



Tunica County School District Alternative School Student Handbook 2026 – 2027

**Dr. Frederick Robinson, Superintendent
Ms. Natasha Bates, Assistant Superintendent
Henry Nickson, Jr., Alternative School Director**

Alternative School

Purpose, Mission, Definition and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of alternative education is to accommodate behavioral and academic needs of children and adolescents that cannot be adequately addressed in a traditional school environment. In addition, alternative education provides direct social, emotional, and behavior management instruction to students.

Mission

The mission of an alternative education program is to promote academic success, modify behavior, and facilitate employability and functional skills attainment, as well as to support career and character education development in an environment that differs from the traditional school setting and offers a more conducive setting for learning. Through ongoing direct instruction, guidance, and monitoring, students will be provided support with the goal of returning the student to a comprehensive school environment with the necessary abilities to function therein.

Definition

The alternative school program is defined through written board-approved policies and procedures designed to provide appropriate educational opportunities for the categories of students to be served. Further, the program must meet the requirements of Mississippi Code 1972 Annotated §37-13-92, ¹ which delineates the components of alternative education. An alternative education program involves temporary authorized departure from the traditional school setting. It is designed to provide educational and social development for students whose behavior places them at risk of not succeeding in the traditional school structure and/or in adult life without positive interventions.

Procedures

Based on the Mississippi Code 1972 Annotated §37-13-92, school districts shall establish, maintain, and operate, in connection with the regular programs of the school district, an alternative school program or behavior modification program for, but not limited to, the following categories of compulsory-school-aged students:

- Any compulsory-school-age child who has been suspended for more than ten (10) days or expelled from school, except for any student expelled for possession of a weapon or other felonious conduct.
- Any compulsory-school-age child referred to such alternative school based upon a documented need for placement in the alternative school program by the parent, legal guardian, or custodian of such child due to disciplinary problems.
- Any compulsory-school-age child referred to such alternative school program by the dispositive order of a chancery or youth court judge, with the consent of the superintendent of the child's school district.
- Any compulsory-school-age child whose presence in the classroom, in the determination of the school superintendent or principal, is a disruption to the educational environment of the school or a detriment to the best interest and welfare of the students and teacher of such class as a whole.



"Our Focus: Teaching & Learning"

Dr. Frederick Robinson
Superintendent of Education

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2026–2027 school year in the Tunica County School District!

It is my honor and privilege to serve as your Superintendent of Education. As we begin another exciting year, I want to thank our students, families, educators, support staff, and community members for their continued commitment to the success of every child.

At the Tunica County School District, our mission is to provide all students with a high-quality education that prepares them for college, careers, and life. We remain committed to our district vision: "Success for All." Every decision we make is centered on creating opportunities for students to learn, grow, and achieve their fullest potential.

This Student Handbook serves as an important resource for students and families. It outlines the expectations, policies, procedures, and guidelines that help ensure a safe, respectful, and productive learning environment. I encourage every student and parent to carefully review the handbook and become familiar with its contents. Working together, we can create schools where academic excellence, positive behavior, and mutual respect are valued and celebrated.

As we move forward this year, I encourage our students to:

- Attend school regularly and arrive prepared to learn.
- Demonstrate respect for themselves, others, and school property.
- Take advantage of academic, extracurricular, and leadership opportunities.
- Set high goals and work diligently to achieve them.
- Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth.

The future of Tunica County is sitting in our classrooms today. By maintaining high expectations and providing strong support, we can ensure that every student is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to thrive in an ever-changing world.

Thank you for your continued support of the Tunica County School District. Let us make the 2026–2027 school year one of growth, achievement, and excellence.

Sincerely,

Dr. Frederick Robinson
Superintendent of Education

Program Overview

The Tunica County School District Alternative School Program serves students in **grades 6-12** who require an educational setting outside the traditional school environment. The program is designed to ensure that all students continue to receive high-quality instruction while addressing behavioral, academic, or situational needs that interfere with success in the regular school setting.

The program operates in accordance with:

- All applicable federal and state laws
- State Department of Education guidelines

The Alternative School Program functions as an extension of the district's regular instructional program and adheres to the same academic, behavioral, and operational standards.

