

2020-2021

BENTON COUNTY SCHOOLS STUDENT HANDBOOK



**HOME OF THE
BLUE DEVILS AND THE REBELS!**

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FOREWORD

By registering your child in the Benton County School District, you and your child agree to be subject to the policies contained within this handbook. Please make yourself familiar with this publication as not being aware of a policy is not an acceptable reason for not following the policy. Also, all statements in this publication are announcements of present policies and are subject to change by without prior notice. If there are policy changes made after this handbook has been published, school personnel will post the changes at the schools and district personnel will post the changes on the Benton County Schools' website – www.benton.k12.ms.us.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

The Benton County School District does not discriminate or exclude on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, or age in the provision of educational programs and services.

NOTIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, provides parents the right to know the qualifications of their child's teacher(s). Parents may request written documentation of teacher qualification by contacting Steve Bostick, Federal Programs Coordinator. *Every Student Succeeds Act* also requires districts to notify parents if their child's teacher is not "highly qualified" according to the *ESSA* definition if the child is assigned to and has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet the requirements.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

District One	Erma Poplar, Vice-President
District Two	Betty Page
District Three	Brian Gresham, Secretary
District Four	Katrina McGregor, President
District Five	Gary Elliott

There is a chain of command that needs to be followed when issues arise. See your teacher first, principal second, and superintendent third. If the matter at that point is not resolved, request to the superintendent to bring the matter to the board.

MISSION STATEMENT

BCSD: Equipping, Empowering, and Educating Our Students for what lies ahead

VISION STATEMENT

The Benton County School District will serve as a model district for the state of MS based upon success generated through students' academic and behavioral performance.

VISITORS

Parents/Guardians are always welcome in the Benton County School District; however, in order to maintain school safety and guard instructional time, all visitors shall report directly to the school's office when arriving on campus and obtain a visitor's pass with the permission of the principal. **The principal has the authority to deny visitation to any individual, if in the judgment of the principal, the visit may negatively affect school climate, negatively affect school safety, or disrupt instructional time.**

Under normal circumstances, teachers will not be allowed to meet with parents during instructional time. Please contact the school by phone and arrange to meet with your child's teacher outside the instructional day. **No visitor should go directly to a teacher's classroom at any time.** Students are not to bring visitors to school at any time. This includes but is not limited to brothers, sisters, children, spouses, or any other relatives.

SUPERINTENDENT’S MESSAGE

I am pleased to welcome you to the 2020-2021 academic year in Benton County School District. In the midst of these uncertain times, it has been my honor to collaborate with our administrators, faculty and staff to ensure that we are doing everything possible to fulfill our vision of **equipping, empowering and educating our students for what lies ahead.**

As a team, we have compiled a list of core concepts we call the S. T. R. A. P. S. – our district mission. We believe these are the standards we must adhere to in order to move Benton County Schools forward in a positive way.

S – Safety. The health and well-being of our community is of utmost importance. We will follow CDC guidelines to determine best practices for monitoring and sanitation, as well as any changes to our overall processes that may become necessary.

T – Transparency. We will share information and answer questions to the best of our ability at all times.

R – Relationships. We want people to feel known and valued. We will work on building positive relationships that help our district grow and thrive.

A – Accountability. We will hold ourselves and each other to high standards of performance, and be mindful of the consequences of our actions.

P- Preservation of Instructional Time. We will make every effort to maintain consistent routines that allow us to maximize learning and focus on student achievement.

S – Stay on Course. We recognize that these are challenging times, which can make it difficult to maintain a positive outlook and direction. By following our philosophy, we can keep our focus on what really matters: student success.

Now, more than ever, we must be unwavering in our commitment to serve the best interests of children. I am confident that together we can turn challenges to triumph for the students of Benton County.

Dr. LaKimberly Gallager-Hobson

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to Benton County School District! I am excited to share this year with you, and I hope that you will face it with courage and determination. While our circumstances cannot be described as “traditional” I believe that each of us has the ability to adapt to our changing world and make the most of what we have. Through creativity, collaboration and compassion I believe this can become a successful and rewarding year for our students and school community. I am proud of the hard work and commitment that has gone into preparing for this year of **equipping, empowering and educating our students for what lies ahead.**

Mrs. Pamela R. Gray

AES PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Ashland Elementary Families:

First, let me tell you it is an honor to serve another year as your school principal. On behalf of the staff, I am happy to welcome you to another exciting year of learning at Ashland Elementary School. As the district strives to equip, empower, and educate students for what the future holds, we are looking forward to a productive partnership with you to ensure our children can achieve their highest potential.

The district's focus is six key elements: Safety, Transparency, Relationships, Accountability, Preservation (of Instructional Time), and Staying on Course. Students need to feel safe and welcomed and know that all staff is interested in them both academically and personally. It is also important that we ensure our students have a successful school year while maintaining relevance and rigor at each grade level. Finally, AES staff will be reflective practitioners who utilize student data to continuously evaluate best practices and student achievement to make daily informed instructional decisions in the learning environment. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's success and want you to know that we will do our very best to carry out our responsibilities.

Communication is vital for a successful school program. We encourage you to assist us as we strive to keep the lines of communication open between school and home. Please feel free to contact me with your concerns, questions, and comments. Once again, we look forward to working with each of you, and remember that our door is always open.

Elynda Finley

AHS PRINCIPAL MESSAGE

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of myself and the glorious staff at Ashland High School I welcome you back to the 2020-2021 school year.

As your principal, I want to assure you that the faculty, staff and I are all working together to provide a challenging, safe, and positive academic environment for your child. Our teachers have been preparing all summer for our new normal this upcoming school year and are very excited to teach all the students here at our school or virtual.

I can assure you that we will happily address all of your child's learning needs. I look forward to getting to know your child and learn about all of his/her talents. I also am always available to you if there is any concern. Please feel free to call the office to schedule an appointment to meet with me at any time.

As parents, you are your child's first and most influential teacher. Communication between home and school is critical to your child's academic success. Together, we will be able to focus on your child's development in all areas: academically, socially, and emotionally.

This will be an exceptional year! Let's work together to do what is best for the school and all of the students. This is an exciting time in the history of the school. Thanks again for being part of it!

Mrs. Angela Brown

HFAC PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the 2020-2021 academic year at Hickory Flat Attendance Center. This year will be like no other. We have many challenges ahead, but I am confident we will meet them with success and make this our best year yet! We have some exciting changes in technology, scheduling, and most importantly, safety. Our priority is providing a safe and clean learning environment for all students and staff. We are working diligently to make sure everyone feels safe and secure each and every day you are at school. I look forward to working with you as we strive to make our district one of the best in Mississippi. Please know my door is always open for any questions, concerns, suggestions or ideas. Let's all be ready to hit the ground running in 2020-2021!

Jane Hubbard

CTC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Benton County Career Technical Center is proud to serve students from Ashland Middle-High School and Hickory Flat Attendance Center. Our programs are offered to all district students in grades 9-12. Our primary goal is to provide students with relevant, challenging, and skills-based training. The BCCTC staff strives to help students learn valuable hands-on skills, gain new knowledge, explore careers, and get prepared for their futures, all in an environment that is welcoming, supportive, and safe. Our hope is for all students to achieve their highest potential.

Dr. Merri Gadd

ABSENCES / ATTENDANCE

There are two types of absences – excused and unexcused. A description of both absences and the reporting process for unexcused absences follows.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An “unexcused” absence is an absence for an entire school day or during part of a school day which is not due to a valid reason as listed below under “excused absences.” Days missed from school due to disciplinary suspension shall be considered an “unexcused” absence.

REF: MS Code § 37-13-91

EXCUSED ABSENCES

An “excused” absence for non-attendance is given provided (1) satisfactory evidence of the excuse is provided to school staff, and (2) the excuse falls under one of the following criteria:

1. Attendance at an authorized school activity with the prior approval of the principal. These activities may include field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical festivals, and any similar activity.
2. Illness or injury which prevents the compulsory-school-age child from being physically able to attend school.
3. Isolation of a compulsory-school-age child is ordered by the county health officer, by the State Board of Health, or appropriate school official.
4. Death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family of a compulsory-school-age child. The immediate family members of a compulsory-school-age child shall include children, spouse, grandparents, parents, and brothers and sisters (including stepbrothers and stepsisters).
5. Medical or dental appointment of a compulsory-school-age child.
6. Attendance of a compulsory-school-age child at the proceedings of a court or an administrative tribunal if the child is a party to the action or under subpoena as a witness.
7. If the religion to which the compulsory-school-age child or the child's parents adheres requires or suggests the observance of a religious event. The approval of the absence is within the discretion of the principal, but approval should be granted **unless the religion's observance is of such duration or frequency as to interfere with the education of the child.**
8. When it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the principal, that the purpose of the absence is to take advantage of a valid educational opportunity such as travel. Approval of the absence must be gained from the principal before the absence.
9. An absence may be excused when it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the principal that conditions are sufficient to warrant the compulsory-school-age child's nonattendance; however, no absences shall be excused by the principal when any student suspensions or expulsions circumvent the intent and spirit of the compulsory attendance law.
10. Attendance of a compulsory-school-age child participating in official organized events sponsored by the 4-H or Future Farmers of America (FFA). The excuse for the 4-H or FFA event must be provided in writing to the appropriate school superintendent by the Extension Agent or High School Agricultural Instructor/FFA Advisor.
11. When the absence results from the compulsory-school-age child officially being employed to serve as a page at the State Capitol for the Mississippi House of Representatives or Senate.

REF: MS Code § 37-13-91

There are three types of excuses that can be provided to excuse an absence. A description of the three is as follows:

1. PARENTAL EXCUSES

Written parental excuses will be accepted up to a maximum of five times for a maximum of ten total days of absence during the school year as long as they fall under one of the eleven criteria listed above. After five notes or ten days, whichever comes first, no more parent notes will be accepted. For a parental note to be considered as an excuse, a reason for the absence must be stated in the note. “My child was absent from school yesterday” is not sufficient to excuse an absence.

Three important things to keep in mind. . .

1. **Just because a parental note is sent to school does not necessarily mean that the absence will be excused.** Examples of reasons for a parent note not being excused are as follows: the student is out of parent notes, the parent note does not meet guidelines expressed above, etc.
2. If school personnel call you to pick your child up from school because your child is sick, you must send a note with your child when he/she returns to school. **If you do not send a note, the absence will be unexcused even though school personnel contacted you to pick up your child.**
3. In case of the death of an immediate family member, a copy of the obituary or funeral program will take the place of a parent note and will not count toward parent note totals as long as it is turned in within 72 hours of the absence.

2. MEDICAL EXCUSES

Written excuse from a licensed physician will be considered valid when the student's absence is caused by illness or injury which prevents the student from being physically able to attend school. **The District recognizes that appointments with medical service providers are not always available after school hours, but we ask that routine procedures such as physicals, teeth cleaning, etc. be scheduled outside of the school day.**

3. ADMINISTRATIVE EXCUSES

An absence is automatically excused and requires no written excuse when it results from the student's attendance at an authorized activity or it results from the attendance of a student at a court proceeding if the student is a party to the action or under subpoena. Examples of authorized activities are as follows: field trips, athletic contests, student conventions, musical competitions, etc. If there is a question concerning the educational value of the activity, the principal will make the final determination of excused or unexcused.

Students have 72 hours from the date of any absence to provide an excuse to the appropriate school personnel. Excuses not turned in within the 72 hour timeframe will not be accepted, and the absence will be considered unexcused. When students are signed out of school early, they will need a note to be admitted when they return.

63% ATTENDANCE LAW

If a compulsory-school-age child has an absence that is more than thirty-seven percent (37%) of the instructional day, the child must be considered absent the entire school day.

REF: MS Code § 37-13-91

A large portion of the Benton County School District's funding is based on the Average Daily Attendance of students. When students miss more than 37% of their instructional day, not only do they miss out on valuable learning, but the District loses money. When the district loses money, we are forced to cut back on services and instructional staff. Obviously, when we are forced to cut back on services and instructional staff, the delivery of education will suffer with larger class sizes, fewer class options, and fewer remediation services. Please help us and help your child by insuring he or she attends school regularly and stays for his or her entire instructional day.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Report to your school's attendance clerk or homeroom teacher, depending on the school site you are attending, before your first class begins and present him or her with your written excuse. **Unless your reason for being late falls under one of the eleven excused absence criteria, you will receive an unexcused absence for the class or classes missed.**

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE LATE TO SCHOOL

Report to the office as soon as you arrive on campus and present your written excuse to office personnel. **Unless your reason for being late falls under one of the eleven excused absence criteria, you will receive an unexcused absence for the class or classes missed.** Students in grades K-4 shall report to the office with a parent/guardian.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO LEAVE CAMPUS

Secure a hall pass from your teacher and report immediately to the office. You will not be allowed to leave campus unless a member of the administrative staff or his/her designee has made contact with your parent/guardian or emergency contact to verify you have permission to leave. Once permission is granted to leave, you must sign out. Failure to follow any part of the checkout procedure will result in disciplinary action. **Students may not leave campus with the purpose of eating and/or picking up lunch with the intent of returning to campus for the remainder of the school day.**

REPORTING OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES TO THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

If a compulsory-school-age child has accumulated five (5) unlawful absences during the school year of the public school in which the child is enrolled, the school district superintendent or his designee shall report within two (2) school days or within five (5) calendar days, whichever is less, the absences to the school attendance officer. The superintendent, or his designee, also shall report any student suspensions or student expulsions to the school attendance officer when they occur. When a school attendance officer has made all attempts to secure attendance of a compulsory-school-age child and is unable to effect the attendance, the attendance officer shall file a petition with the court of competent jurisdiction as it pertains to parent or child. Sheriffs, deputy sheriffs, and municipal law enforcement officers shall be fully authorized to investigate all cases of unlawful absences by compulsory-school-age children and shall be authorized to file a petition with the court of competent jurisdiction as it pertains to parent or child for violation of this section. The court shall expedite a hearing to make an appropriate adjudication and a disposition to ensure compliance with the Compulsory School Attendance Law and may order the child to enroll or re-enroll in school. The superintendent of the school district to which the child is ordered may assign, in his discretion, the child to the alternative school program of the school established pursuant to MS Code § 37-13-92.

