juvenile Court.

## CLASS III VIOLATIONS

- 3.01 Fighting on school grounds, buses or school-related functions or events
- 3.02 Inciting or participating in major student disorder-leading, encouraging or assisting in disruption which results in destruction or damage of private property or personal injury to participants or others.
- 3.03 Unjustified activation of fire alarm system or fire extinguisher
- 3.04 Possession of Nicotine, Vape & Tobacco Products. First offense, one day out of school suspension or two day in-school suspension, a parent meeting, and complete three educational components on vapes/tobacco prior to returning to regular classes. Second offense, ten days at the Blount County Alternative School, plus attend the Nicotine, Vape, & Tobacco program. (see 5.07D) Third offense, Out of school suspension pending a disciplinary hearing.
  - 3.04 a Tobacco products, use
  - 3.04 b Tobacco products, possession
  - 3.04 c Tobacco products, sale
  - 3.04.d E-Cigarettes, use
  - 3.04.e E-Cigarettes., possession
  - 3.04.f E-Cigarettes, sale
  - 3.04.g Vape/Vapor, use
  - 3.04.h Vape/Vapor, possession
  - 3.04.i Vape/Vapor, sale
- 3.04 Unauthorized use of school computers/violation of Internet policy.
- 3.05 Indecent exposure of the human body on school property, buses or at school-sponsored events or functions.
- 3.06 Extortion-the act of obtaining service, money or information by the use of threats
- 3.07 Aggressive contact/assault which causes physical harm
- 3.08 Robbery-The taking of money or other property (may subject the student to larceny) from the person or custody of another by force, violence, assault, or putting in fear of same. Restitution will be required.
- 3.09 Theft of property-The intentional unlawful taking and/or carrying away of property valued at \$50.00 or more belonging to or in the lawful possession or custody of another. Restitution will be required.
- 3.10 Possession, sale, use, furnishing, or giving of a prohibited item not listed above.
  - 3.11 a Possession of a prohibited item not listed above
  - 3.11 b Sale of a prohibited item not listed above
  - 3.11 c Use of a prohibited item not listed above
  - 3.11 d Giving of a prohibited item not listed above
- 3.11 Threats, harassment, intimidation, bullying
- 3.12 Multiple Class I and II violations will result in Class III sanctions

\*Any other offense which the principal may deem reasonable to fall within this category after investigation and consideration of extenuating circumstances

## CLASS III DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

Administrative responses for Class III violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Out-of-school suspension
- Alternative education program

Referral to outside agency, including the criminal justice system  
Expulsion hearing  
Restitution of property and damages where appropriate  
Other sanctions deemed necessary or appropriate by school administration

#### CLASS IV VIOLATIONS

- 4.01 Sexual offense-Acts of a sexual nature which occur on school property, school buses or when the student is in attendance at a school sanctioned activity. These acts include but are not limited to battery, indecent exposure, intercourse with a student, attempted rape, or rape.
- 4.02 Assault/Battery on another person (student, teacher, staff member, visitor, etc). The unlawful and intentional touching or striking of a school board employee against his/her will or the intentional causing of bodily harm to a school board employee. In accordance with the Code of Alabama, 16-1-24(b) (c), the principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement when any student violates board policy concerning physical harm or threatened physical harm against another student or employee of the Board.
- 4.03 Possession of a weapon-students are prohibited from bringing to the school campus, having in their possession on campus, on the bus or personal vehicle, or in their lockers any lethal weapon or facsimile, including but not limited to a firearm, bomb, fireworks, explosives, knife, hunting knife, bayonet, razor, razor blade, letter opener, ice pick, hat pin, metallic knuckles, tear gas gun, throwing star, chemical weapon or devise, pepper gas or any other weapon, instrument or object
- 4.03 a Knife, possession
  - 4.03 b Knife, sale
  - 4.03 c Knife, use
  - 4.03 d Other weapon, possession
  - 4.03 e Other weapon, sale
  - 4.03 f Other Weapon, use
- 4.04 Possession, sale and/or igniting explosive device
- 4.04 a Explosive/incendiary or poison gas, possession
  - 4.04 b Explosive/incendiary or poison gas, sale
  - 4.04 c Explosive/incendiary or poison gas, use
- 4.05 Possession of Firearms – any firearm (including a starter gun which will, or is designed to, or may already be convert to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive), the frame or receivers of any such weapon, with intent to do bodily harm on School System property, including a school bus, is a Class C felony. In accordance with the Code of Alabama, 16-1-24.1 (b) (c), the principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when any student violates Board policy concerning physical harm or threatened physical harm against another student or employee of the Board.
- 4.05 a Firearm, possession
  - 4.05 b Firearm, sale
  - 4.05 c Firearm, use
- 4.06 Crimes as defined under the laws of the city, county, State of Alabama, or United States
- 4.07 Arson-the willful and malicious burning of any school property. In accordance with the Code of Alabama, 16-1-24.1 (e) (2), parents are liable for damages to school property cause by their child (children).
- 4.08 Unlawful sale, purchase, furnishing or giving or possession of a) prescribed/non prescribed drugs (see definition and exceptions under Drugs and Medication ) b) illegal drug paraphernalia or c) alcoholic beverage-In accordance with the Code of Alabama 16.1.24.1 (b) (c) the principal shall notify appropriate law enforcement officials when any student violates Board policy concerning drugs and/or alcohol.
- 4.08 a Alcohol, possession
  - 4.08 b Alcohol, sale
  - 4.08 c Alcohol, use
  - 4.08 d Alcohol, furnishing or giving
  - 4.08 e Drugs, possession
  - 4.08 f Drugs, sale
  - 4.08 g Drugs, use
  - 4.08 h Drugs, furnishing or giving
- 4.09 Bomb Threat- Any such communication concerning school board property that has the effect of interrupting the educational environment. Any student found to have made a bomb threat or to have falsely reported such a threat that is related to any school system facility, operation, or activity is subject to immediate expulsion procedures. Any student who stands by and aides, abets, or assists another person to make a bomb threat or to falsely report such a threat that is related to any school system facility, operation or activities is subject to immediate expulsion procedures. Any student who counsels, advises, persuades, encourages, or dares another person to make a bomb threat or to falsely report such a threat that is related to any school system, facility, operation or activity is subject to immediate expulsion procedures.