Eligibility for Placement

The program serves compulsory-school age students who meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Mandatory or Disciplinary Placement
 - a. Students suspended for **more than 10 days** or expelled, unless the expulsion involved a weapon or felonious conduct.
 - b. Students referred due to **documented disciplinary concerns** by a parent, guardian, or custodian.
 - c. Students referred by **chancellor or youth court order**, with principal approval.
 - d. Students whose presence in the regular classroom is determined by the superintendent or principal to be a **disruption** or **detriment** to the educational environment.
2. Students Returning from Out-of-Home Placement
 - a. 5 days for students returning from group homes, mental health care, or DHS custody
 - b. 10 days for students returning from youth court dispositional orders

Placement Procedures

Students placed in the program are subject to all district policies, rules of conduct, and any additional expectations established by the superintendent or principal.

Placement Criteria

Student placement into an alternative education program is based on a required referral process. This referral process is included in the district's policy. A student's placement or assignment may be extended due to academic, behavior, or attendance deficiencies. Students assigned to the alternative program are expected to pass their academic courses and attend school on a daily basis, unless otherwise excused. Students assigned to the alternative education program must exhibit appropriate behavior and adhere to the alternative school's rules and regulations. In the case of a recommendation for alternative education placement, the superintendent or his designee must conduct a review of the recommendation. The review shall consider the following factors:

- The student is suspended for more than ten days or expelled
- The nature and seriousness of the violation
- The degree of danger to the school community
- The student's disciplinary history, including the seriousness and number of previous infractions
- The appropriateness of an alternative education placement or program
- The student's age and grade level
- The results of any mental health, substance abuse, or special education assessments
- The student's attendance and academic records
- A customized intervention program with support services to meet the needs of individual students assigned to the program
- A comprehensive transition plan for each student returning to the traditional school setting that outlines support services that are to be provided upon the student's return to the home school

Alternative School Extended Discipline Plan

The Tunica County School District Alternative School Program uses a structured, progressive discipline system designed to support growth, reinforce expectations, and ensure a safe and productive learning environment. Consequences increase in severity with repeated incidents, and each level includes academic, behavioral, and counseling supports.

Board Policy JCD (2): ACTS OF MISCONDUCT – ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL

The levels of behavior and disciplinary options are designed to protect all members of the educational community in the exercise of their rights and duties. The chart below displays what disciplinary action may be taken as a minimum, and further explanation of maximum actions are included in the description of the Levels. These acts of misconduct include those student behaviors that disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on the school grounds including the following:

DISCIPLINE LEVELS	1ST INCIDENT	2ND INCIDENT	3RD INCIDENT
LEVEL 1	Alternative School Director/Teacher Counseling and Contact Parent and Student Counseling	Office Referral and Behavior Modification Plan and Alternative School Director Parent – Student Conference (3-Days Suspension)	Out of School Suspension (3-Days Suspension) and Student Counseling and Contact Parent
LEVEL 2	Out of School Suspension and Contact Parent Student Counseling (3-Days Suspension) and Behavior Modification Plan Implemented	Review Behavior Modification Plan and Alternative School Director/School Counselor Parent-Student Conference and (5-Days Suspension)	Out of School Suspension (5-Days Suspension) and Alternative School Director/School Counselor Student Counseling and Parent Conference and Region 6 Mental Health Parent/Student Referral
LEVEL 3	Out of School Suspension (5-Days Suspension) and Alternative School Director/Teacher Counseling and Student Counseling and Parent Conference Disciplinary Hearing for extension in Alternative School	Review Behavior Modification Plan and Teacher-Alternative School Director Parent-Student Conference and (10-Days Suspension) Review Region 6 Mental Health Disciplinary Hearing for extension in Alternative School Recommendation	Out of School Suspension (10-Days) Suspension) Disciplinary Hearing for expulsion from Alternative School

DISCIPLINE LEVELS	1ST Occurrence
LEVEL 4	Out of School Suspension (10-Days) Disciplinary hearing will be held for extended days in the alternative school or expulsion. Mandatory student and parent counseling sessions are required twice a month.
	2nd Occurrence
	Out of School Suspension (10-Days) Disciplinary hearing will be held for extended days in the alternative school or expulsion. Mandatory student and parent counseling sessions are required twice a month.
LEVEL 5	Out of School Suspension (10-Days) Disciplinary hearing will be held for extended days in the alternative school or expulsion. Student and parent counseling sessions are required twice a month. The student is not provided with the bus privileges.