The School Attendance Officer for Benton County is Courtnei Loftin. Her office number is (662) 224-3503.

ACCESS TO STUDENT INFORMATION

Section 9258 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, requires schools to provide military recruiters with secondary students' names, addresses, and telephone numbers, **unless a parent has "opted out" of providing such information.** Section 9528 also requires schools to provide military recruiters the same access to secondary school students as they generally provide to postsecondary institutions or prospective employers.

If you do not want your child's information released to military personnel for the purpose of recruiting, you must notify the school's guidance counselor in writing as soon as possible.

ACT ASSESSMENT

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test that assesses critical reasoning and higher order thinking skills. The four content areas tested are English, math, reading, and science. Scores reflect acquired skills and measure preparation to undertake course work in college. ACT recommends students take the test in the spring semester of the junior year of high school. The following items are recommended for students to improve ACT scores: college prep core courses, practice ACT tests, review test taking strategies, retake the test, and take ACT test prep courses.

ADDRESS / TELEPHONE NUMBER CHANGE

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to report any changes in contact information to the school immediately. It is vitally important that school officials be able to contact you. For this reason, failure to report changes in address and/or phone numbers may result in a mandatory parent conference.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES FOR ENROLLING IN THE BENTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

When a child attempts to enroll or gain entrance into the Benton County School District and is not accompanied by the child's parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian, school officials may delay consideration of the enrollment of the child and require the child's parent, legal guardian, or legal custodian to accompany the child and apply for enrollment on behalf of the child. (A notarized statement does not grant legal guardianship to a non-parent. A court order from a sitting judge is required.)

REF: MS Code § 37-15-11

When any child applies for admission or enrollment in the Benton County School District, the parent, guardian, or child shall indicate on the school registration form if the enrolling child has been expelled from any public or private school or is currently a party to an expulsion proceeding. If it is determined that the child has been expelled or is a party to an expulsion proceeding for an act involving violence, weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs, or other activity that may result in expulsion, the Benton County School District shall not be required to grant admission or enrollment to the child before one (1) calendar year after the date of the expulsion.

REF: MS Code § 37-15-9

When any child applies for admission or enrollment in the Benton County School District, the parent, guardian, or child shall indicate on the school registration form if the enrolling child has been placed in the alternative school of any public or private school or is currently a party to an alternative school placement proceeding. If it is determined that the child has been placed in the alternative school or is party to an alternative school placement, the Benton County School District will uphold the placement of the previous district, and the student will serve the assigned time in the Benton County School District's alternative school.

INITIAL ENROLLMENT

Students enrolling in the Benton County School District must present the following:

1. A certified birth certificate (long form version);
2. A Mississippi Certificate of Compliance regarding vaccinations. Valid certificates include the following: Form 121 (Certificate of Compliance), Form 121-A (Medical Exemption Form), and Form 121-T (Temporary Compliance Form). The 121-T is not valid after the date shown on the form. **Please note that MS Code § 41-23-37 states, "It shall be unlawful for any child to attend any school, kindergarten, or similar type facility intended for the instruction of children . . . unless they shall first have been vaccinated against those diseases specified by the state health officer."**
3. A current report card from the previously attended school (if applicable);
4. A withdrawal form from the previously attended school (if applicable); and
5. Two **CURRENT** proofs of residence. Examples of proofs of residence are as follows: a homestead exemption form that has been filed, mortgage documents, lease agreement, paycheck stub, IRS forms, DHS benefit documentation, bank account statements, and insurance documents.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 states that each state educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths. **The term "homeless children and youths" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.**

ADMISSION FROM NON-ACCREDITED SCHOOLS

A student from schools or programs such as home study or private schools that are not accredited by a state or regional agency must undergo standardized testing to determine the grade level to which the student should be assigned in grades 1-8. If the student is in high school, he or she must successfully pass final exams in each class for which he or she desires to earn Carnegie Unit credit.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT STUDENT ADMISSION

Upon the petition in writing of a parent or guardian resident of the school district of an individual student filed or lodged with the president or secretary of the school board of a school district in which the pupil has been enrolled or is qualified to be enrolled as a student under MS Code § 37-15-9, individual students living in one school district may be legally transferred to another school district, by the mutual consent of the school boards of all school districts concerned, which consent must be given in writing and spread upon the minutes of such boards.

REF: MS Code § 37-15-31

Admission for out-of-district students will include an analysis of grades, standardized test scores, behavior, absences, and any additional costs to the district. The student must have an academic average of a "C" and be making satisfactory progress toward promotion, graduation, or completion. The school principal and/or a designee will review the merits of a student's application prior to acceptance in the Benton County School District.

The Benton County School District **will not** accept out-of-district students who:

1. Cause the district an additional outlay of funds beyond that which is typical for all students or require services or programs that the BCSD does not have.
2. Cause the expansion of a program that would require additional expenditures.
3. Cause the district an additional financial or administrative burden.

Grades, behavior, and absenteeism will be monitored once a student is admitted. To remain eligible to attend school in BCSD, students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior. Flagrant or serious discipline issues or repeated disciplinary issues will not be tolerated, and cause students' eligibility to be terminated. Furthermore, to remain eligible for enrollment at BCSD, out-of-district students are expected to attend school on a regular basis. Excessive absenteeism may result in the student's enrollment being terminated. Out-of-district students are expected to maintain a "C" average, make satisfactory progress toward promotion, completion, or graduation, and maintain grade level achievement on standardized tests. Any out-of-district student who fails to meet these criteria may be subject to termination of enrollment.

ENTRANCE AGE REQUIREMENTS

No child shall be enrolled or admitted to any kindergarten unless such child will reach his fifth birthday on or before September 1 of said school year, and no child shall be enrolled or admitted to the first grade unless such child will reach his sixth birthday on or before September 1 of said school year.

REF: MS Code § 37-15-9

Any child who transfers from an out-of-state public or private school in which that state's law provides for a first-grade or kindergarten enrollment date subsequent to September 1 shall be allowed to enroll in the public schools of Mississippi at the same grade level if the following are true:

1. The parent, legal guardian or custodian of such child was a legal resident of the state from which the child is transferring;
2. The out-of-state school from which the child is transferring is duly accredited by that state's appropriate accrediting authority;
3. Such child was legally enrolled in a public or private school for a minimum of four (4) weeks in the previous state; and
4. The superintendent of has determined that the child was making satisfactory educational progress in the previous state.

REF: MS Code § 37-15-9

If there are any questions regarding residency of any student, the Benton County School District reserves the right to make a home visit to ensure residency within the district has been properly established. If it is found that residency has not been established, the enrollment of the student or students will be revoked immediately.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

Students shall not arrive on campus before 7:10 a.m. Also, buses shall not arrive on campus before 7:10 a.m. There are no staff members on duty before that time. Students who arrive before that time are therefore unsupervised. Once a student arrives on campus, he/she is not to leave unless he/she has properly checked out in the office.

ASBESTOS

In compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act, the Benton County School District has regular asbestos inspections of all school buildings. The inspection findings and our asbestos management plan are on file in the office of the superintendent and the administrative offices of each campus. They are available upon request, and a reproduction fee is charged for any duplication.

ATHLETICS

Interscholastic athletic activities shall be under the supervision of the school-level athletic director or his or her designee. The program shall be governed by the rules and regulations of the Mississippi High School Athletic Association and applicable state law. For a more detailed review of rules and policies governing athletic participation in Mississippi, visit

www.misshsaa.com.

PARTICIPATION

Any student participating in any school sponsored athletic program shall provide the following to appropriate school personnel before participation in any athletic contest or practice:

1. A **physical examination** performed by a qualified medical professional who shall certify in writing that the student is medically fit to participate in the athletic programs offered by the school. The cost of such physical examination shall be the financial responsibility of the parent/guardian of the student.
2. A **consent form** to be signed and returned by the student's parent/guardian.

In order for a student to participate in a MHSAA sanctioned activity, he/she must be present at least four periods or half of his/her school day on the day of the competition. If the competition is on Saturday, the previous Friday's attendance will count.

Per MHSAA policy, a student who transfers between schools within the district establishes “home school” wherever the student begins ninth grade. For example, a student who transfers to Hickory Flat from Ashland and begins the ninth grade at Hickory Flat may not transfer back to Ashland and be immediately eligible to play high school sports. The student would have to sit out of athletics for one year in this case

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for participation as a **junior high student**, the student must be promoted from the previous grade and have passed four subjects with an overall 2.0 GPA.

To be eligible for participation as a **high school student**, the student must have a 2.0 GPA and be making satisfactory progress toward graduation.

A special education student is eligible if he/she is making satisfactory progress according to his/her IEP according to a review by the IEP committee.

A student who is enrolled in any grade higher than Grade 6 in a school district in this state must be suspended from participation in any extracurricular or athletic activity sponsored or sanctioned by the school district after a semester in which the student's cumulative grade point average is below a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. The suspension from participation in extracurricular or athletic activities may not be removed until the student's cumulative grade point average in a succeeding semester is 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale. A student with a cumulative grade point average below a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale at the semester of an academic school year shall be suspended from participation in extracurricular or athletic activities in the succeeding academic school year until the student's cumulative grade point average is 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.

REF: MS Code § 37-11-65

If a student plans on being eligible for athletics at a four-year college or university, the student must consult with the school counselor to establish which classes he/she must take in order to be eligible, and he/she must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse.

AUTOMOBILES

Driving and parking on school grounds is a courtesy offered to students and others by the Benton County School District. The parking facilities of the school district are to be used for school purposes only. School purposes include attendance at school or other school activities which may occur before or after the regular school day. Violators of this policy may be charged with trespassing. Students are responsible for locking their vehicles upon arrival, as the school district shall assume no responsibility for loss or damage to any vehicle or its contents. Students who operate a vehicle on campus are subject to the following:

1. A student who drives on campus will have a valid drivers' license, automobile insurance, and a parking permit obtained through the school office.
2. Students are not allowed to access vehicles at any time during the school day without prior administrative approval.
3. Once a student drives onto campus, the student cannot leave without appropriately checking out in the office.
4. Driving and parking privileges will be suspended for thirty school days if a student receives two transportation-related warnings or violations within a semester. If the first violation is of a severe nature, school administration may revoke a student's driving privileges at that time.
5. Students are to park only in designated parking areas and spaces. All “no parking” signs are to be honored.
6. Students who drive to campus are asked not to arrive before 7:20 a.m. unless involved in a school-sponsored activity.
7. Students are not allowed to remain in automobiles or assemble in the parking lot upon arrival to school.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

It shall be unlawful for any individual, other than a student scheduled to be a passenger upon that particular bus, a member of the public school administration or faculty, or a law enforcement official, to directly or indirectly interfere in any way with passenger ingress and egress or the operation, including unauthorized boarding thereof, of a bus used in public school student transportation unless permission has been obtained as prescribed by pertinent rules and regulations promulgated by the state board of education or the local school authorities. Upon conviction of violation of any provision of this section, such individual shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine of not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$ 500.00), imprisonment in the county jail for a period not to exceed six (6) months, or both. Any person under the age of seventeen (17) who violates any provision of this section shall be treated as delinquent within the jurisdiction of the youth court.

REF: MS Code § 37-41-2

CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Benton County Career Technical Center in Ashland provides a career technical program of study that is available to all Benton County students in grades 9-12. Career technical education provides students with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to help them succeed in future applicable career pathways. All programs offer academic credits towards graduation.

Classes are offered in the following areas:

Agriculture

Year 1: Agriculture & Natural Resources I (2 elective credits)

Year 2: Agriculture & Natural Resources II (2 Science credits)

Business & Finance

Year 1: Business, Marketing, & Finance I (.5 credit in Economics and .5 credit in Personal Finance (if needed) and 1 or 2 elective credits)

Year 2: Business, Marketing, & Finance II (.5 credit in Economics (if needed) and 1.5 or 2 elective credits)

Health Science

Year 1: Health Science Core (1 credit in Health (if needed) and 1 elective credit or 2 elective credits)

Year 2: Healthcare & Clinical Services (2 Science credits)

Metal Fabrication

Year 1: Metal Fabrication I (2 elective credits)

Year 2: Metal Fabrication II (2 elective credits)

All career technical programs follow a standard, state-wide curriculum which references national and state academic, workplace, technology, and industry standards for each course. A statewide assessment called the MS-CPAS 2 is administered each spring in all programs. This is a criterion-referenced test that is aligned to the Mississippi Vocational Curriculum Framework. Students answer multiple choice questions that vary in competency level regarding subject matter knowledge.

The following four clubs are offered as a supplement to each program's curriculum. Joining a club is optional for students.

National FFA Organization (FFA) – Junior FFA is open to Benton County students in grades 7-8 and to students in grade 9 who currently attend the Agriculture program; Senior FFA is open to students in grades 10-12 who currently attend or who have attended the Agriculture program and who have not yet graduated.

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) - Open to students in grades 9-12 who currently attend or who have attended the Business program and who have not yet graduated.

Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) - Open to students in grades 9-12 who currently attend or who have attended the Health Science program and who have not yet graduated.

SkillsUSA – Open to students in grades 9-12 who currently attend or who have attended the Metal Fabrication program and who have not yet graduated.

Transportation to and from the Benton County Career Technical Center is provided free of charge via district school buses.

All students must use one of the following options for transportation.