#### **Class IV DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

All 5 steps apply.

- 1.-Parent/guardian notification and conference
- 2.-Notify the local police ( or sheriff)
- 3.-Notify Juvenile Justice authority
- 4.-Immediate suspension pending a hearing (within 10 (ten) school days)
- 5.-Initiation of procedures for an Administrative Hearing to consider a recommendation to the Superintendent of action(s) ranging from placement in an Alternative School to a recommendation for expulsion.

School principals must notify appropriate law enforcement officials when any person violates local board of education policies concerning drugs, alcohol, bomb threats, weapons, physical harm to a person, or threatened physical harm to a person. If that person is a student enrolled, the local school system shall immediately suspend that student from attending regular classes and schedule a hearing at the earliest possible date which shall not be later than five school days. The decision to initiate disciplinary action and/or initiate criminal charges against a student shall include a review and consideration of the student's exceptional status, if applicable. Code of Alabama 16-1-14 (1975)

#### **5.14 Textbooks**

Pupils are to sign for the books issued to them under a statement at the top of the page, which shall read:

"I agree to assume responsibility for the care and return of the books issued to me. I will not write in, tear, cut, deface, or permit the books to become wet. I understand that if I damage the books beyond normal wear that I will be assessed a fee for the damage. If I should lose a book, I agree to pay for it."

The condition of the book at the time it is issued to the student should be recorded by the number of the book according to one of the following terms: New, Good, Fair, Poor.

For loss or damage the pupil will be assessed as follows:

1. full price if new when issued
2. seventy-five percent of full price for books two years old,
3. fifty percent of full price for books three years old or older.

No textbooks will be issued to any pupil until all charges for lost or damaged books have been paid.

All textbooks must be returned to the issuing school by the pupil when he is promoted or transferred or when he terminates his attendance for any other reason.

#### **5.15 Visitors**

Persons visiting on the school campus during school hours must have written permission from the principal's office.

#### **5.16 Medication**

A Parent/Prescriber Authorization form must be completed and signed by the physician (prescriber) and the parent/guardian for prescription medication to be dispensed at school. The parent/legal guardian is responsible for having the medication forms completed and delivered to the school.

The parent/guardian must provide the school with medication that is in a correctly labeled prescription bottle/container. The parent/guardian or the parent designated responsible adult shall deliver ALL medications to the designated school personnel. The school personnel will count and document all controlled substances in the presence of a parent/guardian or parent designated responsible adult.

#### **Non-prescription Medication:**

The parent must complete and sign the Parent/Prescriber Authorization form. This medication must be in the original unopened container. Dosage will not exceed package directions for weight and/or age.

A Parent/Guardian Authorization for non-prescription medications is valid for two weeks only. Parent/guardian has the option of submitting a new form after two weeks, if warranted. After the two-week period is over, the parent/guardian must pick up the medication. In order for the non-prescription medication to be valid for the entire school year, a physician/prescriber must sign the medication authorization form. If the medication is not picked up within two weeks after the parent/prescriber authorization expires, the medication will be discarded per federal guidelines.

The registered nurse will determine if non-prescription medications are appropriate and whether a provider order is also necessary. On the last day of school, parents are responsible for picking up any remaining prescription or non-prescription medication. Designated school personnel will discard remaining medications in a manner consistent with federal guidelines.



School personnel will refuse to administer medication when there is any discrepancy, i.e. label is different from instructions, label is unclear, or label is torn. This medication will not be given until clarification is obtained.

All medications to be administered by school personnel shall be kept in a securely locked cabinet.

Students are not allowed to keep over-the-counter or prescription medications on person unless the registered school nurse has determined it to be safe and appropriate and in compliance with the Kyle Grady Act.

#### 5.17 Student Records

Records of attendance and scholastic progress as well as vital statistics and significant health facts are maintained under the direction of the principal of each school in the system. A copy of certain student information is filed in the office of the Superintendent. Upon graduation the educational record is destroyed except for the permanent record containing semester averages, attendance, vital statistics, significant health facts, scores on standardized tests, and graduation date.

Professional and paraprofessional personnel in the school system having a legitimate educational reason have access to the student records. Persons or agencies having legitimate educational interests who obtain access to a student's records are required to sign a written form indicating specifically the legitimate educational or other interest of such person or agency. They may have access thereto without the written consent of the parents or legal guardians. No other person, except where specifically authorized by law, have access to these records without the written consent of the parent or the student provided that he is 18 years of age.

The only exception to the above is the information published in the student directory and/or yearbook which is as follows: Name of student, home address, phone number, grade or classification in school, membership in school clubs and organizations, honors received, participation in sports and other such general information. In order for a school to release the above information in a student directory, the principal must provide notice to all parents of the school's intent to declare this information as directory information. Parents have the right to request that the names and addresses of their children be deleted from the directory information.

Questions in regard to student records should be directed to the principal. Parents may inspect and review all cumulative or permanent records relating to their children. Requests for access to such records shall be granted by the principal within a reasonable period of time. The period of time must not be longer than 45 days after the initial contact and request. The principal may require that inspection be made in his presence.

The principal or superintendent may release personally identifiable student record information to authorized education and government agencies. All other release of student record information shall be made only upon the written request of the parent or the student provided he has attained 18 years of age.

Student records, including students currently receiving special education and related services, must be transferred to the requesting school without the requirement of obtaining a written permission statement from the applicable parent or guardian.

#### Health and Safety

In consideration of health and safety emergencies, schools may disclose student information to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or others. Schools may also disclose information about certain disciplinary actions taken against students to officials of other schools.