****NOTE: Elementary Students are not referred to the Tunica County Alternative School. Elementary students will require a conference with the Parent(s), Principal, Administrative Staff, and/or Superintendent of Education.**

Level 1

- 1 - 2 Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or building
- 1 - 2 Initiating or participating in any unacceptable physical contact (horse playing)
- 1 - 3 In an unauthorized area without pass (halls, etc.)
- 1 - 4 Displaying any behavior which is disruptive to the orderly process of education
- 1 - 5 Using forged notes or excuses
- 1 - 6 Failure to wear district adopted school uniform or violation of the school's dress code
- 1 - 7 Disruptive classroom behavior
- 1 - 8 Abusive language

Level II

- 2 - 1 Skipping class
- 2 - 2 Insubordination, defiance of school personnel's authority, disrespect
- 2 - 3 Cheating on tests or exams
- 2 - 4 Unauthorized or inappropriate use of the Internet, computers, or computer software
- 2 - 5 Continuation of unmodified Level I Behavior Modification Plan

Level III

- 3 - 1 Gambling
- 3 - 2 Theft of personal and/or school property (Restitution shall be made regardless of other punishment)
- 3 - 3 Extortion – use of intimidation, coercion or force
- 3 - 4 Exhibiting any hostile physical actions
- 3 - 5 Vandalism of personal and/or school property (Restitution shall be made regardless of other punishment)
- 3 - 6 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral or offensive language gestures, and/or possession of obscene, indecent, immoral or offensive materials toward students
- 3 - 7 Refusal of punishment
- 3 - 8 Repeated refusal to follow administrator's instructions
- 3 - 9 Sexual harassment
- 3 - 10 Trespassing or loitering on any school property while suspended
- 3 - 11 Disorderly conduct, out of control, throwing objects, yelling, screaming, loud profanity
- 3 - 12 Continuation of unmodified Level I and II – Behavior Modification Plan
- 3 - 13 Bullying/Harassing Behavior of any form
- 3 - 14 Matches, any form of lighters
- 3 - 15 Possession and/or use of tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco), vapes, or e-cigarettes
- 3 - 16 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language through social media
- 3 - 17 Leaving the school grounds without permission

Level IV

- 4 - 1 Fighting, Instigating, Initiating of a fight
- 4 - 2 Using profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language, gestures; and/or possession of obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive materials directly toward a staff member
- 4 - 3 Acts which threaten the safety and well-being of student and/or staff
- 4 - 4 Students caught in the act of engaging in sexual misconduct

Level V

- 5 - 1 Group Fighting (involvement of three or more students); Group Fighting
- 5 - 2 Possession, use or under the influence of alcohol, counterfeit drugs, illegal drugs, narcotics, controlled substance(s) or paraphernalia
- 5 - 3 Aggravated assault, assault/battery (resulting in serious injury) toward a student
- 5 - 4 Assault/battery against a school employee
- 5 - 5 Sexual assault/battery toward students
- 5 - 6 Sexual assault/battery toward school employee
- 5 - 7 Destructive Devices, weapon(s) possession or use of devices such as a knife, gun, picks, brass knuckles or any form of a weapon or object that may be used to do bodily harm and having knowledge of concealing a weapon, etc.
- 5 - 8 Sale of, distribution, or conspiring to sell counterfeit drugs, illegal drugs/alcohol, narcotics or controlled substance(s).
- 5 - 9 Students are prohibited from wearing, displaying, or possessing in any manner; on school property or at school-sponsored events; clothing, apparel, accessories, drawings, or messages associated with any gang or social club that is associated with criminal activity, as defined by law enforcement agencies.

In addition to these penalties, provisions of the Mississippi Criminal Code are applicable to illegal behavior. Principals are required to report illegal activities to the proper authorities.
Reference: Mississippi Code of 1972; Section 37; §37-9-14, §37-11-18, §37-11-29

Any student in violation of the above shall be suspended by the Principal for five to ten days and ordered to appear for a disciplinary hearing with referral to Alternative School.