1. Ride the provided bus to and from the Career Technical Center
2. First block students may be dropped off at the Career Technical Center in the morning and ride the provided bus to the school after class
3. First Block Only: Drive to and from the Career Technical Center with prior, written approval from the student's parent/guardian, the director, and the school principal. Driving rules must be followed. Driving privileges may be revoked for failure to follow driving rules.

CELL PHONES AND SMART WATCHES

The Benton County School District is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment. To this end, the district's position is that cell phones and headphones serve as a disruption and distraction during the school day. For this reason, students may not use cell phones on school property, including school buses, during regular school hours **with the exception of educational purposes that are pre-planned and pre-approved by instructional staff.**

Cell phones may be kept in vehicles that are in the school parking lot, but the Benton County School District assumes no responsibility for loss of or damage to items in personal vehicles on school property.

Students found to be in violation of the cell phone use prohibition will be subject to the following discipline ladder:

First Offense	The phone will be confiscated and kept in the school office for seven calendar days, or a \$25 fee may be paid for the immediate release of the phone. Confiscated phones will only be released to the student's parent/guardian.
Second Offense	The phone will be confiscated and kept in the school office for 30 calendar days, or a \$50 fee may be paid for the immediate release of the phone. Confiscated phones will only be released to the student's parent/guardian.
Third and each subsequent offense	The phone will be confiscated and kept in the school office for the remainder of the school year.

In addition to forfeiture of the phone, any student found to be taking or have taken photographs, videos, or audio recordings with a cell phone on school grounds during the regular school day shall be subject to a three-day out-of-school suspension and may be subject to further action by law enforcement.

Upon being caught using a cell phone, the student will surrender the cell phone to school personnel. If the student refuses to release the cell phone to school personnel upon request, he/she will be suspended until the cell phone is surrendered. Cell phones may be voluntarily turned in to a school administrator if a student realizes that he/she has accidentally brought the phone to school. If the phone is voluntarily turned in, the phone may be returned to the student at the end of the student's school day. **Once a student is found to be in possession of the phone by a staff member, the option of voluntary turn-in is lost.** During the time of confiscation, the Benton County School District will not be held responsible for default on contractual agreements, cell phone bills, or loss of or damage to phones.

Valuable instructional and administrative time will not be taken to search for lost or stolen items that are not supposed to be used at school. Any student who violates this policy does so at his/her own risk.

CHANGE OF SCHEDULE

Thoughtful planning of your course selection with the help of teachers and guidance counselors should make schedule changes unnecessary; however, should students require a schedule change after they receive their schedule, the following procedure will be followed to make necessary adjustments:

1. Summer Changes-Counseling department schedules specific days for grade specific changes. Students are to meet with their counselor on the assigned day to make any necessary changes. If a student is unable to attend on the assigned day, he/she must call the counselor's office to schedule a date in the summer to make the necessary changes.
2. Beginning-of-School Changes-In isolated instances where adjustments are necessary during the first five days of class; students may request a "Change of Schedule" form from the guidance office to request a schedule change. The form must be signed by the student and the parent. The guidance counselor will meet with the student to discuss the requested change.

After classes have met five (5) times, schedule changes will cease unless initiated by school staff in order to balance class loads or to fulfill IEP, TST, or disciplinary considerations.

Students who are enrolled in a first semester ½ credit course must take the second semester course scheduled to follow it. The only exception to this rule is if the student has already earned ½ credit for the second semester course.

CHILD NUTRITION

In order for any student to eat free or reduced meals, there must be a current application on file for the student. Free and reduced lunch applications are given to each student on the first day of school, and the applications must be returned to the homeroom teacher as soon as possible. **Please read the application carefully, complete all sections fully, sign the application, and have your child return it to his/her homeroom teacher.** Please make sure to include the last four digits of the social security number of the head of household on the form. Your application is not complete without those four numbers. If there is any change in your financial situation during the school year, you may complete another form at that time.

1. The full price for a student lunch is \$2.25. The reduced lunch price is \$.40. The full price for a student breakfast is \$1.25. The reduced breakfast price is \$.30.
2. Milk products and water are the only items that can be purchased without first purchasing a meal.
3. Noise level in the cafeteria should be low, and the tables and floors should always be left clean.
4. Soft drink and glass containers are not allowed in the cafeteria.
5. Parents are encouraged to allow their children to purchase milk or drink water. If a soft drink is sent from home. It must be placed on a unidentifiable container such as a thermos or a squeeze bottle.
6. If a student requires a special diet due to medically proven health reasons or other legitimate reason, the parent/guardian must contact the local cafeteria manager or Anola Stricklin, Food Service Director.
7. No meal charges will be allowed."

Benton County Schools utilizes online application software to process free and reduced meal applications. Log onto www.myschoolapps.com to complete a 2019-2020 free or reduced meal application form. In addition, parents now can add money directly to the student's account through My School Bucks. My School Bucks allows parents to access the student's account to check balance, receive low balance notification, etc. Go to myschoolbucks.com or download the app.

CLASS CHANGES

The teacher, not the bell dismisses class. Students shall not run or congregate in the hallways so as not to endanger other students or impede the flow of traffic. Students should always stay to the right when traveling in the hallways.

CLUB MEETINGS

Class, club, athletic meetings shall not be held unless the sponsor or coach is present. These meetings are to be held at such time that instructional time is not compromised.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The local school board shall adopt and make available to all teachers, school personnel, students and parents or guardians, at the beginning of each school year, a code of student conduct. The code shall be based on the rules governing student conduct and discipline adopted by the school board and shall be made available at the school level in the student handbook or similar publication.

REF: MS Code § 37-11-55

The Code of Conduct is applicable to all students who are registered in the Benton County School District, but it is understood that some students, due to being very young or intellectually challenged, may need differentiated disciplinary actions that vary from those stated in this section. It is very important that parents/guardians be made aware of conduct issues regarding their children. Most of the disciplinary actions listed in this section mandate a parent conference. Understanding that many parents'/guardians' work schedules do not allow for in-person conferences, conferences via phone or electronic methods such as email or Skype are acceptable unless otherwise specified.

It is important to note that the Code of Conduct is not an exhaustive list of all the possible conduct violations that could arise in a school. It is a guide that addresses common issues and expectations. When a student violates an expectation that is not specifically addressed in the Code of Conduct or discipline ladder, it is the responsibility of the staff member involved in the disciplining of the student to use his/her best professional judgment in taking an action that will deter the student from failing to meet that expectation again.

If within one behavioral episode a student is in violation of multiple policies within the code of conduct, the most stringent punishment for the most serious behavior will be applied.

GENERAL RULES

1. Public Displays of Affection – Students are not to exhibit public displays of affection while on school property or at school-sponsored events. Some examples of public displays of affection are as follows: hugging, sexual hand or mouth gestures, and kissing. First Offense- warning. Second Offense and Repeated Offenses will result in more severe punishment.
2. Teachers' Lounge – Students are not to enter the teachers' lounge at any time during the school day unless accompanied by teacher or specifically instructed to enter by an administrator.

BUS CONDUCT

School bus drivers are required to observe state laws and numerous regulations to safeguard the lives of the students they transport. Students are under the supervision of the bus driver, and any violation of school policy as it applies within the school applies on the school bus and at the school bus stop. Any student who persists in violating the established rules of conduct or whose actions provide an unsafe environment on the bus will not be allowed to ride the bus. **A bus driver shall not permit a student to leave the bus before arrival at school, home, and/or regular stop without prior permission from a school administrator.**

Students shall . . .

1. Be at the assigned bus stop on time
2. Remain well off the road until the bus comes to a complete stop and the bus driver indicates that it is safe to board the bus.
3. Always look both directions and walk in front of the bus when it is necessary to cross a road or street.
4. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before trying to load or unload.
5. Be very quiet when the bus is nearing and crossing a railroad or highway.
6. Treat the bus driver with respect and follow his/her instructions.

Parents should . . .

1. Cooperate with school officials and bus drivers in promoting safe and efficient student transport.
2. Not expect buses to operate on roads that are not properly maintained or where adequate space for turning around is not provided.
3. Have children ready at the bus stop at the time designated for the bus to arrive.
4. Help ensure that the children cooperate with bus drivers.
5. Explain the importance of acting appropriately on the bus as good behavior goes a long way toward keeping everyone safe.
6. Contact your child's school **no later than 2:30 PM** if you need to request a change of bus route

There are three categories of bus conduct offenses – **Category One** offenses include standing up while bus is in motion, excessive noise, and littering. **Category Two** offenses include but are not limited to the following: roughhousing, bothering other students, making excessive noise, throwing objects (such as paper, clothing, etc.), putting things out the window. **Category Three** offenses include but are not limited to the following: tobacco use or possession, intoxicant use or possession, profanity or vulgar gestures, damaging the bus, weapon possession, fighting, threatening the bus driver, etc.

Students who are found to be in violation of Category One offenses will be disciplined as follows:

First Offense	Student Conference and Notice of referral sent to student's parent/guardian
Second Offense	One day bus suspension
Third Offense	3 day bus suspension
Fourth Offense	5 day bus suspension

Students who are found to be in violation of Category Two offenses will be disciplined as follows:

First Offense	Student conference and notice of referral sent to student's parent/guardian
Second Offense	Parent conference and corporal punishment or three-day bus suspension
Third Offense	Parent conference and Five-day bus suspension
Fourth Offense	Parent conference and Suspension from bus for the remainder of the school year

Students who are found to be in violation of Category Three Offenses will be discipline as follows:

First Offense	Parent conference and five-day bus suspension, ten-day bus suspension, or suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year – depending on the severity of the offense
Second Offense	Parent conference and ten-day bus suspension or suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year – depending on the severity of the offense
Third Offense	Parent conference and suspension from the bus for the remainder of the school year

Please note that some offenses may warrant disciplinary action in addition to being suspended from the bus.

Questions regarding disciplinary action should be directed to the local school principal. Questions regarding bus stops, routes, and a student's eligibility to ride the bus should be directed to Steve Bostick, Superintendent.

BULLYING

Bullying or harassing behavior in public schools is prohibited. "Bullying or harassing behavior" is any pattern of gestures or communication, any physical act, any threatening communication, or any act reasonably perceived as being motivated by any actual or perceived differentiating characteristic that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, or on a school bus that causes any of the following:

1. It places a student in actual and reasonable fear of harm to his or her person;
2. It places a student in actual and reasonable fear of or damage to his or her property; or
3. It creates or is certain to create a hostile environment by substantially interfering with or impairing a student's educational performance, opportunities, or benefits.

Notice of an incident of bullying will be sent to the parent/guardian of the victim within a reasonable amount of time. The student who is being bullied should report it to the nearest staff member. All parties involved will be referred to the schools' counselor. All reports of bullying will be investigated. Incidents involving more than 2 people with harmful intent will be considered gang violence. For purposes of this section, "hostile environment" means that the victim subjectively views the conduct as bullying or harassing behavior and the conduct is objectively severe or pervasive enough that a reasonable person would agree that it is bullying or harassing behavior. No student shall be subjected to bullying or harassing behavior by school employees or students. No person shall engage in any act of reprisal or retaliation against a victim, witness, or a person with reliable information about an act of bullying or harassing behavior.

REF: MS Code § 37-11-67

DESTRUCTION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

If any pupil shall willfully destroy, cut, deface, damage, or injure any school building, equipment, or other school property he/she shall be liable to suspension or expulsion **and his parents or person or persons in loco parentis shall be liable for all damages.**

REF: MS Code § 37-11-19

Students involved in the destruction of school property will be disciplined according to the following discipline ladder:

First Instance	Parent conference and five-day out-of-school suspension, 40-day alternative school placement, or expulsion depending on the severity of the action.
Second Instance	Parent conference and 40-day alternative school placement or expulsion depending on the severity of the action.
Third Instance	Parent conference and expulsion

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

The term "disruptive behavior" means conduct of a student or parent that is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a school teacher's or school administrator's ability to communicate with the students in a classroom, with a student's ability to learn, or with the operation of a school or school-related activity and which is not covered by other laws related to violence or possession of weapons or controlled substances on school property, school vehicles, or at school-related activities. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to the following: foul, profane, obscene, threatening, defiant, or abusive language or action toward teachers or other school employees; defiance, ridicule or verbal attack of a teacher; and/or willful, deliberate, and overt acts of disobedience of the directions of a teacher. Refer to building level discipline policies.

REF: MS Code § 37-11-18

DRESS CODE

The dress code is not an exhaustive list of all the possible dress code violations that could arise in a school. It is a guide that addresses common issues and expectations. When a student violates an expectation that is not specifically addressed in the dress code, it is the responsibility of the staff member involved in the disciplining of the student to use his/her best professional judgment in taking an action that will deter the student from failing to meet that expectation again.

Clothing in General

1. Clothing or jewelry which advertises or displays the following may not be worn: suggestive wording or pictures, alcoholic beverages, obscene language, obscene pictures, satanic cults, drug culture, or gang-related culture.
2. Clothing shall not be cut excessively low in the front or back.
3. Clothing which permits the underwear to be shown may not be worn.
4. Students may not wear oversized clothing which is excessively large for their body type and size.
5. Female students are to wear bras. Of course, this is dependent on age and physical maturity.

Shirts/Blouses

1. Shirts or tops must be long enough so that no skin is showing around the midriff when the student has one or both arms raised or when bending over, and shirts/blouses may not be excessively tight.
2. Shirts may not be unbuttoned below the second button.
3. No fraternity or sorority jerseys or shirts shall be worn.
4. Halter tops, backless shirts, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, muscle shirts, and spaghetti strap shirts are unacceptable unless a tee shirt is worn underneath.
5. Students may wear hooded sweatshirts, but the hood may not be worn on the head inside any school building.