Parents of students under 18 years of age and students 18 years of age or older are entitled to the right to request a hearing to challenge the content in the student's records. Such request must be made to the principal in writing. The principal must grant such a hearing with proper notification to the person eligible to request such a hearing as to the place and time of said hearing. The hearing should be scheduled within a reasonable period of time. The period of time must not be longer than 45 days after the receipt of the written request for such hearing.

The person or persons requesting such hearing shall have the right to challenge the content in the student's records and to state reasons and evidence for the challenge. The principal shall make a decision within five (5) school days after the hearing and make his decision known to the person(s) eligible to request the hearing.

In regard to student records, the rights of parents pass to students at age 18.

If the parent(s) or eligible student so desires, copies of the student's records will be made at the cost of \$.25 per page. The principal must produce such copies within 45 days after receipt of such request.

Consent of a parent or eligible student to release records should state the type of information to be released, the reason, the name(s) of the parties to receive the information and it should be dated and signed. A record of all

parties requesting or obtaining access to records, other than authorized school personnel, should be kept with the records of each student.

### **Notification of Rights under FERPA for Parents and Students**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students over 18 years of age ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- (1) The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the School receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the School principal a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The School principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- (2) The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the School to amend a record should write the School principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- (3) The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except the extent that FERPA authorized disclosure without content.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the School has contracted as its agent to provide a service instead of using its own employees or officials (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the School discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

The school may disclose directory information for public consumption without requesting parental consent. Directory information is defined as student information not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. This information includes, but is not limited to: student names, addresses, telephone listings, photographs, grade level, participation in activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, and honors and awards received. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the school to include this type of information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include: programs, yearbooks, honor rolls, graduation recognition, and sports publications. Similar informational data may also be released to local newspapers, or included in school related video presentations, etc.

Directory information can also be disclosed to outside organizations that provide student-based products and services without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings, publish yearbooks, provide photographs, graduation products, sporting goods, etc. In addition, two federal laws require schools receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide military recruiters, upon request, with three directory information categories – names, addresses, and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the school that they do not want their student's information disclosed without prior written consent.

If the parent/guardian does not want the school to disclose directory information without prior written consent, you must notify the school in writing.

- (4) The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the *School District* to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-5920

## 5.18 Student Fees

Students enrolled in the following courses are required to pay the following annual fees upon registration for each school year except that students may make arrangements with the principal for deferred payment of the fees:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Blount County Career Technical Center Lab.....  | \$40.00 (4) |
| Family and Consumer Science.....                | \$20.00 (4) |
| Vocational and Agriscience and Technology ..... | \$20.00 (3) |
| Driver Education .....                          | \$25.00     |
| Band.....                                       | \$30.00     |
| Computer Lab Fee .....                          | \$25.00 (1) |

A student's financial inability to pay the above fees shall not prohibit him from enrolling and completing the school year and the courses listed above. The parents of a student who is unable to pay the fee or fees due to financial inability must complete the form entitled "School Fees Exemption Claim Form" supplied by the Superintendent of Education and available in the principal's office. The principal shall make a determination on the exemption claim within five days. His decision is subject to review by the Superintendent.

The fee in any course listed above shall be waived for any student provided that the course is a requirement for the diploma pursued by the student.

All fees collected in the courses listed above must be receipted and all funds expended for instructional supplies and expenses in the course. The Superintendent may require that the principal supply documents to support collections and expenditures in each course.

This policy is effective with the 1984-85 school year.

## 5.19 Students Leaving School During the School Day

A student shall remain in school for the full instructional day except when the student is earning high school or college credit through cooperative education, clinical experiences, college level course work, through cooperative arrangements with a post-secondary institution, or while participating in job training and work experiences. A student must be in academic and conduct good standing as determined by the school principal, on track to graduate with a recognized diploma or as required by the student's Individualized Education Program.

## 5.20 Student Complaints and Grievances Procedure

Grievances

*Level One*-The resolution of a grievance through free and informal communications as close as possible to the point of origin is encouraged. A student with a grievance may first take it to his immediate teacher or principal. Both shall be consulted prior to further resolution procedures.

*Level Two*-In the event the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his grievance at Level One, he may file an appeal in writing with the Superintendent or his designee. Within ten (10) days from receipt of the grievance, he shall request a conference with the aggrieved or render a written decision.

*Level Three*-In the event the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the disposition of his grievance at Level Two, he may request the Superintendent or his designee to schedule a brief hearing before the Board of Education at its next regular meeting.

The aggrieved person may select a representative to accompany him at each level, may ask such representative to state the facts in written form, and may request a written decision at each level outlined above. The grievance procedure must be initiated at the level at which the grievance occurred, and all requirements specified must be observed by students and school officials.

For the discussion and consideration of a grievance, time and place will be selected which will not interfere with regular scheduled classes or school related activities. The faculty and administration shall make an honest effort to resolve student grievances as quickly as possible at the most immediate level of supervision.

Confidentiality

- A. To the greatest extent possible, all complaints and/or grievances will be treated as confidential.
- B. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. The school's and district's obligation to investigate and take corrective action may supersede an individual's right to privacy.

- C. The complainant's identity shall be protected, but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The identity of the victim of a reported act shall be protected to the extent possible.

### Retaliation Prohibited

- A. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment in connection with filing a complaint or assisting with an investigation.
- B. Retaliatory or intimidating conduct against any individual who has made a complaint or any individual who has testified, assisted, or participated, in any manner, in an investigation is specifically prohibited and as detailed in this policy shall be treated as an incidence of bullying or harassment.
- C. During the investigation, the principal/designee may take any action necessary to protect the complainant, other students or employees consistent with the requirements of applicable regulations and statutes.
- 5.21 System-Wide Core Curriculum for Grades 7-12  
Refer to Policy 5.5 Graduation Requirements
- 5.22 HEAD LICE (Pediculosis)

### Guidelines for Pediculosis Screening

All classes, K– 6th grade will be checked by teachers. Routine checks will be performed as scheduled and should be completed by 8:30 a.m. Additionally, checks will be performed the second day of class at the beginning of the school year and the day students return from specified holidays and breaks.

