

Attendance Policy

Baldwin County Board of Education

The Baldwin County Board of Education believes that attendance is a key factor in student achievement. Thus, any absence from school represents an educational loss to the student. However, the Board recognizes that absence from school is sometimes necessary. Therefore, the Baldwin County Board of Education has developed an attendance policy that is designed to minimize student absenteeism while providing students the opportunity to make-up school work missed due to absences that can reasonably be considered unavoidable.

All persons between the ages of seven and sixteen years of age are required by state law to attend school for the minimum number of scholastic days prescribed by the State Board of Education. All laws regarding school attendance shall be strictly enforced by the Baldwin County Board of Education. All students must attend school or must be instructed privately unless the student holds a Certificate of Exemption. In accordance with state law, a student in the following categories may obtain a Certificate of Exemption by the Superintendent of the Baldwin County Board of Education.

- (1) A person whose physical or mental condition prevents attendance or makes attendance inadvisable. Such physical or mental incapacities must be certified by the county health officer or a licensed, practicing physician.
- (2) A person 16 years of age or older.
- (3) A person who has completed the course of study of the public schools of the State of Alabama.
- (4) A student who lives more than two miles from a public school where lack of transportation would require that the student walk to school.
- (5) A person who is legally and regularly employed under the provisions of child labor laws and who holds a permit to work under the terms of child labor laws.

Any student not holding a Certificate of Exemption shall be required to attend public school.

Permissible Reasons for Absences (Grades K-12)

The following are permissible reasons for excused absences:

- (a) Student illness
- (b) Inclement weather which makes it dangerous for students to attend school (as announced by the Superintendent)
- (c) Legal quarantine
- (d) Death in the immediate family
- (e) Emergency condition as determined by the principal or superintendent.
- (f) Absence to observe traditional religious holidays of a local, national, or international origin when verified by the student's minister or religious leader.

Absences in Elementary School and Middle School (Grades K-8)

Students in grades K-8 schools may not exceed nine (9) unexcused absences per year. If a student misses more than half of the school day, a full absence will be accumulated. A student and a student's parent or guardian shall be given written notice when a student's unexcused absences exceed four (4) days. The student could be retained if unexcused absences exceed nine (9) unexcused days per year. If the maximum number of unexcused absences is exceeded, the student and parent/guardian may petition the Attendance Committee for review of the reasons for the absences. Petition for review by the Attendance Committee may be filled-out at any time after notification, but in any event, no later than 30 calendar days after the final day of the semester. The Attendance Committee shall review the student's entire attendance record and documented excuses to determine whether to allow the student to pass.

NOTE- The Early Warning Program will remain in effect.

High School (Grades 9-12)

All Alabama public schools are governed by the Alabama State Department of Education Administrative Code 290-3-1-.02(9)(a) which states the following:

(9) Time Allotment and Credit Requirements for Secondary Schools

(a) Any subject passed in Grades 9-12 that meets for a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction shall count as one (1) credit toward graduation, either required or elective. All subjects taught are considered major subjects. The Alabama State Department of Education does not recognize major and minor subjects in Grades K-12.

In the block schedule program (grades 9-12), a student may not exceed five (5) unexcused absences per class per term. If a student misses more than half of a class period, a full absence will be accumulated. A student and a student's parent or guardian shall be given written notice when a student's unexcused absences exceed two (2) days in any class. The student could lose credit for any class in which the unexcused absences exceed five (5) per class. If the student exceeds five (5) unexcused absences per class, the student and parent/guardian may petition the Attendance Committee for review of the reasons for the absences, and/or make-up two (2) of the absences by attending Academic Saturday School. Petition for review by the Attendance Committee may be filled-out at any time after notification, but in any event, no later than 30 calendar days after the final day of the term. The Attendance Committee shall review the student's entire attendance record and documented excuses to determine whether to award credit.

NOTE- The Early Warning Program will remain in effect.

Policy to Reclaim High School Credit

Students who fail a course are strongly encouraged to make-up the course in night school, summer school, or through a correspondence course.

Policy for Make-Up Work

Upon return to school from excused absence(s), students have up to three days to complete and turn-in make-up work to teachers.

Academic Saturday School (Grades 9-12)

There will be four Academic Saturday School dates set aside per term per school year. Students whose unexcused absences exceed four days per term may be allowed to make-up two (2) unexcused absences per term by attending Academic Saturday School. Students who make-up absences due to suspension will be allowed to make-up absences from excused suspensions only. Students who choose to make-up absences in Academic Saturday School must sign-up for Academic Saturday School via the school Principal or his/her designee.

Written Explanation for All Absences (Grades K-12)

Every parent, guardian, or other person having control or charge of any child required to attend public school, private school, or church school, shall as soon as practical explain the cause of any absence of the child under his control or charge which was without permission of the teacher. (Alabama Code (1975) § 16-28-15)

Failure to furnish such explanation shall be admissible as evidence of such child being a truant with the consent and connivance of the person in control or charge of the child, unless such person can show to the reasonable satisfaction of the court that he had no knowledge of such absence and that he had been diligent in his efforts to secure the attendance of such child. (Alabama Code (1975) § 16-28-15)

A written note from parents or guardians will excuse absences for up to but not exceeding nine (9) absences in grades K-8 and four (4) absences in grades 9-12. Future absences for illness will require a doctor's note in order to be excused.

Transfer Students and Attendance Requirements

Students who transfer into Baldwin County Public Schools must have documented proof of enrollment, attendance, and coursework in another school system before enrollment in local schools. High school student (grades 9-12) who do not submit proof of enrollment in another school system and who enroll after the first five (5) days of a term may not be awarded Carnegie units for coursework. Elementary and middle school students (grades K-8) who do not submit proof of enrollment in another school system and enroll after the first ten (10) days of the school year may be retained. Absences incurred in the student's previous school will not apply to the student's attendance record in Baldwin County.

ROLE OF ATTENDANCE COMMITTEE

The Attendance Committee will have the opportunity to review petitions by students and parents/guardians to determine whether excessive absences are justified. Any absence not falling into the categories listed under *Permissible Reasons for Absence* may be subject to review by the Attendance Committee. Students and parents/guardians may petition the Attendance Committee to review the reasons for absences. The Principal or his or designee shall inform the student and parents/guardians by written notice of the decision of the Attendance Committee. Decisions made by the Attendance Committee at the local school may be appealed to the Superintendent's Attendance Committee. The Superintendent's Attendance Committee meets once per term.

At the local school level, the Attendance Committee will be composed of the Principal (his/her designee) and a counselor. The Superintendent's Attendance Committee will be composed of the Assistant Superintendent assigned to the local school and a representative from the Baldwin County Board of Education Attendance Office. All decisions made by the Superintendent's Attendance Committee are final.

APPEAL PROCESS

CAMPUS LEVEL: Students and parents/guardians may appeal to the Attendance Committee to review both written excuses and oral explanations for excessive absences. Student or parents/guardians will use the appeal form available in the counselors office. The Attendance Committee will review all written/oral appeals within three weeks before the end of the term. If needed, the Attendance Committee may interview the student prior to making a decision regarding awarding of Carnegie units or promotion/retention.

DISTRICT LEVEL Student and parents/guardians may appeal the decision made by the local school Attendance Committee. A written appeal must be submitted to the Superintendent's Attendance Committee within three days of receipt of the local school's Attendance Committee decision. The Superintendent's Attendance Committee will review all written excuses and oral explanations for excessive absences. If needed, the Superintendent's Attendance Committee may interview the student prior to making a decision regarding awarding of Carnegie units or promotion/retention. All decisions made by the Superintendent's Attendance Committee are final.