Pants/Shorts/Skirts/ Dresses

1. Grades K-12 shorts must not be spandex or “biker shorts.”
2. Grades K-12 shorts, skirts, and dresses may be no shorter than four inches above the center of the knee cap.
3. Pants and shorts must be worn at the waist and not around the hips. Pants worn in the “sagging” style will not be tolerated at school.
4. Students in grades K-12 are prohibited from having holes in their jeans, shorts, pants, etc.
5. Female students who wear leggings, jeggings, tights, or yoga pants as pants must have a dress or skirt on that completely cover the posterior
6. Students in grades K-12 are prohibited from having any holes in their jeans, shorts, pants, etc that is above the knee. A hole is defined as an opening that reveals skin.

Shoes

1. Shoes must be worn at all times.
2. Bed slippers or house shoes may not be worn.
3. If a shoe is intended to have shoestrings, the shoe must have strings and be tied at all times.
4. Rubber flip flops such as those suited for showering and beachwear or slides are prohibited in grades K-12.

Miscellaneous Items

1. If belts are worn, they must be worn appropriately and fastened at all times.
2. No hats, caps, or visors are permitted at school unless part of a school athletic team uniform or special permission is granted by school administration. No combs, picks, head scarves, rollers, or any other similar head wear may be worn at any time.
3. Sunglasses may not be worn indoors.
4. Students may only wear earrings in the ear. Students who have piercings in areas not listed in this policy shall remove them during the school day or at school-sponsored activities. Using a Band-Aid or other covering to mask the inappropriate jewelry is not acceptable.
5. Benton County School District cheerleaders and dancers shall wear uniforms which are not backless and which do not bare the midriff.
6. Chains are considered a weapon and may not be worn as part of a student’s clothing. A chain which is meant to be worn as jewelry and is not considered as potentially dangerous is permitted.
7. Male and female students’ hair cannot obstruct the vision.

DRUG/ALCOHOL POSSESSION, USE, AND/OR DISTRIBUTION

No student shall have in his/her possession or in any way use or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages, morphine, marijuana, cocaine, opium, heroin, or their derivatives or compounds or any other narcotic drug, barbiturate, substance, ingredient, or compound which when ingested would cause the student to be under its influence, regardless if the substance is legal or illegal. This policy is in effect for students on Benton County School District property or at any school-sponsored activity but does not apply to any student who is under the care of a licensed physician and taking the medication according to the supervision and direction of said physician.

A student found to be in possession of an intoxicating substance will be subject to the following discipline ladder:

First Offense	Parent conference and 60-day alternative school placement or expulsion
Second Offense	Parent conference and expulsion

Local law enforcement officials will be notified in the event of a student being found in possession of an intoxicating substance and asked to take student into custody.

FIGHTING

Any student who starts and/or participates in a fight or starts and/or participates in a disturbance that could reasonably be perceived to lead to a fight on school property or any school-sponsored activity will be considered to have participated in a fight. Disciplinary actions for fighting will be the same for all participants unless the principal is able to determine beyond a reasonable doubt that a certain student instigated the fight.

Local law enforcement officials will be notified in the event of any fight and asked to take participants into custody. Fighting with more than two participants and/or a weapon or if a fight leads to serious bodily injury of a participant or a staff member attempting to stop the fight, local law enforcement officers will be asked to take participants into custody.

GANGS AND GANG ACTIVITY

The Benton County School District prohibits gang activity at school, on district-owned property, and at school-sponsored events. A gang is defined as a group that initiates, advocates, or promotes activities that threaten the safety or well-being of persons or property on school grounds or at supervised school functions or that are harmful to the educational process.

Specifically prohibited gang activity includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Soliciting students to become gang members;
2. Participating in gang initiations or other gang ceremonies;
3. Wearing, displaying, or possessing gang symbols; or
4. Engaging in any behavior undertaken in such a manner as to be reasonably likely to incite violence or endanger persons or property.

Any gang behavior or activity that leads to theft, disrespect of staff, violence, possession of dangerous items or weapons, etc. will be handled according to code of conduct policy that directly addresses those behavioral issues.

ITEMS NOT ALLOWED AT SCHOOL

The following is a list of everyday items that should not be brought to school: radios, televisions, CD players, iPods, smart watches, “vaping” devices, e-cigarettes, video games, musical instruments, pagers, laser pointers, trading and playing cards, dice, etc. Any of these items **and anything else deemed to be potentially disruptive to the learning environment will be confiscated by school personnel**. The Benton County School District will not be held responsible for loss of or damage to items brought from home while in the possession of students or school personnel.

If the item confiscated is of a dangerous or particularly disruptive nature, the item will be kept in the school office for the remainder of the school year, and the student will be punished accordingly, see “DANGEROUS ITEMS” in the Code of Student Conduct.

If it becomes educationally necessary for a potentially disruptive item to be brought to school in order to complete an assigned academic project, it is the sole responsibility of the student to secure permission to bring the item and to insure the item is not used to disrupt the school day. If permission is not granted or the item is used to disrupt the school day, it shall be subject to the aforementioned discipline ladder.

Valuable instructional and administrative time will not be taken to search for lost or stolen items that are not supposed to be brought to school. Any student who violates this policy does so at his/her own risk.

LEAVING CAMPUS

Once you arrive on campus, you are not to leave until your scheduled day is complete. If it becomes necessary for you to leave campus before your scheduled day is complete, request permission to go to the office. Once in the office, request permission to leave from the principal or his/her designee. For your safety and ours, you will not be allowed to leave campus until a member of the office staff has made contact with your parent/guardian or emergency contact to verify you have permission to leave. Once permission is granted to leave, you must sign out or be signed out. **Students may not leave campus for the purpose of eating and/or picking up lunch with the intent of returning to campus for the remainder of the school day.**

Students who fail to follow any part of the dismissal procedure before leaving campus will be disciplined according to the following discipline ladder:

First Instance	Parent conference and three-day suspension
Second Instance	Parent conference and five-day suspension
Third and Each Subsequent Instance	Parent conference and 40-day alternative school placement

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media are internet-based tools designed to create a highly accessible information highway. They are powerful and far reaching means of communication that, as a student of the Benton County School District, can have a significant impact on your personal reputation and the reputation of our District. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Snapchat, etc. Students are liable for anything they post to social media sites and the same laws, policies, and guidelines are expected to be maintained as if you were interacting in person. The Benton County School District supports your right to interact knowledgeably and socially, and guidelines have been developed to outline appropriate standards of conduct for your future and the reputation of our District.

Guidelines:

- 1 Social networking or “friending” of Benton County Schools’ staff is prohibited.
- 2 Think before you post as your reputation will be permanently affected by the Internet and email archives.
- 3 Post responsibly and use good judgment.
- 4 In accordance with the Family educational rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and student privacy policies, personal information of Benton County Schools District’s students should never be disclosed. Care should also be taken not to compromise the privacy of the District’s faculty and staff members.
- 5 Threatening, harassing, and/or bullying posts that negatively impact the safety or educational progress of any school in the Benton County School District will lead to disciplinary and/or legal action.

THEFT

Theft is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Law enforcement officials may be notified when theft occurs on Benton County School District property or at any school-sponsored activity.

Students who commit theft on Benton County School District property or at any school-sponsored event will be disciplined according to the following discipline ladder:

First Offense	Parent conference, 5 day suspension, and 40-day alternative school placement, long-term alternative school placement of not less than 90 days, or expulsion – depending on the value of what is stolen and/or the circumstances of the theft
Second Offense	Parent conference and long-term alternative school placement of not less than 90 days or expulsion – depending on the value of what is stolen and/or the circumstances of the theft
Third Offense	Parent conference and expulsion

TARDINESS

Because students entering class after instruction has begun is a disruption to the educational process, tardiness is considered a serious issue. Also, students who are not in class after the bell has rung are unsupervised – another serious issue. There are two types of tardiness – being late to class and being late to school.

Being Late to Class – During the school day, a three minute period of time is allowed for students to travel from one class to another. If a student does not report to class in the required amount of time, he/she is considered tardy to class. Sometimes it is necessary for a teacher to hold a student after class, causing that student to be tardy to his/her next class. If the student has a legitimate reason for being tardy and a note from another teacher explaining the tardiness, the teacher may excuse the tardiness.

A student is considered tardy after the tardy bell rings. The teacher will refer the student to the administration upon the fourth and subsequent tardy received.

If you are late arriving at school for the start of your instructional day, you are considered absent. See page 5, “What to do if You Have Been Absent from School.”

TRUANCY

A student is considered truant or “skipping” when he/she is absent from **school or class** without the permission of a parent/guardian and/or a school official.

Students who are truant from class or school will receive an unexcused absence for any classes or days missed and be subject to the following discipline ladder:

First Truancy	Parent conference and three-day suspension or in school suspension
Second Truancy	Parent conference and five-day suspension or in school suspension
Third and Each Subsequent Truancy	Parent conference and 40-day alternative school placement

TOBACCO/“VAPING”

No person shall use any tobacco product, “vaping” device or e-cigarette on any educational property. "Educational property" means any public school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used, or operated by any local school board, school, or directors for the administration of any public educational institution or during a school-related activity.

REF: MS Code § 97-32-29

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

It is understood that students will miss school from time to time. Students have five parent notes that may be used to excuse up to ten days of absence per year as long as the reasons for absences fit the criteria in MS Code § 37-13-91. Also, students under the care of a licensed physician may miss as many days as are medically necessary to recover from illness and injury. Unfortunately, some students miss school without valid reason and are assigned unexcused absences.

WEAPONS

Any student in any school who possesses a knife, handgun, other firearm, or any other instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm **or** who commits a violent act on educational property as defined in Section 97-37-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, shall be subject to automatic expulsion for a calendar year by the superintendent or principal of the school in which the student is enrolled. Such expulsion shall take effect immediately subject to the constitutional rights of due process, which shall include the student's right to appeal to the local school board. Possession of a Plastic Firearm – Plastic guns of any type are prohibited on Benton County School District property or at school-sponsored events. Any student found to be in possession of a plastic gun will be subject to a three-day suspension. Any student who displays a plastic firearm in a threatening manner on Benton County School District property or at school-sponsored events will be subject to a 40-day placement in the alternative school.

Any student found to be in possession of a weapon such as pepper spray, stun gun, metal pipe, throwing stars, brass knuckles, etc. will be suspended will be suspended from school while awaiting any hearing and/or appeal process. Law enforcement may be contracted. REF: MS Code § 37-11-18

DANGEROUS ITEMS

Any student who knowingly or unknowingly possesses a dangerous item on Benton County School District property or to a school-sponsored activity adversely affects the safety of all other students and staff members. Some examples of dangerous items are as follows: gunpowder, fireworks, brass knuckles, stun guns, pepper spray, metal pipe, throwing stars, and snakes.

COMPUTER USAGE (AUP)

The Benton County School District (BCSD) offers currently enrolled students, faculty and staff access to the school computer network through computer labs, networked and stand-alone computers. District technology equipment is provided for use in fulfilling curriculum objectives and quality enrichment activities. Personal electronic devices are not to be connected to the District network. This includes, but is not limited to personal computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones, and MP3 Players.

The BCSD is in compliance with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use within the district and through use of the BCSD network infrastructure and servers that is forthcoming from the local, state and federal regulatory agencies.

The Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law enacted by Congress to address concerns about access in schools and libraries to the Internet and other information. Among many other things, it calls for schools and libraries to have in place appropriate electronic filters to prevent children and adults from accessing and viewing inappropriate Internet content.

For any school or library that receives discounts for Internet access or for internal connections, CIPA imposes certain requirements. The BCSD receives these discounts for Internet Access through the E-Rate program and is therefore must be in compliance with CIPA.

Benton County School District Computer Acceptable Use Policy (Revised June 2016)

The Benton County School District (BCSD) offers currently enrolled students, faculty and staff access to the school computer network through computer labs, networked and stand-alone computers. District technology equipment is provided for use in fulfilling curriculum objectives and quality enrichment activities. Personal electronic devices are not to be connected to the District network. This includes, but is not limited to personal computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones, and MP3 Players.

The BCSD is in compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and will comply with any additional state and federal regulations that pertain to technology use within the district and through use of the BCSD network infrastructure and servers that is forthcoming from the local, state and federal regulatory agencies.

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COMPUTER NETWORK AND INTERNET USE RULES

Students and school personnel are responsible for good behavior on the school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or in a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. General school rules for behavior and communications apply. Within reason, freedom of speech and access to information will be honored.

In compliance with CIPA 2008 updates, all students (K-12) will be educated about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites, in chat rooms and in cyberbullying awareness and response. When using the Internet, all students will be closely monitored to prevent students from accidentally or otherwise accessing inappropriate material.

Computer access is a privilege, not a right, and is provided for students and staff to conduct research, fulfill course requirements, and communicate with others when appropriate or authorized. Access to network services is given to students and staff who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. Signed parental permission is required for all students. All faculty and staff using the district's Internet access must sign a written contract. **The permission form is located on the last page of this handbook.**

Network administrators may review network storage files and communications to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are using the system responsibly. While user files will not be examined without good cause, users should not expect that files stored on school computers will always be private. The BCSD will fully cooperate with local, state or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted through any BCSD Internet account.

All users are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of Netiquette. These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- ✦ Be polite. Do not be abusive or be "bullying" in your messages to others.
- ✦ Use appropriate language.
- ✦ Do not assume that email is secure and/or confidential. Never send anything that you would hesitate to have viewed by others.
- ✦ Respect other people's privacy regarding mail and files. Do not reveal personal address or phone numbers, or those of students or colleagues.
- ✦ Keep paragraphs short and to the point. Be mindful of spelling.
- ✦ Check email regularly and delete unwanted messages as quickly as possible.

GOOGLE APPS FOR EDUCATION ACCEPTABLE USE

Google Apps for Education is primarily for educational use. Students may use Google Apps for Education for personal use subject that may apply.