All changes to the pediculosis screening schedule must be approved by the Central Office. Students that are absent will be screened on the following school day and guidelines followed. A school plan should be established to allow for a trained teacher or designated person (s) to check classes where a substitute is in place of an absent teacher.

All findings shall be documented using the approved forms. If evidence of pediculosis, bugs or nits, is found, the identified students' names should be listed on the Pediculosis Screening List and delivered confidentially to the re-checker as soon as possible.

The re-checker should either call or send for the identified students. The re-checker is responsible for confirming the evidence of pediculosis. Regardless of the findings, the student should be sent back to the classroom. Hopefully, this will decrease the amount of attention that causes the student to be stigmatized.

If a student is positive for pediculosis, parents should be notified to pick up the child as soon as possible. Siblings of the positive students in grades 7-12 should be brought to the office and checked by the designated person.

A letter (Form A) stating that evidence of pediculosis was found, and the general information sheet should be given to the parent along with verbal and demonstrated instructions. The parent should sign, in the designated space, acknowledging receipt of the letter. A copy of this letter should be placed in the individual student's pediculosis file each time he/she is newly identified. If the student is picked up by the parent or guardian, a signature should be obtained at this time. In a case where the student was not picked up from school, the signature should be obtained when the student is re-checked for clearance.

When the student returns to school, he/she must be brought in by the parent/guardian to be screened by the designated person. Rechecks should be completed within the first two hours of the school day. When cleared, the student will receive a Return to Class Pass that shall be taken to the school's office for re-admittance.

The student must be free of **ALL NITS and LICE before being readmitted to school.** A doctor's or health department's excuse does not preempt these readmission requirements!

If a student is not clear and is sent back home, the parent or guardian should be given additional verbal and demonstrated instruction on checking their child's head plus another copy of the general information sheet.

Nits should not be pulled from the student's hair by school personnel.

The school nurse may notify the school social worker if the student has not returned for a recheck within two days.

A copy of all information given to the parent/guardian must be copied and placed in the student's pediculosis file. Records must be kept up-to-date. This document serves as a legal record of the dates/times when a student has been sent home and when the student has been cleared to return to school.

The day the student is identified with bugs or nits AND/OR sent home will be the only excused absence. Routine screenings are done on Friday giving the parent extra days to clear the child of head lice.

The school should be aware of health hazards which may provide for spreading of lice, i.e., mats, proximity of coats and jackets on racks, and listening station earphones.

When a case of pediculosis is suspected prior to the biweekly check, the teacher must screen the entire class. The teacher may not screen an individual student or may not refer the student to the school nurse unless the entire class has been screened. If evidence of pediculosis is found, guidelines must be followed.

5.23            Alternative School Program

The Blount County Board of Education recognizes that all members of the school community should be served in order that they might develop academically, physically, socially and mentally to become members of society. With the implementation of this program, the Blount County Board of Education endeavors to provide a means to retain those students whose behavior requires removal from the regular school setting.

Students who are assigned to the Alternative School for more than 15 school days will be offered a discipline hearing in accordance with ACT #2024-262 which will be effective October 1, 2024.

- A.            Objectives of the Alternative Program
  - 1.            To meet minimum state academic requirements
  - 2.            To improve behavior of students
  - 3.            To help students become more responsible
  - 4.            To improve student self-concept
  - 5.            To improve attendance
  - 6.            To provide a highly structured and closely supervised school environment
  - 7.            To reduce number of at-risk students leaving school before graduating
  
- B.            Organization
  - 1.            The Alternative School shall operate under the direct supervision of the lead teacher at the school.
  - 2.            Students who attend the Alternative School shall be in attendance for the entire school day and meet the State Board of Education requirement concerning a six-hour instructional day.
  - 3.            The Alternative School shall observe all policies of the Blount County Board of Education
  - 4.            The teacher at the Alternative School shall keep a Teacher's Attendance Register and file monthly reports with the principal of each applicable school. The attendance data for that student will be included in the student's base school.
  
- C.            Guidelines
  - 1.            The local school principal may recommend a student for assignment to the Alternative School for the following reasons:
    - Possession or use of drugs or alcohol, violent behavior, possession of a weapon, chronic disruptive behavior, any offense causing danger to the student or other students and teachers, or violation of any Board policy.
  
  - 2.            The Superintendent or his designee will decide after a hearing of the facts if the recommended placement is appropriate. The exception to this will be the second offense of tobacco use or possession which will be an automatic placement of two weeks in the Alternative School with the beginning date being determined by the Superintendent in coordination with the Alternative supervisor.
  
  - 3.            The parent and student will be required to sign an agreement stating that the student's behavior must be corrected before the student will be readmitted to the local school.

4. The parent and/or student will be responsible for transportation to the Alternative School.
5. The student will be assigned for a period as determined by the Superintendent or designee in conjunction with Principal/Assistant Principal and the Alternative School Supervisor. The exceptions are: (1) a second offense of the tobacco policy which will be an automatic two week period assigned by the principal, and (2) students who bring a weapon (firearm) to school must be assigned to a one year (365 days) except as provided for otherwise in Board Policies.
6. A student who does not alter his or her behavior may be referred to the Board by the teacher at the Alternative School with the concurrence of the local school principal.
7. There will be no field trips, parties or free time for students at the Alternative School.
8. Students at the Alternative School shall not interact with or participate in athletics and in extra-curricular activities at the local schools at any time.
9. After students get their books and assignments upon initial placement in the Alternative Program, they may not return to the base school for any reason during the school day or for extracurricular activities unless it is for testing or if granted permission by the school administration. Students may attend school events open to the general public if granted permission by the school administrator. Students may also be denied this request.
10. Rules and regulations for the day to day operation of the Alternative School shall be developed by the teacher at the Alternative School. Such rules and regulations must be written and made available to students.
11. Regular attendance is mandatory. All absences must be for excused reasons documented by statements from doctors or documentation from other authorities attesting to the legality of the absence. Any unexcused absence must be made up plus two additional days
12. Students who do not attend regularly or who drop out will be reported to the Juvenile Court and parents/guardians of the students will be reported to the District Attorney as provided by Alabama law.