TRANSITION FROM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION TO TRADITIONAL SETTING

A student's exit will be contingent upon regular attendance, appropriate behavior, and academic progress during his/her assignment in the alternative program. An evaluation by the alternative education staff of the student's behavior, attendance, and academic progress will be performed prior to returning a student to their home school. The student **may not go back to the home school until approval has been given.**

INSTRUCTION

- Curriculum and instructional practices will reflect high expectations for students.
- Curriculum will address cultural and learning style differences.
- Instructional activities will be consistent with the written curriculum.
- The instructional program will be delivered in a climate conducive to learning.

STATE ASSESSMENT

Students will participate in the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program at sites determined by district test coordinator in accordance with established guidelines regarding student grade levels and eligibility.

SUPPORT SERVICES

A student in alternative education programs will receive school counseling services and/or other support services such as school social work or psychological services as indicated in the IIP or IEP.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Tunica County School District will comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations in the education of exceptional students placed in alternative education programs.

Student non-compliance of the dress code will result in disciplinary actions.
Revised/Adopted: June 21, 2018

Uniform and Dress Code – Grades 6th – 12th Grade & Alternative School

Tunica County School District has adopted the following uniform policy.

Item of Clothing	Alternative School Attire for Tunica Middle (6-8)	Alternative School Attire for Rosa Fort (9-12)
Shirt	White or Gold (with collar)	Green or Gold (with collar)
Pants/Skirts	Navy Blue	Tan
Shoes:	Closed toe shoes, NO CROCS, SANDALS, FLIP FLOPS or SLIDES	Closed toe shoes, NO CROCS, SANDALS, FLIP FLOPS or SLIDES
Shoestrings	Black, Brown, or White	Black, Brown, or White
Belt	Black, White, or Brown	Black, White, or Brown
Socks	Black, White, or Brown	Black, White, or Brown
Jewelry/Accessories	One stud/hoop per ear not to exceed one inch in diameter (the size of a quarter and no dangling jewelry)	One stud/hoop per ear not to exceed one inch in diameter (the size of a quarter and no dangling jewelry)
Head Gear (Winter Only)	Knit/Sweater hats (Blue or red not allowed) All over face coverings, bonnets, du-rags, or wave caps are NOT allowed	Knit/Sweater hats (Blue or red not allowed) All over face coverings, bonnets, du-rags, or wave caps are NOT allowed
Jackets/Coats/Hoodies	NO HOODIES	NO HOODIES

SEARCH POLICIES

- Students will be searched when entering alternative school and any other time given probable cause.
- Any refusal of this policy will result in a suspension from alternative school.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED

- Cell phone, radio, tape recorder, electronic games, or calculators, are **NOT** allowed in alternative school.
- Book bags, backpacks, gym bags, trapper keepers, spiral notebooks, and zip-up notebooks are **NOT** allowed in alternative school.

BREAKFAST/LUNCH ROOM RULES

1. Students will get off the bus at the guard shack and be escorted to class by alternative school personnel. They are not allowed to socialize with the regular students.
2. Students will be escorted to breakfast in the cafeteria by alternative school personnel.
3. Students will be escorted to lunch in the cafeteria by the alternative school personnel.

EMERGENCY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name of Student _____

Grade: _____ Birth Date: _____ Soc Sec # _____

Father/Guardian _____

Mother/Guardian _____

Physical Address _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone Father: _____

Work Phone Mother: _____

Name, age, grade and school of brothers/sisters _____

List three emergency contacts (other than parents) that do not live with you.

Name	Relationship	Phone
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Name	Relationship	Phone
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Name	Relationship	Phone
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Doctor: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please list any food or drug allergies, or medical problems of which our school should be aware of: _____

Daily Medications: _____



Alternative School Student Behavior Contract

1. No Profanity or inappropriate language
2. Attendance must be regular. If you are absent, you will need a note from home or a doctor's excuse. **Each absence will result in additional days to alternative assignment.**
3. Daily searches will be conducted and anything that does not belong at school will be taken. Parents will have to come and get these items, we will not be responsible if they are lost, stolen, or broken.
4. No disrespect to staff or peers will be tolerated.
5. No food, drinks, or gum in class.
6. No personal contact. No touching, fighting, kissing, etc.
7. Destruction of property is prohibited. This includes building, furniture, books, or clothing.
8. Permission is required before operating any equipment.
9. When outside the alternative building, students must remain together as a group.
10. Talking is not allowed in the lunchroom.
11. No weapons of any kind. This includes sharp or dangerous objects, i.e. box cutters, scissors, rat-tailed combs, fingernail filers.
12. Alcohol, drugs, or toxic substances are not allowed. No smoking or smoking materials are allowed.
13. Stealing will not be tolerated.
14. Dress code will be followed strictly. No grooming products, lotions, perfumes, breathe spray, etc.
15. No valuables allowed.
16. I agree to actively participate in daily group and/or individual counseling as determined by a behavior assessment as a part of my educational plan.
17. I acknowledge that Alternative School Students are restricted from Tunica County School system grounds for any reason other than transferring to and from the alternative school bus or state testing. Written permission must be received from the alternative/home school principal before going on campus for any reasons that listed above.