PRIVACY

School staff and administrators have access to student email for monitoring purposes. Students should have no expectation of privacy on the Google Apps for Education System.

Limited personal use – Students may use Google Apps for Education for personal projects but may not use them for:

- Unlawful activities
- Inappropriate sexual or other offensive content
- Threatening another person
- Misrepresentation of BCSD, staff or students

SAFETY

- Students will tell their teachers or other school employee about any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Students are responsible for the use of their individual accounts and should take all reasonable precautions to prevent others from being able to use their account.
- Under no conditions should a user provide his or her password to another person.

ACCESS RESTRICTION – DUE PROCESS

Access to Google Apps for Education is considered a privilege accorded to the discretion of the BCSD. BCSD maintains the right to immediately withdraw access and use of Google Apps for Education when there is reason to believe that violations of law or school policies have occurred. In such cases, the alleged violation will be referred to the Head of School for further investigation and account restoration, suspension, or termination. As a party of the Agreement with Google, BCSD also reserves the right to immediately suspend any user's account suspected of inappropriate use. Pending review, a user account may be terminated as part of such action.

Due to the rapidly changing technology environment, BCSD reserves the right to determine if an action not listed in this document is inappropriate, and the students may be subject to discipline.

DISTRICT PROVIDED LAPTOP, TABLET, OR OTHER PERSONAL COMPUTING DEVICE POLICY

TERMS: All users of district provided laptops, tablets, or other personal computing devices will comply at all times with the Benton County School District (BCSD) Technology Handbook policies. Any failure to comply may result in termination of user rights of possession effective immediately and the District may repossess the device. Any lost, stolen and damaged devices must be reported to school authorities immediately.

TITLE: The District has legal title to the property at all times. The user's right of possession and use is limited to and conditioned upon full and complete compliance with this agreement, the BCSD Technology Handbook policies, and all District policies and procedures.

LOSS, THEFT OR FULL DAMAGE: If a device is stolen, the employee or parent/guardian (in the case of a student) should immediately notify the school administration. At that time, the user or the parent/guardian will be required to file a police report. Once a police report has been filed, the district, in conjunction with the local law enforcement agency may deploy locating software to aid authorities in recovering the device. It is imperative that a lost or stolen device be reported immediately. If the stolen device is not reported within five (5) calendar days to a district school administrator, the employee or parent/guardian will be responsible for full replacement cost. If a device is lost or damaged as a result of irresponsible behavior, the user or the parent may be responsible for the full replacement cost. The user or the parent/guardian will be responsible for full replacement cost of the device if not reported to district personnel within calendar five (5) days of missing or damaged device. In the event that a device is damaged, lost or stolen, the user will be assessed a deductible for the repair or replacement of the device for the first occurrence per device. Replacement cost will be determined by the current value of the device or a comparable device. Students or employees who leave the district during the school year must return all devices and additional accessories to the school administrator.

NETWORK SECURITY – CIPA COMPLIANCE

Users have the responsibility to use computer and network resources for academic purposes only. Therefore, as mandated by CIPA, filtering and monitoring will be utilized on all computers accessing the Internet. Free email sites are blocked for all users. Faculty and staff must use District provided email and students will have access to Gagggle email. The District is required by the State to archive (keep on file) all email going in and out. This is due to past litigations involving email and requirements for the District to produce email copies when requested by the courts.

Activities using the computer network in violation of Local, State, Federal or BCSD policies are strictly forbidden.

Students will not respond to unsolicited online contacts or reveal personal identifiable information over the network unless it meets District-approval (examples: ACT Registration, Scholarships or College Applications). This includes information about themselves as well as information about anyone else.

BCSD staff is prohibited from disclosing personal information about students on websites. Although teachers and other district personnel may reveal personal information about themselves over the network, they are strictly forbidden to disseminate any student information electronically to any source that has not met district approval. Information that is considered personal includes but is not limited to the following: student's full name, home address, Social Security number, personal telephone numbers, and any information relating to their health.

Because there are additional prohibitions with which users must comply, non-compliance with these regulations will result in disciplinary and/or legal actions taken by the BCSD authorities if deemed necessary.

There is absolutely no expectation of privacy on the BCSD network. Activities at any workstation or transmission and receipt of data can be monitored at anytime both electronically or by staff members. This includes the transmission and receipt of email, email attachments, Web browsing and any other use of the network.

Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- ✦ Using the network to transmit, or retransmit copyrighted material (including plagiarism).
- ✦ Accessing, transmitting, or retransmitting threatening, harassing, bullying (cyberbullying) obscene and pornographic or trade secret material or any material deemed harmful to minors.
- ✦ Using the network to access, transmit or retransmit language that can be considered defamatory, abusive or offensive.
- ✦ Using social networking sites, chatting, or blogging unless associated with a specific curriculum related activity.
- ✦ Users of the BCSD network are forbidden to access, transmit, or retransmit information that could cause danger or disruption, engage them in personal, prejudicial or discriminatory attacks or that harasses or causes distress to another person.
- ✦ Users of the district network are forbidden to access transmit, or retransmit material that promotes violence or the destruction of persons or property by any device including but not limited to firearms, explosives, fireworks, smoke bombs, incendiary devices or other similar material.
- ✦ All users agree to report any accidental access of any of the aforementioned material to the appropriate school authority so that the district can take steps to prevent similar future access.
- ✦ Using the network to download, upload or store large files such as music and video that are not directly related to projects

- or activities that are a part of the school curriculum.
- ✦ The use of flash (thumb) drives is limited to data storage only.
- ✦ No executable files of any type may be transferred to district property.
- ✦ Re-sending email chain letters or engaging in any spamming activities where bulk mailings of unsolicited email are sent.
- ✦ Damaging computers, computer systems, or computer networks (hardware or software). If a student maliciously damages BCSD technical equipment in such a way that requires service or repairs, the parent/guardian of the student is responsible for providing all expenses incurred for those services, grades K-12.
- ✦ Deliberate or careless action that damages the computer's configuration or limits the computer's usefulness to others.
- ✦ Downloading unauthorized software on school computers/networks. This includes students, teachers, staff and administrators. All software installed on district computers must be installed by the Technology Department and only after the proper licenses or authorizations for use have been acquired and verified.
- ✦ Creating, uploading, or transmitting computer viruses, worms or other disruptive software code.
- ✦ Making any attempt to defeat computer or network security on the district network or any other client, server, or network on the Internet. Hacking or attempting to gain access to unauthorized areas of the district network or the Internet is prohibited.
- ✦ Invading the privacy of other individuals. Using another person's password or account or providing his/her password to another person. Trespassing in another's folder, work or files, in the attempt to use others' work to "cheat" on assignments, tests, or any class work.
- ✦ Intentionally wasting limited resources.
- ✦ Using the network or school computer for unauthorized commercial, private, personal purposes or political lobbying.
- ✦ Any activity harmful to or reflecting negatively on the BCSD community.

CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY NON-COMPLIANCE

Violation of this AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) may result in the denial, suspension or cancellation of the users' privileges as well as other disciplinary and/or legal action deemed appropriate and imposed by the school administration, district administration and/or local, state or federal law enforcement officials. Other action not specified above may include but are not limited to monetary restitution, school suspension or expulsion, detention or any other action deemed appropriate by the administrative authorities.

In grades K-12, students in computer-based classes may be removed from the course for the duration of the semester or school year if found by administration to be intentionally in violation of the Acceptable Use Policy. Reinstatement procedures will be individually addressed.

Any disciplinary action that is a result of an alleged violation of this policy can be appealed through the normal channels provided by the disciplinary policy of the BCSD.

Signatures at the end of this document are legally binding and indicate the parties who have signed have read the terms and conditions carefully and understand their significance.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR USE OF THE BCSD NETWORK.

All users of the BCSD's network and Internet access are required to adhere to the district's Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The policy describes in detail the purpose of the district's network and the rules governing its use. If a parent does not want their child to have access to the Internet or Internet services provided by the district, they must obtain and complete a Refusal Form and return to your child's Principal. This form will have to be completed each school year. Please realize that this action will make enrollment in certain classes impossible.

All users and the parents of all student users are required by the BCSD AUP to sign a contract stating that they will abide by the policy while using the district's computer network resources.

All users, including faculty and staff, must be aware that misuse of the network facilities could result in disciplinary action by the BCSD officials including termination of employment or legal action by local, state and/or federal law enforcement officials.

It is, therefore, incumbent upon all who sign the Internet Use Contract to carefully read the district AUP and understand what is expected and the penalty for non-compliance.

Terms and Conditions for Use of the Benton County School District Network

Please read the following carefully before signing the attached contract. The contract is a legally binding document.

All users of the Benton County School District's network and Internet access are required to adhere to the district's Internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The attached policy describes in detail the purpose of the district's network and the rules governing its use. All users (**Grades K-12**) and the parents of **all** student users are required by the Benton County School District AUP to sign a contract stating that they will abide by the policy while using the district's computer network resources.

All users, including faculty and staff, must be aware that misuse of the network facilities could result in disciplinary action by the Benton County School District officials including termination of employment or legal action by local, state and/or federal law enforcement officials. It is, therefore, incumbent upon all who sign the Internet Use Contract to carefully read the district AUP and understand what is expected and the penalty for non-compliance.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

A student may earn no more than one Carnegie unit toward graduation through the completion of an approved correspondence course from outside the district. Permission to enroll in a correspondence course must be granted by the principal. All correspondence lessons and tests will be completed before April 15th. If correspondence credit is necessary to meet graduation requirements, the final grade must be received by the principal or school counselor seven working days before graduation.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Benton County Schools' Discipline Ladder-GRADES 7-12

***Flagrant offenses may receive a more severe punishment.**

Failure to report to early or in-school detention is Automatic ISS or suspension.

Level	Offense	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense	4 th Offense or more
1-1	Tardiness	Warning	Warning	1 early detention or in school detention	3 days ISS
1-2	Unacceptable PDA	1 day early or in-school detention	2 day ISS	1 day out of school suspension	3 day out of school suspension
1-3	Dress Code Violation	Parent called for	Change of clothes.	early or in-school detention	1 day ISS
1-4	Disruptive Behavior	1-2 day early or in-school detention	3 day ISS	2 day out of school suspension/parent conference	3 day out of school suspension/parent conference
1-5	No Homework	Warning	2 day early or in-school detention	3 days ISS	2 day out of school suspension/parent conference
2-1	Skiping Class	2 days early or in-school detention	3 days ISS	3 day out of school suspension/parent conference	5 day out of school suspension/hearing for alternative placement
2-2	Defiance, Disrespect/ Insubordination	1 day ISS/ Parent Contact	3 days ISS	2 days out of school suspension	5 day out of school suspension/hearing for alternative placement
2-3	Hostile Actions Toward Another (Pre-Fight)	2 days ISS	3 days ISS	3 day out of school suspension/parent conference	5 day out of school suspension/hearing for alternative placement
3-1	Fighting	3 day suspension	5 day suspension	5 day suspension/hearing	Continued Alternative Placement
3-2	Use/Possession of Tobacco	3 day out of school suspension conference	5 day out of school suspension/parent conference	5 day out of school suspension/hearing for alternative placement	Parent Conference/Expulsion

Level	Offense	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense	4 th Offense or more
3-3	Theft	Restitution/5 Day out of school suspension	Restitution/ 5 day out of school suspension/ Hearing for alternative placement	5 day out of school suspension/ Expulsion	
3-4	Acts that threaten the safety of others (Bullying)	Parent Conference/Warning/ Referral To Counselor	3 days out of school suspension/ parent conference/ Counseling	5 day out of school suspension/ parent conference/ Counseling	Parent Conference/ hearing for alternative placement/ Counseling
3-5	Academic Dishonesty (Major grade)	1 day out of school suspension/ grade of zero on test/assignment/ parent conference	3 day out of school suspension/grade of zero on test/ assignment/parent conference	5 day out of school suspension/ grade of zero on test/ assignment/ hearing for alternative placement	Parent Conference/ Expulsion
3-6	Vandalism (School Property or Grounds)	3 day out of school suspension/ restitution/ Parent conference	5 day out of school suspension/ restitution/ Parent conference	5 day out of school suspension/ Restitution/ hearing for alternative placement	Parent Conference/ Expulsion
3-7	Profanity/Obscene Language/ Gestures	2 days ISS	2 day Out of School Suspension	3 day Out of School Suspension	5 Day Out of School Suspension/ hearing for Alternative Placement
3-8	Sexual Harassment	3 Day Out of School Suspension/Parent Conference	5 Day Out of School Suspension/Parent Conference/ hearing for alternative placement	Parent Conference/ Expulsion	
3-9	Verbal, Written or Cyber Threat on a student (Bullying with harmful Intent)	3 days Out of School Suspension	4 day Out of School Suspension	5 day Out of School Suspension/ hearing for alternative placement	Parent Conference/ Expulsion

Level	Offense	1 st Offense	2 nd Offense	3 rd Offense
4-1	Alcohol Possession/Use/ Influence	3 day Out of School Suspension/Police Report/Counseling	5 day Out of School Suspension/Police Report/ hearing for Alternative Placement/Mandatory Counseling	
4-2	Physical Assault on Another Student	5 day Out of School Suspension/Hearing for Alternative Placement/Police Report	5 day Out of School suspension/ Automatic return to Alternative School Placement	Parent Conference/ Expulsion
5-1	Weapon Possession	5 day Out of School Suspension/Police Report/Hearing for Alternative Placement	5 day out of school suspension/automatic return to Alternative Placement	Parent Conference/ Expulsion
5-2	Physical, Written, Verbal, or Cyber Threat on an Employee	5 days out of school suspension/hearing for alternative placement/ contact law enforcement		
5-3	Drug Possession/ Sale or Distribution	5 Day out of School Suspension/police report/hearing for alternative placement/ possible expulsion		
5-4	Sexual Assault/Battery	5 Day out of School Suspension/police report/hearing for alternative placement/ possible expulsion		

DUAL CREDIT / ENROLLMENT

A “dual enrolled” student is a student who is enrolled in a community college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school. A “dual credit” student is a student who is enrolled in a community college or state institution of higher learning while enrolled in high school and who is receiving high school and college credit for postsecondary coursework.