D. Curriculum and Instruction

1. The instructional needs of individual students will be met based upon plans forwarded from the local school. All appropriate skills and/or lesson plans will be provided by the local school.
2. Each student transferring to the Alternative School shall bring textbooks which he or she is currently using in the local school.
3. The teacher(s) at the Alternative School shall administer and return major examinations to the student's home school for grading.
4. Grades will be determined at the local school by averaging current grades with grades earned at the Alternative School. All standardized tests shall be taken at the local school except for students found to have violated the weapons policy. Tests for those students must be administered at the Alternative School.
5. The graduation eligibility of senior students attending the Alternative School shall be determined by the local principal.
6. Students must be taught character education, nonviolent conflict resolution, responsibility, group problem solving, and satisfaction through academic achievement.

E. Exit Conference

Upon completing the assigned period, a conference will be held involving the principal or the assistant principal of the local school, the parent, the student and the teacher at the Alternative School to discuss the progress made by the student.

All grades, attendance records and other pertinent material shall be given to the principal upon the student's departure from the school.

## 5.24 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

### Prohibited conduct

Students shall not engage in conduct constituting sexual harassment. Sexual harassment, whether between students or between a student and an employee, is illegal and will not be tolerated. The Board will investigate all allegations of sexual harassment and take appropriate action against students who engage in sexual harassment. Sanctions against students for violation of this policy may include verbal or written warning, suspension, or expulsion.

### Definition

Sexual harassment is defined to include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when the advances, requests, or conduct have the effect of interfering with performance of school related activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or otherwise offensive environment in or about the school or school facility.

### Complaint Procedure

A student who believes he or she has been or is being subjected to any form of sexual harassment shall immediately report the matter to the school counselor, principal or the Superintendent. Any student who becomes aware of or suspects that a student is being sexually harassed shall immediately report the information to the school counselor, principal or the Superintendent. A student's request to make his or her report of sexual harassment to someone of the same sex as the student shall be granted.

No student alleging sexual harassment shall be required to present the matter to the person who is the subject of the complaint.

If the complaint is received by someone other than the school principal, the person receiving the complaint shall promptly inform the school principal. The principal shall start an immediate investigation into the matter. The custodial parent(s) of the student will be informed of the complaint. The completed investigation shall be reviewed by the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee and legal counsel for prompt and appropriate action, if warranted. A written response to the student's complaint will be provided to the custodial parent(s) of the student and the student within 45 days of the date the student first registered the complaint. The student or the custodial parent(s) of the student may appeal the decision within 10 days of receipt of the decision by filing a written notice of appeal with the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall present the decision and notice of appeal to the Board at the next scheduled meeting of the Board. The Board shall make a final decision and notify the student and the custodial parent(s) of the student in writing of the Board's decision.

### Protection of Complainant

No student shall be subject to adverse action for any good faith report of sexual harassment under this policy. To the fullest extent practical, all reports of sexual harassment will be kept confidential.

## 5.25 Voluntary Student Religious Expression and Prayer

### A. Religious Expression

The Blount County Board of Education does not discriminate against students or their parents or guardians on the basis of their religious viewpoints or their expression of such viewpoints. Such views and expressions are treated in the same manner as nonreligious viewpoints, activities, or expressions. The Board shall treat a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint, if any, on an otherwise permissible subject in the same manner the Board treats a student's voluntary expression of a secular or other viewpoint on an otherwise permissible subject and may not discriminate against the student based on a religious viewpoint expressed by the student on an otherwise permissible subject.

Students may express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. Homework and classroom assignments shall be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance and

against other legitimate pedagogical concerns identified by the Board. Students may not be penalized or rewarded on account of the religious content of their work. A student's academic work that expresses a religious viewpoint shall be evaluated based on ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance to the course curriculum or requirements of the course work or assignment.

Students may organize and participate in religious activities before, during, and after school and have access to school facilities to the same extent students are permitted to organize and participate in other non-curricular activities to the extent that such access to or use of Board facilities does not constitute a constitutionally impermissible endorsement or sponsorship of the organization or violate any right established or imposed by either the Alabama or United States Constitutions.

Students in Blount County Schools may wear clothing, accessories and jewelry that display religious messages or religious symbols in the same manner and to the same extent that other types of clothing, accessories and jewelry that display messages or symbols are permitted.

Nothing herein shall be construed to authorize the Blount County Board of Education, its Superintendent, officers, members, administrators and/or employees to require any student or person to participate in prayer or in any other religious activity or to violate the constitutional rights of any student or person.

Nothing herein shall be constructed to limit the authority of the Blount County Board of Education, its Superintendent, officers, members, administrators and/or employees to do any of the following:

- Maintain order and discipline in the schools in a content and viewpoint neutral manner,
- Protect the safety of students, employees, and visitors of the schools, and
- Adopt and enforce policies and procedures regarding student speech at school provided that the policies and procedures do not violate the rights of students as guaranteed by the United States and Alabama constitutions and laws.

The provisions of this policy shall apply to all religions.