By entering this program, I agree to the above rules and policies. I have received a copy of the handbook.

Student Signature

Date



Tunica County Alternative School Program Student Contract

I, _____, acknowledge that, as a student of Tunica County
(please name print)

Alternative School Program, there will be rules that I must abide by in order to achieve the greatest level of success in the Alternative Program.

1. I will show up for school on time. Being tardy and absent will extend my time-spent in Alternative.
2. I understand that **electronic devices will be confiscated.**
3. If I am not feeling well and/or in need of medical attention. I will inform the teacher or the Alternative School Director who will arrange for me to see the school nurse, who will determine the appropriate course of action.
4. I will **NOT** leave school grounds while school is in session without the expressed permission of the Alternative School Director.
5. I will actively participate in my own education by participating in class activities, maintaining a positive and cooperative attitude toward staff members, as well as, complying with requests made by any staff member. Failure to comply with this contract will result in being sent home and you will then be counted absent for that day.
6. I am aware that all school property should be respected and I understand that I will be held financially accountable for the destruction or malicious damage of any school property.
7. I understand that while I am on school property, which includes riding the school bus, I will **NOT** use vulgar or profane language to express myself.
8. I will not bring **outside food** into the Alternative School classroom.
9. I will not **SLEEP** while in the classroom.
10. I will raise my hand for permission to get out of my seat.
11. I will be respectful of everyone associated with the Alternative School program, including other students, security staff, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators.
12. I will remain in the part of the building that houses the Alternative program at all times, unless given permission by a staff member.

Your signature indicates that you have read, understand, and agree to abide by these specified rules as well as all of the Tunica County School District policies. If you are found to be in chronic violation of any of these rules, your **status** and **placement** in the Alternative Program will be subject to re-evaluation by the administration of the Alternative School Program, and could result in your removal from the school.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



Alternative School
Henry Nickson, Jr., Director
Phone: 662-363-1343

Alternative School Screening Information

Student's Full Name _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Referred By: _____

Medical Information:

Does the student have any known allergies/disability? _____

Academic History:

Age _____ Current Grade _____ Homeroom Teacher _____

Student's MSIS _____ Home School _____

What is the student's typical grades? _____

Does the student receive Special Education services? ☐ Yes ☐ No

NOTE: If you answered yes, please provide a copy of the IEP (Individual Education Plan)

Does the student have behavior problems in school? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the student skip or cut classes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has the student ever failed or been held back? ☐ Yes ☐ No What grade(s)? _____

Has the student ever been suspended or expelled to an alternative school before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, reason:

BEHAVIORAL CONCERNS:

Does the student display any of the following behaviors?

- ☐ Defiance/Does not follow directions ☐ Disrespects adults/Authority figures
- ☐ Lying ☐ Stealing ☐ Talks Back ☐ Uncontrollable Anger/Rage
- ☐ Verbal Aggression ☐ Destruction of Property ☐ Physical Aggression with People
- ☐ Possession of Weapons ☐ Sexual Misconduct

If any behavior not listed, explain _____

What are the student's strengths and interests? _____

Final decision of the Steering Committee _____

Alternative School Steering Committee:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Visitors to Steering Committee Meeting:

_____	_____
_____	_____

Handbook Notification Receipt

I have received a copy of the Alternative School Handbook. I understand that this handbook is to be given to my parents or legal guardian(s) so that they may be fully informed regarding policies and procedures regarding the Alternative School Program.

Student Signature

Date

I have read a copy of my child's handbook that includes the Alternative School's discipline plan.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

I have received a copy of the rules and regulations that address the unique needs of Alternative School Program students.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date