REF: MS Code § 37-15-38

Benton County School District students are eligible to dual enroll if they meet the following criteria:

1. Have a minimum of 18 Carnegie Units
1. Have a written recommendation from the principal

Students interested in dual enrollment are responsible for completing the necessary paperwork for college admission and any costs associated with college attendance.

DUE PROCESS

The constitutional rights of students are protected through due process. In the Benton County School District, procedures granting due process will be followed in the exercise of disciplinary authority. The practice of telling students what they are accused of doing and the evidence against them (notice) and allowing them an opportunity to explain their version of the facts (hearing) before imposing any punishment contributes to achieving fundamental fairness.

For suspensions of eleven days or more and for expulsions, the student has a right to a due process hearing to appeal the disciplinary action. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the superintendent 3 calendar days of day of suspension if a due process hearing is desired.

If there are problems concerning school-related discipline issues at your child’s school, follow this chain of command: **Contact the teacher first, the principal of the school second, and the superintendent third.** If the situation is not satisfactorily resolved after meeting with the superintendent, he will inform you of the policy regarding meeting with the Benton County School Board.

EARLY DISMISSAL

The following guidelines will govern the early dismissal program in the Benton County School District:

1. Requests for early dismissal will only be considered after schedules have been completed.
2. Students must complete an early dismissal form to be considered.
3. No early checkouts will be approved for freshmen or sophomores.
4. In a hardship case, the parent/guardian may make a written request for a waiver of the above guidelines.
5. **In cases of poor academic performance, attendance, and/or behavior early leave may be revoked indefinitely by school administration.**

Students who have early leave will be expected to be off campus during those times. Students must check in through the main office if he/she returns to school after checking out. Students who are found on campus more than ten minutes after time for them to depart shall lose their early release privileges. The only exception for this rule is if a student is on campus, in a teacher’s classroom, and receiving tutorial services and/or making up work.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

It shall be the duty of the principals and teachers in all public school buildings to instruct the pupils in the methods of fire drills and to practice fire drills until all the pupils in the school are familiar with the methods of escape. Such fire drills shall be conducted often enough to keep such pupils well drilled. It shall be the further duty of such principals and teachers to instruct the pupils in all programs of emergency management as may be designated by the state department of education. REF: MS Code § 37-11-5

EXEMPTIONS

Students in grades K-12 may be exempt from **final exams** through excellence in educational achievement and attendance. Exemptions are calculated on a subject by subject basis; therefore, a student may be exempt in one class but not another. In order to be exempt, a student must have at least a 90 average in the class/subject and one unexcused absence to be exempt with a 95 average or the student may have a 95 average in the class/subject and two unexcused absences. Excused absences **do not** count against exemptions.

GRADING

No school board member, school superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, guidance counselor, other teachers, coaches, or other administrative staff members of the school or the central staff of a local school board shall attempt, directly or indirectly, to change, alter, or otherwise affect the grade received by a student from his teacher unless it is determined that the grade is an error or that the grade is demonstrably inconsistent with the teacher's grading policy. REF: MS Code § 37-11-64

The grading system will be uniform for all schools in the Benton County School District.

1. Homework/Classwork/Daily grades count as 40% of the nine weeks’ average.
2. Weekly, chapter, and/or unit tests; projects; or major assignments count as 45% of the nine weeks’ average.
3. Nine weeks’ exams count as 15% of the nine weeks’ average.
4. For semester averages, each nine weeks’ average will count 50%.
5. For final averages, each semester average will count 50%.

90 – 100+	A “exceptionally fine work”
80 – 89	B “better than average work”
70 – 79	C “average work”
65 – 69	D “poor work”
Below 65	F “unacceptable work/failure”

Students in grades 1-3 must have a grade of 70 or better for promotion.

Mississippi Diploma Options

Begins with incoming freshmen of 2018-2019

Mississippi has two diploma options: The Traditional Diploma and the Alternate Diploma. The Traditional Diploma is for all students. The Alternate Diploma is an option for students with a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD).

TRADITIONAL DIPLOMA OPTION

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English I English II
Mathematics	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algebra I
Science	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biology I
Social Studies	3½	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 World History 1 U.S. History ½ U.S. Government ½ Economics ½ Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	5 ½	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements

- Student must identify an endorsement area prior to entering 9th grade. Endorsement requirements can only be changed with parental permission.
- For early release, students must have met College or Career Readiness Benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math or earned a Silver level on ACT WorkKeys or SAT equivalency sub scores). Alternately, a student must meet ALL of the following:
 - Have a 2.5 GPA
 - Passed or met all MAAP assessments requirements for graduation
 - On track to meet diploma requirements
 - Concurrently enrolled in Essentials for College Math or Essentials for College Literacy

Recommendations

- For early graduation, a student should successfully complete an area of endorsement.
- A student should take a math or math equivalent course the senior year.

ALTERNATE DIPLOMA OPTION

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate English Elements I-IV
Mathematics	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate Math Elements I-III Alternate Algebra Elements
Science	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate Biology Elements Alternate Science Elements II
Social Studies	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate History Elements (Strands: U.S. History and World History) Alternate Social Studies Elements (Strands: Economics and U.S. Government)
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternate Health Elements
Art	1	
Career Readiness	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Readiness I-IV (Strands: Technology, Systems, Employability, and Social)
Life Skills Development	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills Development I-IV (Strands: Technology, Systems, Personal Care, and Social)
Additional Electives	2	
Total Units Required	24	

Requirements

- The Alternate Diploma is not equivalent to a traditional high school diploma and is not recognized by postsecondary entities that require a traditional high school diploma.
- All students are required to participate in the Mississippi Assessment Program-Alternate Assessment (MAAP-A) with a score TBD.
- Students who have met the criteria on their IEP for having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) may participate in a program of study to earn the Alternate Diploma.

Traditional Diploma Endorsement Options

Students pursuing a Traditional Diploma must identify an endorsement prior to entering 9th grade. There are three endorsement options: Career and Technical, Academic, and Distinguished Academic Endorsement.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I
Science	3	• Biology I
Social Studies	3½	• 1 World History • 1 U.S. History • ½ U.S. Government • ½ Economics • ½ Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
CTE Electives	4	• Must complete a four-course sequential program of study
Additional Electives	3 ½	
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Earn Silver level on ACT WorkKeys.
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One CTE dual credit or earn articulated credit in the high school CTE course
 - Work-Based Learning experience or Career Pathway Experience
 - Earn a State Board of Education-approved national credential

ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I + two (2) additional math courses above Algebra I
Science	3	• Biology I + two (2) additional science courses above Biology I
Social Studies	3½	• 1 World History • 1 U.S. History • ½ U.S. Government • ½ Economics • ½ Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	7 ½	• Must meet CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	26	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 2.5.
- Courses must meet MS IHL college preparatory curriculum (CPC) requirements.
- Earn Mississippi IHL and community college readiness benchmarks (ACT sub scores 17 English and 19 Math as approved by postsecondary for non-remediation at most community colleges and IHL college-ready courses in senior year, or the SAT equivalency subscore).
- Earn two additional Carnegie Units for a total of 26.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a C or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a C or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One academic dual credit course with a C or higher in the course

DISTINGUISHED ACADEMIC ENDORSEMENT

Curriculum Area	Carnegie Units	Required Subjects
English	4	• English I • English II
Mathematics	4	• Algebra I + two (2) additional math courses above Algebra I
Science	4	• Biology I + two (2) additional science courses above Biology I
Social Studies	4	• 1 World History • 1 U.S. History • ½ U.S. Government • ½ Economics • ½ Mississippi Studies
Physical Education	½	
Health	½	
Art	1	
College and Career Readiness	1	• Must occur in the student's junior or senior year, or in the student completion of a 4-year sequence.
Technology or Computer Science	1	
Additional Electives	8	• Must meet CPC requirements for MS IHLs
Total Units Required	28	

Additional Requirements

- Earn an overall GPA of 3.0.
- Courses must meet Mississippi IHL CPC-recommended requirements.
- Earn national college readiness benchmarks on each subtest established by ACT of 18 in English and 22 in Math or SAT equivalency subscore.
- Earn four additional Carnegie Units for a total of 28.
- Must successfully complete one of the following:
 - One AP course with a B or higher and take the appropriate AP exam
 - One Diploma Program-IB course with a B or higher and take the appropriate IB exams
 - One academic dual credit course with a B or higher in the course

GRADUATION CEREMONY

Graduation is a formal ceremony and an important rite of passage for students. Parents, students, friends, family members, etc. are asked to and expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is suitable for a formal ceremony of great importance. All participants should refrain from behaviors such as screaming, shouting, yelling, etc. Those who do not conduct themselves in an appropriate manner **will be escorted from the building and not allowed to return.**

A graduation dress code for seniors has been established by a committee consisting of students, parents, teachers, and administration. Tennis shoes/sneakers are not allowed. Administrators will determine what type (if any) decoration of graduation caps is permissible.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Students who receive special education services may graduate via any of the standard graduation tracks if they are capable of completing the graduation requirements and passing the required state tests. In case a special education student's disability is so severe as to limit him/her from meeting the requirements of standard graduation, there are two other graduation options specifically designed for him/her. They are as follows:

1. Certificate track
2. Alternate Diploma Option (for SCD Students ONLY)

It is important to note that the certificate and alternative diploma options will allow a student to participate in a graduation ceremony but will not allow a student to enter college. For more information regarding the certificate and alternative diploma option, please contact the Director of Special Education.

HEALTH POLICIES

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Every student is expected to be personally clean, to practice good hygiene, and to be well groomed. A student may be suspended for failure to abide by the health and hygiene standards if confirmed by the teacher, principal, or school nurse.

A STUDENT SHOULD STAY AT HOME IF ...

1. He/She has not been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
2. He/She has experienced vomiting and/or diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
3. He/She has an unexplained rash.
4. He/She has an active case of pinkeye (redness and drainage from the eye).
5. He/She has head lice and/or nits.
6. He/She has chickenpox.

Students who have had mononucleosis or pinkeye, must provide proof of treatment from a medical professional before they will be allowed to return to school. Also, just because district policy or a staff member directs your child to stay home because of illness, does not mean the absence is automatically excused. ALL students who are absent must bring an excuse when they return to school.

MEDICATION

The Benton County School District permits the self-administration of **asthma medications** by a student if the student's parent / guardian complies with the following:

1. Provides written authorization for self-administration to the school; and
2. Provides a written statement from the student's health care practitioner that the student has asthma and has been instructed in self-administration of asthma medications. The statement shall also contain the following information:
 - a. The name and purpose of the medications;
 - b. The prescribed dosage;
 - c. The time or times the medications are to be regularly administered and under what additional special circumstances the medications are to be administered; and the length of time for which the medications are prescribed.
3. Over the Counter Medications – Students should not bring OTC medication to school and keep it on their persons. Students should also not share any sort of OTC medication with other students as OTC medications can cause serious adverse reactions. For example, Tylenol can cause difficulty breathing and swelling of the face, lips, tongue, or throat in some people.

The written statements shall be kept on file in the office of the school nurse or school administrator.

The Benton County School District and its employees and agents shall incur no liability as a result of any injury sustained by the student from the self-administration of asthma medications. The parent or guardian of the student shall sign a statement acknowledging that the school shall incur no liability, and the parent or guardian shall indemnify and hold harmless the school and its employees against any claims relating to the self-administration of asthma medications. The permission for self-administration of medications shall be effective for the school year in which it is granted and shall be renewed each following school year upon fulfilling these requirements. REF: MS Code § 41-79-31

In the event a student needs to take medication other than asthma medications at school, the parent must send the medication in the original labeled bottle from the pharmacy. Medication brought to the school in an inappropriately labeled or an unlabeled container will not be dispensed to the student. **It is understood that school personnel do not have medical training, and school personnel shall not administer the medication if there are any questions concerning the dosage, time administered, etc.**

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The Benton County School Board has the power, authority, and responsibility to exclude from the schools any student(s) with what appears to be infectious or contagious diseases provided such student may be allowed to return to school upon presenting documentation from a public health official, licensed physician, or nurse practitioner that the student(s) is free from such disease. The following is the policy of the Benton County School District for educating students known to have chronic infectious diseases such as but not limited to Hepatitis B, Herpes Simplex, AIDS/ARC, or Cytomegalovirus:

1. The student shall be removed from the classroom temporarily, and the district's medical advisor, in consultation with the student's physician, determines whether the student's presence in the school poses a risk of transmission of the disease to others.
2. Should it be determined the student's attendance poses no threat, the student shall be allowed to resume school attendance subject to whatever restrictions or limitations the district's medical advisor should recommend. The student's school attendance shall be reviewed by the district's medical advisor, in consultation with the student's physician at least once a month to determine if continued attendance poses any risk of disease transmission.
3. Should it be determined by the district's medical advisor that attendance poses a risk of transmission of the disease to others, an appropriate alternative educational setting shall be established for that student. This alternate setting shall continue until the district's medical advisor determines the risk of transmission to others has abated and normal school attendance may resume.
4. The decision of the district's medical advisor shall be considered final.

HEAD LICE

Throughout the year, especially in the lower grades, school personnel may examine students for lice and/or nits. If evidence of lice/nits is seen, the child will be removed from class and the parent/guardian of the child will be contacted to take the child home or to a medical professional for treatment. The child may return to school when he/she is free of lice and nits and the parent provides proof of treatment.