ACT of Alabama  
No. 2015-129

#### B. Voluntary Prayer at School Related Events

In order that students may exercise their freedoms of speech and religion as guaranteed by the Alabama and United States Constitutions without government direction, support or intervention, and to maintain a neutral position for the state on all religious matters and not to advance as state action any religion, the Alabama State Board of Education directed that each school board implement the following policy concerning voluntary prayer on public school or other public property, or other property at school-related events:

- (a) All Blount County Board of Education officials, employees or agents shall maintain a neutral position concerning students' religious matters and shall accommodate students' rights as guaranteed by the Alabama and United States Constitutions.
- (b) A student's giving of a prayer, invocation or benediction at any school-related assembly, school-related student sporting event, school-related graduation or commencement ceremony or any other school-related student event shall be at the personal decision of a participating student.
- (c) Any such prayer, invocation or benediction shall be nonsectarian and non-proselytizing in nature.
- (d) This policy shall in no way limit the rights of students to engage in prayer or religious activity at such other times and places, on public school or other public property, or other property as permitted by the Alabama and United States Constitutions.
- (e) Any order or finding by a court of competent jurisdiction concerning that enforceability or constitutionality of Alabama Acts 93-850 on voluntary school prayer shall not affect the validity or enforceability of this policy.

(Note-Alabama State Attorney General Jimmy Evans issued an advisory opinion in November, 1993, stating that the regulation adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education on voluntary prayer at school related events is constitutional.)

#### 5.26 Exceptional Children

The Blount County Board of Education ensures that all children residing within the jurisdiction, age 3 to 21, regardless of the severity of the disability that need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated and provided a free appropriate public education as established by state and federal regulations.

Each disabled student will be given the opportunity to participate in all extra-curricular activities and field trips which are offered to his/her non-disabled peers.

Intellectually gifted children are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared to others of their age, experience, or environment. These



children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor. Gifted students may be found within any race, ethnicity, gender, economic class, or nationality. In addition, some students with disabilities may be gifted.

A student may be referred for consideration for gifted services by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents or guardians, peers, self, or any other individuals with knowledge of the student's abilities. Additionally, all second grade students will be observed as potential gifted referrals using a gifted behavior checklist provided by the State Department of Education. Parents will be informed when their child is referred.

For each student referred, information is gathered in the following three areas:

1. Aptitude
2. Characteristics
3. Performance

The scores from the assessments/items used are entered on a matrix where points are assigned according to established criteria. The total number of points earned determines if the student qualifies for gifted services.

For more information or a referral contact Bitsy Fendley, Special Education Coordinator.

5.27 Child Nutrition Program Charged Meal Policy

Each cafeteria will operate a computerized point of sale system with a system-wide database.

Student meal accounts will follow their attendance site.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to maintain a sufficient balance in their child's account to pay for meals or should send money on a daily basis to cover meal costs. Funds left in the students' account at the end of the year will rollover to the next school year.

Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free reimbursable breakfast and lunch daily. Any a la carte and/or extra item purchases must be paid/prepaid.

Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a reimbursable breakfast and lunch for the published reduced meal price established prior to the new school year. Any a la carte and/or extra item purchases must be paid/prepaid.

Full pay students will purchase reimbursable breakfast and lunch at the published paid meal price established prior to the new school year. Any a la carte and/or extra item purchases must be paid/prepaid.

Students with negative balances will continue to receive a reimbursable meal but will not be allowed to purchase a la carte or extra items in the cafeteria. Any funds collected must be posted to the students' account and applied to any outstanding negative balance.

Bi-weekly automated phone calls will be used to notify parents/guardians when the balance becomes negative.

CNP Managers will run a weekly report and will make a personal phone call to the parent/guardian once the student reaches a negative balance of \$25.00.

Students with negative balances that have not been paid in a timely manner will be referred to the Principal for assistance with collection. Assistant Principals, School Counselors, and other School Office Staff may assist with contacting parents/guardians concerning negative balances. CNP Central Office Staff will contact parents/guardians concerning negative balances after all other measures have been exhausted.

Charged meals are not considered an allowable expense. Therefore, all uncollected charges will be the responsibility of the school where the child's attendance is maintained. CNP will be reimbursed for any unpaid charges from non-public school funds by the end of the program year (June 30th).

Adults will not be allowed to charge meals. All adult purchases must be paid/prepaid.

Parents of withdrawn and/or graduating students requesting a refund of remaining funds in the student's account must complete the ACH Form for Direct Deposit Authorization and submit it to the CNP Director.

Students who are withdrawing or graduating also have the option of transferring funds to a sibling's account with a written request.

Cafeteria account balances are refunded by request up to 1 calendar year following withdrawal and/or graduation after which the balance is consensually donated to cover unpaid meal charges if not claimed.

The CNP Director proposes policy and updates to Administration prior to Board consideration and approval. The policy is distributed to each household in the student handbook and posted on the Blount BOE website. The CNP Director is responsible for ensuring that CNP Staff is aware of and follows policy.

5.28        Service Animals in Schools

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and procedures when a student with a disability is seeking to bring his/her service animal to school or school functions. Individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to bring their service animal into school buildings or onto school grounds in accordance with, and subject to, this policy.

**Definitions**

- a. Student with a disability is one who has been determined to be disabled by an appropriate team pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).
- b. Service Animal – As defined by Alabama law and federal regulations implemented under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a service animal includes any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability including, but not limited to, a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, other mental disability or autism. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purposes of this definition.
- c. Handler – A “handler” is an individual with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal or a trainer who is accompanied by a service animal.
- d. “Work or Tasks” – “Work or Tasks” are functions performed by a service animal. The “work or tasks” performed by a service animal must be directly related to the handler’s disability.
  - 1. Examples of “work or tasks” include, but not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or the telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance or stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors.
  - 2. The prime deterrent effects of an animal’s presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship are not “work or tasks” for the purpose of this policy.
- e. Trainer – A “trainer” is a person who is training a service animal and is affiliated with a recognized training program for service animals.