Several effective treatments are available for lice infestation. Kwell shampoo and Nix rinse both require a prescription. The pyrethrin/pyrinate products such as RID, A-200, and R&C are available over the counter at pharmacies.

An initial treatment will kill adult and larval lice but will not kill all the eggs. Eggs and nits must be removed by hand, and a second treatment seven to ten days later should kill the lice that have hatched from any nits left behind. If the second treatment is not completed, any nits left in the hair after the first treatment will become mature lice and the infestation will continue.

Bed linens, backpacks, coats, stuffed animals, carpet, clothing, furniture, etc. that the infested child has come in contact with will also need to be treated with louse-killing spray or washed in very hot water. Also, placing items in an airtight bag or container for ten days or more will kill lice on the items. Household members of a child with head lice should also be examined and treated.

Upon the third incidence of head lice infestation within a school year, the principal or his/her designee shall notify the county health department of the recurring problem.

MISSISSIPPI HEALTHY STUDENTS ACT

The Mississippi Legislature passed the Healthy Students Act in recognition that there is a problem with student inactivity and obesity in Mississippi. The following guidelines for school district physical education, health education and physical activity and fitness classes will be implemented as part of this act.

1. Kindergarten through Grade 8 – one hundred fifty (150) minutes per week of physical activity-based instruction and forty-five (45) minutes per week of health education instruction, as defined by the State Board of Education
2. Grades 9 through 12 – ½ Carnegie unit requirement in physical education and a minimum of ½ Carnegie unit requirement in health for graduation. All instruction in physical education, health education and physical activity must be based on the most current state standards provided by the State Department of Education.

Beginning with the 2015-2016 Ninth Grade class, an instructional component on the proper administration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) will be included as part of the physical education or health education curriculum. The curricula shall incorporate into the instruction the psychomotor skills necessary to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation and use of an automated external defibrillator.

All students will receive an unstructured period of physical activity every day. This activity period will be in the form of a recess period for elementary students and a break period for secondary students. This activity period will take place outdoors if weather permits.

REF: MS Code § 37-13-134

FIRST AID

At the beginning of the school year, each student will be given an Emergency Procedures Card for his/her parent/guardian to complete. These cards are very important as they let school staff members know what procedures you wish to be followed in the event of illness or injury to the student. Please fill out the card carefully and neatly. Please insure the phone numbers listed are correct.

Students who receive minor injuries such as cuts or bruises will be treated at school. In case of serious accidents or those that involve head injuries, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian; however, if you cannot be reached, the

principal or his/her designee will use his/her discretion regarding the best interests of the child. This may include calling 911 and requesting first responders and/or ambulance services at the school.

No student who is ill or injured will be sent home alone. A student who is ill or injured will not be taken home unless it is known there is someone there to supervise the ill or injured student.

HOMEWORK

Teachers give homework to students to aid in their academic development and to instill responsibility. Parents are encouraged to help their children with homework assignments as needed but allow them to take as much responsibility as possible. This will help your child learn responsibility and be accountable for his/her own actions. **Never** complete your child's homework assignments for them.

The total amount of homework assigned should depend on the grade level of the student. The amount of homework normally increases as a child moves up in grade level. Parent/guardians should contact the teacher if there is an issue with homework.

LIBRARY / MEDIA CENTER

Books may be checked out for two weeks. Overdue books carry a penalty for each day the book is late. If a book is lost or damaged while in a student's possession, the student and/or parent/guardian are responsible for financially compensating the library for the loss or damage. The cost of replacing or repairing the book shall be determined by the school's librarian. The condition of the book when checked out will be considered in computing the fine. If a student does not pay the required fine for loss or damage by the end of the school year, the student's final report card will be held, and the student will lose the privilege of checking out library books.

Basic rules for the library are as follows:

1. Take care of all materials. They belong to all students and teachers.
2. Return all materials to their proper places.
3. The library is for learning, studying, and reading. It is not a place for socializing.
4. Check out all materials before leaving the library with them.
5. Reference materials cannot be checked out and should be used only in the library.

MAKE-UP WORK

It is the student's responsibility to ask his/her teacher for any make-up work missed due to absence from school. The best time to request make-up work is before or after class. **Requesting make-up work during a class period while instruction is on-going is not acceptable.** It is the teacher's responsibility to provide the requested make-up work upon the student's request. It is also the responsibility of the teacher to grade and record the make-up in a timely manner. Any pre-announced work or tests missed due to absence will be made up on the day the student returns to school.

Any work not made up according to the Benton County District's make-up work policy will receive a grade of zero.

For **excused absences**, 100% of the grade earned will be given as credit for make-up work provided that work is completed and submitted within the time allowed by the "one school day plus" rule. For example, if a student missed school on Wednesday, then all work will be due Friday before the end of the school day (one day absent + one school day). If a student misses Wednesday and Thursday, then all make-up work will be due the following Tuesday before the end of the school day (two days absent + one school day).

Unexcused absences can be made up at 65% credit.

MESSAGES

If a parent/guardian needs to contact his/her child during the school day, he/she may do so by leaving a message in the office. If the message concerns some sort of family emergency, the office staff will make every effort to deliver the message without delay; however, it is not possible to hand deliver every message that comes into a school without interrupting classes and interfering with the learning environment. For this reason, students should ask parents, friends, employers, etc. to leave non-emergency messages at their homes – not at school.

MISSISSIPPI VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

The Mississippi Virtual Public School (MVPS) is a web-based educational service offered by the Mississippi Department of Education to provide Mississippi students and educators with a wider access to a wider range of course work with more flexibility in scheduling and with the opportunity to develop their capacities as independent learners.

In order to be successful in an online class, students need certain characteristics such as keyboarding skills, good written communication skills, experience using email and the internet, self-motivation, and the ability to stay on track and meet deadlines. Falling behind in an online course makes it extremely difficult to successfully complete the course.

The Benton County School District has set the following district-specific guidelines for MVPS:

1. The student must receive permission from the principal to take an MVPS course. The student will be screened by the guidance counselor before being allowed to register for a course.
2. A student may earn a maximum of two Carnegie units toward graduation through the completion of an approved MVPS course. The only exception is Advanced Placement (AP) courses. A student may earn Carnegie units in an unlimited number of AP courses.

3. Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and US History may not be taken through MVPS unless the student has previously passed the subject area test for the class for which he/she is attempting register.
4. Classes specifically listed as graduation requirements on pages 34-36 of this handbook may not be taken through MVPS unless the student has taken and failed the class previously. If there is an educationally sound reason which would make it necessary for a student to take a required class he/she has not failed, the parent/guardian must request in writing a waiver from the guidance counselor.
5. Students may only enroll in one MVPS class at a time.
6. Students must request to take an MVPS class no later than one week prior to the registration deadline.
7. Summer school sessions must be completed by the August 1st before the regular school session begins.
8. Priority for MVPS enrollment will be given to seniors first and juniors second.
9. Students who enroll but fail to complete the course will be charged for the course.

For further information regarding MVPS, contact your school counselor or visit <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/mississippi-school/home.aspx>.

LITERACY-BASED PROMOTION ACT

There is established an act prohibiting social promotion to be known as the "Literacy-Based Promotion Act," the purpose of which is to improve the reading skills of Kindergarten and First through Third Grade students enrolled in the public schools so that every student completing the Third Grade is able to read at or above grade level. A kindergartener, first grader, second grader, or third grader identified with a deficiency in reading must be provided intensive interventions in reading to ameliorate the student's specific reading deficiency, as identified by a valid and reliable diagnostic assessment. The intensive intervention must include effective instructional strategies, and appropriate teaching methodologies necessary to assist the student in becoming a successful reader, able to read at or above grade level, and ready for promotion to the next grade. A Kindergarten, First, Second or Third Grade student identified with a reading deficiency or not promoted may be placed in a transition class.

REF: MS Code § 37-177-1

PARENT CONFERENCES

A parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child enrolled in a public school district may be requested to appear at school by the school attendance officer or an appropriate school official for a conference regarding acts of the child (specified as his or her minor child's destructive acts against school property or persons) or for any other discipline conference regarding the acts of the child.

Any parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child who fails to attend a discipline conference to which such parent, guardian, or custodian has been summoned under the provisions of this section or refuses or willfully fails to perform any other duties imposed upon him or her under the provisions of this section, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not to exceed Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$ 250.00).

REF: MS Code § 37-11-53.

PARTIES AND PARTY INVITATIONS

When parents/guardians send party invitations to be passed out at school or when students invite others to a party while at school, this causes hurt feelings for those not invited and causes a disruption to the educational process; therefore, this will not be allowed. Parents are to use the telephone, mail, internet, or other such method for this purpose.

School party plans are under the control of the local school administrators. Details will be established during the school year for various grades, and parents will be notified in the event of a classroom party. Birthday parties for students are not permitted at school, and only pre-packaged food will be allowed to be served by parents.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Weapons Possession – A parent may be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined up to \$1000.00 and up to six months in the county jail for knowingly allowing a child (under 18) to have, own, or carry a concealed weapon.

REF: MS Code §97-37-15

2. General Responsibility for Child's Act – A parent, guardian, or custodian of a compulsory school-aged student enrolled in a public school district shall be responsible for any criminal fines brought against such student for unlawful activity occurring on school grounds (fine not to exceed \$3,500.00)

REF: MS Code § 37-11-53

3. Damages – Any public school district shall be entitled to recover damages in an amount not to exceed \$ 20,000.00, plus necessary court costs, from the parents of any minor under the age of eighteen (18) years and over the age of six (6) years, who maliciously and willfully damages or destroys property belonging to such school district. The action authorized in this section shall be in addition to all other actions which the school district is entitled to maintain and nothing in this section shall preclude recovery in a greater amount from the minor or from a person, including the parents, for damages to which such minor or other person would otherwise be liable.

REF: MS Code § 37-11-53

4. Attendance at Discipline Conference – Any parent, guardian or custodian of a compulsory-school-age child who (a) fails to attend a discipline conference to which such parent, guardian or custodian has been summoned under the provisions of this section, or (b) refuses or willfully fails to perform any other duties imposed upon him or her under the provisions of this section, shall first be given the opportunity to enroll in a series of parenting classes consisting of not less than twenty (20) hours of instruction as developed by the M.P.A.C. Program Coordinator and appropriate to the age of the parent's

child. If the parent does not attend the series of classes, he shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be fined not to exceed Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00).

REF: MS Code § 37-11-53

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All teachers are required to have all pupils repeat the oath of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America at the beginning of the first hour of class each day school is in session, such oath of allegiance being as follows: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Any student or teacher who objects to reciting the oath of allegiance shall be excused from participating without penalty.

REF: MS Code § 37-13-6

PROMOTION POLICY

Grades K-3 – Students must have a minimum score of 70 in Reading/Language Arts and Math for promotion. Students who do not meet this requirement may be recommended for promotion if their standardized assessments indicate grade level performance. Teachers must submit supportive documentation to the building administrator for approval.

Grades 4-8 – Students who fail reading **OR** math or fail two major subjects will be retained. **If reading is not taught in junior high, English takes its place and must be passed for promotion.** Major subjects are reading, math, English, science, and social studies.

Ninth Grade – must have been promoted from the eighth grade

Tenth Grade – must have earned six credits

Eleventh Grade – must have earned twelve credits

Twelfth Grade – must have earned eighteen credits

A student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the established state assessment for 3rd grade will not be promoted to 4th grade unless the student meets the good cause exemptions for promotion. (See “Literacy Based Promotion Act”)

RESTRAINT POLICY

Except in the case of excessive force or cruel and unusual punishment, a public school teacher, assistant teacher, principal, or an assistant principal acting within the course and scope of his employment shall not be liable for any action carried out in conformity with state or federal law or rules or regulations of the State Board of Education or the local school board or governing board of a charter school regarding the control, discipline, suspension, and expulsion of students.

REF: MS Code § 37-11-57

In accordance with the above referenced legislation, it is recognized that instructional and other staff may be called upon to intercede in situations wherein students may be displaying physically violent or non-compliant behavior. The Benton County School District prohibits the use of excessive force or cruel and unusual punishment regarding student management, but staff may use restraint techniques to control and restrain a student when there is a reasonable belief that a serious situation exists like, but not limited to, one of the following listed circumstances:

1. The student is a danger to himself.
2. The student is a danger to others.
3. To prevent the destruction of property.
4. If the student refuses to move from one location to another after being so ordered or asked.

Any use of restraint will be preceded by the following verbal intervention:

1. Ask the student to comply.
2. Order the student to desist in the behavior.
3. Advise the student they will be restrained if behavior does not cease.
4. Restrain the student.
5. Ask for assistance from other staff.

This continuum is not meant to prevent immediate restraint if so warranted. Under all circumstances, without exception, if possible the student is to be restrained at the location the behavior occurs. Restraint is to be applied only until the student is no longer a danger or is compliant. Under absolutely no circumstances will restraint be used as punishment.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Students in the Benton County School District are protected from sexual discrimination, including sexual harassment by Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 to the Civil Rights Act. It is the intent of the Benton County School Board to maintain an environment free from sexual harassment of any kind; therefore, repeated unwelcomed sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature amounting to or constituting harassment are prohibited

In the event a student, parent/guardian, or a member of school personnel becomes aware of a violation of this policy, this complaint must be made within five working days from the time the complaint becomes known and a “Title IX Report Form” must be completed and submitted. This report must state the respondent’s name, the nature and date of the alleged violation, the names of any witnesses to such alleged violations, and action request. Forms are available at the local schools and from Lakimberly Hobson, Title IX Coordinator.

SIGNS

A sign or poster may not be posted in any building or on the campus without permission from the building's administrator. The individual responsible for posting the sign must remove the sign within twenty-four hours after the event is complete.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides a legal basis for administration of special education. Federal, state, and local policies have been developed that reflect the intent of this law. All disabilities recognized by the State of Mississippi are eligible for services under this law. Any students who may be eligible for services under this law should be referred to the Director of Special Education.

The Benton County School District is committed to providing all students with disabilities a free and appropriate education in their least restrictive environment in compliance with all statutory provisions. A primary objective of this commitment is to provide the most appropriate education for each student without infringing on other students' rights to a profitable learning environment. A continuum of placement options that extends from regular classroom placement with consultative services to homebound services embodies the district's commitment to appropriately serve students.

The Benton County School District may conduct the following observations/screenings/assessments without obtaining written parental permission when a student may need interventions and/or enrichment supplements.

1. Hearing and/or vision screening
2. Behavioral observations / checklists
3. Interventions
4. Functional behavioral checklists
5. Instructional interventions
6. Speech / Language screening

The purpose of these screenings / assessments is to determine a student's strengths as well as possible reasons for the child's lack of success in the regular program. If an individual or entity contracting with the district for the purpose of performing an observation / screening / assessment in order to make recommendations of possible changes in a child's IEP, or any outside individual or entity making an observation of a child which results in recommendations, shall submit a report of the observation to the district. The district shall notify the parent/guardian upon receipt of said report.

All first and fourth graders will be screened for hearing and vision problems each year in order to meet state mandates.

STUDENT FEES/SUPPLIES

The Benton County School Board authorizes schools to charge reasonable fees of not more than the actual cost of the following:

1. Supplemental instructional materials and supplies excluding textbooks but including workbooks
2. Other fees related to valid curriculum objectives, including transportation

If you are unable to pay these fees due to financial hardship, you may meet with the principal to complete the necessary paperwork to apply for a financial hardship waiver. Each school will communicate to parents concerning fees.

SUPPLIES

Supply lists for grade levels K-6 can be obtained at the local schools.

Because students in grades 7-12 have several teachers and several classes throughout the day, it is very difficult to devise a common supply list for those grade levels. For this reason, 7-12 students should not buy supplies beyond paper and pencils before meeting with each teacher the first day of school.

STUDENT PRAYER

It shall be lawful for any teacher or school administrator in any of the schools of the state which are supported, in whole or in part, by the public funds of the state, to permit the voluntary participation by students or others in prayer. Nothing contained in this section shall authorize any teacher or other school authority to prescribe the form or content of any prayer.

REF: MS Code § 37-13-4

STUDENT RECOGNITION

Star Student

The Star Student award will be awarded to the senior receiving the highest ACT score of 25 or better. If a senior does not meet the requirement, the school will not recognize a Star Student.

Valedictorian and Salutatorian

A student must complete the following courses in order to be eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian:

- English I, II, III, and IV
- Four science credits (Biology I, Biology II, Anatomy & Physiology, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science, Health Science, or Agriculture & Natural Resources.)
- Four math credits (Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Advanced Math Plus)
- All social studies classes required for graduation

Valedictorian will be the senior who has met the above criteria and has the highest overall numeric average, and Salutatorian will be the senior who has the next highest overall numeric average. Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be computed at the

end of the first semester, and will be based on overall numeric average calculated to four decimal places (ten-thousandths). In the case of a tie, the valedictorian or salutatorian honors will be shared. The overall numeric average will be computed based on final averages for any credit bearing course taken by the end of the first semester of the students senior year.

Students who are graduating early will not be considered for Valedictorian or Salutatorian honors. A student who graduates before the class he/she entered ninth grade with shall be considered an early graduate. Also, a student must attend the same school within the Benton County School District, grades 9-12, to be eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian.

Honor Graduates

To be recognized as an honor graduate at graduation, the senior must have an overall average of 90 or above with the exclusion of the following courses: physical education, athletics, band, and drivers' education.

Any senior with an overall average of 90-94 will be an honor graduate and receive a stole as a part of the graduation attire. Any senior with an overall average of 95 or above will be a special honor graduate and will receive a stole and academic pin as part of the graduation attire.

Honor Roll

Superintendent's List – average of 90 or better in each class for the nine weeks

Principal's List – average of 80 or better in each class for the nine weeks

Only students completing work at their assigned grade levels will be eligible for the honor roll.

Subject Area Awards

In grades 7-12, subject area awards are given to the student with the highest overall numeric average in a given class.

In grades K-6, subject area awards are given to the students with the highest average in a given class for each homeroom. Example: If there are five fourth grade homeroom classes; five math, science, history, etc. awards would be given in the fourth grade.

The highest average for all subject area awards will be compiled based on grades received for the class beginning with the first nine weeks' average and ending with the fourth nine weeks' average.

Attendance

Perfect attendance is defined as being present for each class 100% of the time that school is in session while the student is enrolled in the district. All absences including but not limited to excused, unexcused, partial day, full day, partial period, or full period count against a perfect attendance award. **The only absence that does not count against perfect attendance is an absence caused by school-sponsored activities.** Exemplary attendance is defined as having no unexcused absences and no more than two unexcused tardies. Students who meet the criteria for Perfect Attendance or Exemplary Attendance will receive a certificate at the end-of-year awards presentation.

STUDENT SEARCHES

Desks and lockers are school property and remain at all times under the control of the Benton County School District. Students are responsible for any items contained in desks and lockers issued to them by the school district and its employees. School authorities may conduct periodic general inspections of said items at any time for any reason related to school administration. Inspection of individual lockers may occur when there is reasonable suspicion a state or federal law or district policy has been broken.

The Benton County School District retains authority to inspect student automobiles. When a school authority has reasonable suspicion that illegal or unauthorized materials are contained inside a student vehicle, the student shall be required to open the automobile for further inspection.

A student's person and or personal effects may be searched whenever a school authority has reasonable suspicion the student is in possession of illegal or unauthorized materials. If a pat down search of a student's person is conducted, it will be performed in private by a school official of the same sex with another school official as a witness.

The Benton County School District reserves the right to have law enforcement agencies use drug-sniffing canines to carry out unannounced, random searches on school district property.

SUBJECT AREA TESTING

All regular education students must pass four statewide subject area tests as part of meeting the graduation requirements set forth by the State of Mississippi. The tests are given at the end of Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and US History. **Students who do not pass these tests or meet alternate, state-approved requirements will not graduate and will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.**

If a student fails Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and/or US History with a 60 average or better but passes the statewide assessment in that subject, the student will receive credit for the course and have his/her grade in that subject adjusted to a 65 – the lowest possible passing grade according to district policy.

SUMMER SCHOOL / CREDIT RECOVERY

If offered, students in grades nine through twelve may attend Benton County School District's **Credit Recovery Program** for the purpose of earning credit toward graduation through the Edmentum online program. Students are limited to earning one Carnegie unit during the extended school session. The final average for any course taken must be 55 or above, and the student

must have failed the course during a previous school year. Algebra I, Biology I, English II, or U.S. History may not be taken through extended school year unless the student has previously passed the subject area test for the course. The tuition will be \$100 for each course taken and is non-refundable.

High school students may attend **Summer School** at an accredited Mississippi high school for the purpose of earning credit toward graduation. Algebra I, Biology I, English II, or U.S. History **may not** be taken through summer school unless the student has previously passed the subject area test for the course. **No more than two credits required for graduation may be earned in summer school.** Any student who desires to take a class through summer school must have written permission from the high school principal.

TELEPHONE

Students should use the school telephone only when absolutely necessary and only after the principal or his/her designee grants permission. A note from the student's teacher is required before the telephone may be used.

TEXTBOOKS/CHROMEBOOKS

Textbooks/chromebooks are issued at the beginning of the school year when appropriate for the course. Students are urged not to abuse or misuse textbooks/chromebooks as fines will be assessed on books showing damage. Parents are required to sign a book card which verifies that they have assumed responsibility for issued textbooks. If a book is lost or damaged beyond use, the following schedule will be used to assess the cost of replacement:

0-1 years old, full replacement value

2 years old, 80% of the cost of the textbook

3 years old, 60% of the cost of the textbook

4 years old, 40% of the cost of the textbook

over 4 years old, 20% of the cost of the textbook

Students will not be issued further textbooks if payment has not been received for lost or damaged books or if the book card has not been signed by the student's parent/guardian. Local schools will determine the assessments for damage to books.

WEATHER NOTIFICATION

In the event of bad weather or other occurrence which causes the schools to be closed, parents and students should watch for reports on local television stations regarding closings. In addition, recorded messages will be broadcast via telephone through our automated system. **If your number is not listed in our student database, you will not receive the automated alert.**

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

When it becomes necessary for a student to withdraw from the Benton County School District, the parent/guardian will report to the school's office and request a withdrawal form. The form will be completed and returned to the appropriate school personnel. The parent/guardian will be given a copy of the form. This form will be needed in order to enroll in the next school district. Official student records, such as the cumulative folder, will not be released to parents but will be mailed to the next school district after an official request is received by the Benton County School District from the district to which the student is transferring.



STUDENT INTERNET USE CONTRACT

Grades K – 12

(This is a legally binding document)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Current Grade Level: _____ Date: _____

STUDENT CONTRACT AGREEMENT

Carefully read the attached Benton County School District Acceptable Use Policy (IFBG). If you have any questions as to what will be expected of you when you are using the district's Internet access or school network or computer equipment, ask a teacher, your librarian or someone in the office to help you with anything you do not understand..

When you feel that you understand the rules, sign the contract below so that you will be able to access the school's network and utilize the available technology.

CONTRACT

I have read the Benton County School District Acceptable Use Policy (IFBG). I understand the rules that I am to follow while using the Internet at school.

I understand that if I break the rules, I will be punished based on the type of rule I break. If I break a rule, the punishment will be determined by Benton County administration or faculty. If I break a law, however, I understand that the courts and law enforcement officials who enforce the law that I break will determine the punishment I receive.

BCSD is also COPPA (Children's On-Line Privacy Protection Act) and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) compliant.

Student's Name (please print): _____

Student's Signature: _____

INTERNET USE PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE FORM

Grades K - 12

(This is a legally binding document)

Student's Full Name (Please Print): _____ Current Grade Level: _____ Date: _____

As the parent or guardian of this student I have read the Acceptable Use Policy of the Benton County School District (IFBG) and understand the rules and regulations that my child is to follow while using the Internet and/or school network while at school. I understand that the school's Internet access is available for educational purposes only and have discussed the proper use of the Internet at school with my child.

I understand that if my child breaks the rules, he/she will be punished based on the type of rule broken just as it is with any other school activity. If he/she breaks a rule made by the Benton County School District, the punishment will be determined by the building Principal or the Assistant Principal. If he/she breaks a law, however, I understand that the courts and law enforcement officials who enforce the broken law will determine the punishment received by my child.

I understand that the Benton County School District has taken available electronic precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible for the school district to restrict access to all controversial materials and will not hold them responsible for materials this student may acquire on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision of my child's Internet if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. Further, I accept responsibility for any/all expenses for any damages on the network caused by my child. I hereby certify that the information that I have entered onto this form is correct.

Initial One:

My child has my permission to use the Benton County School District's network to access the Internet _____

My child **DOES NOT** have my permission to use the Benton County School District's network to access the Internet and I **DO NOT** want Internet services or any other computer or computer service available to my child. I realize that this will make enrollment in certain classes impossible. _____

Parent or Guardian (please print): _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____



ALL SIGNED PAGES MUST BE TURNED IN TO YOUR BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR.

**OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND
NON-DISCLOSURE OF RELEASED INFORMATION**

I understand that the data maintained by the Mississippi Student Information Manager (MSIS) is sensitive and confidential. I acknowledge the access to and release of MSIS information is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and Section 37-15-1, *et seq.* of the Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated, as amended. I further acknowledge that this data may only be accessed and used for legitimate educational interests **and is sensitive, confidential, and not subject to disclosure.**

I agree that I shall not release MSIS data unless authorized to do so according to applicable laws, rules and regulations, neither shall I access nor use the information contained therein except for legitimate educational interests.

I acknowledge that I fully understand that the release by me of this information to any unauthorized person could subject me to disciplinary action including termination and/or criminal and civil penalties imposed by law.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

BENTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2020-2021 School Calendar

First Semester 2020	
August 3	Professional Development Day-Teacher Work Day #1
August 4	General Assembly (HFAC) & Teacher Work Day #2
August 5	Teacher Work Day #3
August 6	Students' 1 st Day
September 7	Labor Day Holiday
September 10	Progress Reports Sent Home
October 5-9	1 st Nine Weeks' Exams
October 12-13	Fall Break
October 13	Teacher Work Day #4 (No Students)
October 14	Students Return
October 15	Report Cards Sent Home
November 3	Election Day (No School)
November 12	Progress Reports Sent Home
November 23-27	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 14-18	2 nd Nine Weeks' Exams
December 18	60% Day
December 21 – January 1	Christmas Holidays
Second Semester 2021	
January 4	Teacher Work Day #5
January 5	Students Return
January 7	Report Cards Sent Home
January 18	MLK Jr Holiday
February 4	Progress Reports Sent Home
February 15	Presidents Day Holiday/Snow Day
March 1-5	3 rd Nine Weeks' Exams
March 8-12	Spring Break
March 18	Report Cards Sent Home
April 2	Good Friday Holiday
April 5	Good Monday Holiday/Snow Day
April 8	Progress Reports Sent Home
May 17-21	Final Exams
May 22	Ashland High School Graduation @ 10:00am Hickory Flat High School Graduation @ 2:00pm
May 25	60% Day –Last Day for Students
May 26	Teacher Work Day #6
May 27	Teacher Work Day #7 (Last Day for Teachers)

MONTH	TEACHER DAYS	STUDENT DAYS
August	21	18
September	21	21
October	21	20
November	15	15
December	14	14
January	19	18
February	19	19
March	18	18
April	20	20
May	19	17
Total	187	180