**Access to Programs and Activities: Permitted Inquiries**

- a. In general, handlers (i.e. individuals with disabilities or trainers) are permitted to be accompanied by their service animals in all areas of the school district properties where members of the public, students, and employees are allowed to go. A handler has the right to be accompanied by a service animal whenever and the same extent that the handler has the right:
  - 1. to be present on school district property, and
  - 2. to attend or participate in a school sponsored event, activity, or program, and
  - 3. to be transported in a vehicle that is operated by or on behalf of the school district.
- b. When an individual with a disability brings a service animal to a school district property, school district employees shall not ask about the nature or extent of a person’s disability, but may make the following inquiries to determine whether the animal qualifies as a service animal:
  - 1. If the animal is required because of the disability;
  - 2. What work or tasks the animal has been trained to perform; and
  - 3. Is the service animal’s vaccinations and immunizations up to date
- c. School district employees shall not make these inquiries to students or parents with a disability bringing a service animal to school district property when it is readily apparent that an animal is trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability.
- d. An individual with a disability may not be required to provide documents such as proof that the animal has been certified, trained, or licensed as a service animal.

**Management of Service Animals**

A service animal must be under control of its handler. A service animal must wear proper identification and always have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash or other tether would

interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (i.e. voice control, signals, or other effective means).

### **Care of, and Responsibility for, Service Animals: Liability**

- a. The handler is solely responsible for the care and supervision of the service animal including, but not limited to, feeding, watering, cleaning, and toileting. Neither the school district nor its staff will assume such responsibilities. Issues related to the care and supervision of service animals will be addressed on a case-by-case basis at the direction of the building administrator.
- b. Individuals with disabilities who are assisted by service animals are responsible for providing supplies and equipment needed by the service animal. Any costs incurred to handle the service animal will be the responsibility of the parent.
- c. Owners of the service animals are liable for any harm or injury caused by the service animal to other students, staff, visitors, and/or property.

### **Removal or Exclusion of a Service Animal**

- a. A school official may require a handler to remove a service animal from school district property, a school building or a school-sponsored program or activity if:
  1. The service animal is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it;
  2. The service animal is not housebroken;
  3. The presence of the animal would fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program or activity; or
  4. The handler fails to submit proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service animal.
- b. If the service animal is properly excluded, the school district shall give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in the service, program, or activity without the service animal, unless such individual has violated the law or school rule for regulation that would warrant the removal of the individual.

### **Allergies; Fear of Animals**

If a student or employee notifies the school district that he/she is allergic to a service animal, the school district will balance the rights of the individuals involved. In general, allergies that are not life-threatening are not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a service animal. Fear of the animal is generally not a valid reason for prohibiting the presence of a service animal.

### **Procedures/Requirements for Use of a Service Animal by Students**

A request to bring a service animal to school by or on behalf of a student with a disability is subject to the following procedures and requirements:

1. Parents must submit a written request to bring the service animal to school to the Superintendent's office. The request must identify and describe the service animal and what work or task(s) the service animal is trained to perform that is/are directly related to the student's disability. In addition, the individual requesting that the service animal attend the school with a student must provide documentation that the animal is properly immunized as required under Alabama Law, and registered and licensed in accordance with all state and local animal licensing registration requirements.
2. Requests to bring a service animal on school system property must, whenever possible, be made not less than three weeks prior to bringing the animal to school to afford the system adequate time to properly address the request and make necessary adjustments to the educational environment to accommodate the service animal's presence. Under no circumstances may a service animal be on school property without prior approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
3. The student's IEP team or Section 504 team, as applicable, will conduct the school system's review of a student's request to bring a service animal to school. In such cases, the team will conduct a case-specific inquiry as to whether the animal meets the definition of service animal and performs a task directly related to the student's disability.
4. The approval of the request to bring a service animal on school property is subject to periodic review, revision, or revocation by the student's IEP/504 team, which can occur at any time and will occur at least annually.
5. If it is decided that the service animal will be allowed to accompany the student to school, the IEP/504 team will also discuss a plan for introducing the service animal to the school environment, any appropriate training for staff and students regarding interaction with the service animal, and other

activities and conditions deemed necessary by the IEP/504 team.

6. If it is determined that the student will not be allowed to bring his/her service animal to school, that determination will be considered a grievable discrimination issue and subject to the school system's internal grievance procedures.

# Blount County Parent and Family Engagement Policy

## GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The school district will put into operation programs, activities and procedures for the involvement of parents in all of its schools with Title I, Part A programs, consistent with section 1116 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Those programs, activities and procedures will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.

*Parent/Family Engagement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring—*

- a) That parents and families play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;*
- b) That parents and families are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;*
- c) That parents and families are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and*
- d) That other activities are carried out that will build the capacity of all parents and families.*

## THE BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL:

- Involve parents and family members in jointly developing the local educational agency plan under section 1112, and the development of support and improvement plans under paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 1111(d) of ESSA.
- Coordinate and integrate parental involvement programs that encourage and support parents and families in more fully participating in the education of their children.
- Provide timely notice if a student has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.
- Ensure parents are informed of their right to request and receive information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers.
- Conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the LEA Parent Engagement Policy and Plan.
- Educate teachers, instructional support personnel, principals, other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and the school.
- Provide assistance, materials, and/or training to parents and families of participating Title I children in understanding such topics as the challenging state academic standards, State and local academic assessments, the requirements of Title I, Part A, and how to monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve their achievement.
- Use technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement.
- To the extent feasible and appropriate, provide full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including providing information and school reports in a language such parents understand.

# **Blount County Parent and Family Engagement Plan**

Revised and adopted for use in 2025-2026

The Blount County School District believes greater academic growth occurs when there is a partnership between school, families and the community. Such a partnership means a belief in and commitment to significant educational goals for every student.

The Blount County School District will assist Title I, Part A schools in planning and implementing effective family engagement activities to improve student academic achievement through the following actions:

- Facilitating Parent Advisory Council meetings twice yearly, to oversee the planning and implementation of the District Parent and Family Engagement Plan
- Conducting an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the family engagement policy and plan using parent survey results and input from parent advisory council members
- Distributing to all parents the Blount County Student Handbook which includes the LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Plan, as well as Parents Right to Know information
- Posting the Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Plan on the Blount County Schools Parent Engagement web page
- Providing a presentation for each school's annual meeting to discuss items indicated in section 1116 of the ESSA
- Assisting Title I, Part A schools in developing a Parent and Family Engagement Plan and School-Home Compact
- Supplying informational resources for the Parent Resource Corner at each Title I school
- Providing information regarding opportunities for parent involvement in a language parents can understand
- Serving on school advisory committees, if requested
- Providing parent training sessions for parents, as requested or needed
- Providing materials for schools to use in parent trainings, as requested or needed

This LEA Parent and Family Engagement Policy and Plan has been developed jointly with, and agreed on by, parents of children participating in Title I, Part A, programs, as evidenced by the minutes from the Spring Parent Advisory Council meetings held on May 8, 2025. Inclusion in the Parent-Student Handbook ensures distribution of this plan to all parents of participating Title I, Part A children.

**FEDERAL PROGRAMS  
PARENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW INFORMATION**

In accordance with the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), you have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teacher.

1. Whether the student's teacher:
  - Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
  - Is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
  - Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
2. Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications, including state requirements:
  - Secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
  - Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education.
  - Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree.
  - Workkeys Assessment.
3. In addition, you may request:
  - Information on the level of achievement and academic growth of the student, if applicable and available, on each of the state academic assessments required.
  - Timely notice that the student has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

**Blount County Board of Education  
Parent's Right-To-Know Request Teacher Qualifications  
(ESSA, Sec. 1112(e)(1)(A))**

**Complete the form below *ONLY IF* you would like to receive this information. Please return to your child's school or to the Blount County Board of Education at 415 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Oneonta, AL 35121**

I am requesting the professional qualifications of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Please Print)

Teacher's Name

Who teaches my child, \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Please Print) Child's Name School Name

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Please Print)

My mailing address is

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print) Street City ZIP Phone Number

---

Signature





**IMPORTANT NOTICE  
FROM THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Important Information on Meningococcal Disease and Vaccine**

**What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is a serious illness, caused by bacteria. It is the leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2-18 years old in the United States.

**How do you catch the disease?**

The bacteria that cause meningococcal disease are very common. The disease is most common in children and people with certain medical conditions that affect their immune system. College freshmen living in dormitories also have increased risk of getting the disease. The disease is spread through exchange of respiratory droplets or saliva with an infected person including kissing, coughing, sneezing, and sharing drinking glasses and eating utensils. In a few people, the bacteria overcome the body's immune system and pass through the lining of the nose and throat into the blood stream where they cause meningitis. Meningitis is a term that describes inflammation of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

**What are the symptoms of the disease?**

- Fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck
- Red rash
- Drowsiness
- Nausea and vomiting

**Meningococcal vaccine: Who should get the vaccine and when?**

MCV4, or the meningococcal vaccine, is recommended for all children 11-12 years of age and for unvaccinated adolescents at high school entry (15 years of age). High school seniors should also consider obtaining the vaccine prior to entering college, especially if they are planning on living in a dormitory. Please consult your physician or local health department for more information.

For more information on this and other vaccine recommendations go to:

[www.adph.org/immunization](http://www.adph.org/immunization)



**BLOUNT COUNTY SCHOOLS**  
**COMPLAINT REPORT FORM**  
**Bullying, Harassment, Threats and/or Intimidation**

This report **MUST** be completed to file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying, etc. and turned in to the school Principal/designee of the victim's home school or the appropriate area/district office.

|   |                    |       |
|---|--------------------|-------|
| Complainant or Witness Name (last, first) check here if anonymous _____ | Sex                | Grade |
| Victim Name (last, first)   | Sex                | Grade |
| Accused Name (last, first)  | Sex                | Grade |
| Location of Incident(s)   | School Name        |       |
| Principal/Administrator   | Incident Date/Time |       |

Describe the incident, location, witnesses and evidence: (Attach pages of evidence if necessary).

Has the victim expressed suicidal thoughts that indicate they may hurt themselves or others? If yes, explain on back of form.

The Jamari Terrell Williams Student Bullying Prevention Act, No. 2018-472, defines bullying as a continuous pattern of intentional behavior that takes place on school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored function including, but not limited to cyberbullying or written, electronic, verbal, or physical acts that are reasonably perceived as being motivated by any characteristic of a student, or by the association of a student with an individual who has particular characteristic, if the characteristic falls into one of the categories of personal characteristics contained in the policy adopted by the local board. To constitute bullying, a pattern of behavior may do any of the following:

- a. Place a student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person, or damage to his or her property.
- b. Have the effect of substantially interfering with the educational performance, opportunities, or benefits of a student.
- c. Have the effect of substantially disrupting or interfering with the orderly operation of the school.
- d. Have the effect of creating a hostile environment in the school, on the school property, on a school bus, or at a school sponsored function.
- e. Have the effect of being sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment or a student.

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Please note that the submission of a complaint does not automatically substantiate that misconduct has occurred. The school administration has the prerogative to investigate any allegations of wrongdoing.
2. Administration **MUST** describe action taken and resolution on the back of this form.



**BLOUNT COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**415 5<sup>th</sup> AVENUE EAST  
ONEONTA, ALABAMA 35121**

**Parent-Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct/Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act  
(FERPA)/Technology Responsible Use Policy/Title I Parents' Right to Know**

**NOTICE OF RECEIPT**

I hereby certify that I have received a copy of the Parent-Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct for Blount County Schools, which outlines Board Policy as it relates to student activities and responsibilities.

I hereby certify that I have read the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act concerning parental and student rights with respect to the student's educational records. I understand that if the parent/guardian does not want the school to disclose directory information without prior written consent, I must notify the school in writing.

I hereby certify that I have read and agree to follow the guidelines, provisions, and user responsibilities of Board Policy 5.0 Technology Responsible Use Policy.

I hereby certify that I have received and read the Title I Family Engagement Policy and Plan Right to Know information concerning the parents' right to request information about their child's teacher(s) pertaining to professional qualifications. The Parents' Right To Know Request Form is located on page 50 of this handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT NAME (**PLEASE PRINT**)

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF STUDENT

(Please sign, remove and return this form to school.)





