

Benton Elementary School

Handbook 2025-2026

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NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the Polk County School System not to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or disability in the educational programs, activities, or Educational Amendments, and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Section 504 may be directed to the Special Education Supervisor of the Polk County School District. BES's 504 point of contact is Dr. Keisha Hamby, Principal. Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX or Title VI for students may be directed to the Supervisor of Alternate Programs, and compliance inquiries for employees may be directed to the Director of Instruction. The Polk County Department of Education can be contacted at 131 Stephens Street, Benton, TN 37307, or 423-299-0471.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Benton Elementary School is for all students to be proficient and beyond in reading and math, according to the Tennessee Standards. Students will be prepared to make a contribution to society with a solid educational foundation, a strong sense of self-worth, and a lifelong quest for learning.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Benton Elementary School is that all students are empowered to face the choices, challenges, and cultural diversity of the 21st Century. Parents, community, faculty, and staff will work collaboratively in the pursuit of excellence for our school.

MEDICATION POLICY

If under exceptional circumstances, a student is required to take non-prescription or prescription medication during school hours and the parent/guardian cannot be at school to administer the medication, only the nurse will assist in self-administration of the medication if the student is competent to self-administer medicine with assistance in compliance with the following regulations. The office will not administer medication without the proper form on file.

- All medicine must be in the original bottle/container (envelopes or baggies will not be accepted) with necessary information as listed on the prescription medication form or nonprescription medication and delivered to the nurse or principal's office by the parent or guardian of the student.
- For students who must carry their medication with them at all times, such as EPI-PENS, inhalers, pumps, etc., the proper Prescription/Non-Prescription Medication Retained by the Student Form must be completed and turned into the nurse/principal's office.
- The parent/guardian is responsible for informing the designated official of any change in the student's health or change in medication.
- When a child has a temperature of 100 or greater orally (by mouth), he/she should be sent home.
- If a student is involved in a field trip, the medication will be prepared by the nurse for appropriate school personnel, and a copy of the Medication Form will accompany the student.
- The parent or guardian is responsible for picking up any unused prescription.
- All medications and Medication Forms must be renewed annually.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

The school building will not be open until 7:05 a.m. each morning. All students arriving at school before 7:50 a.m. must report either to the cafeteria for breakfast or the auditorium. If a student arrives after 7:50 a.m., he/she must report to the office to sign in and obtain an admit to class slip. School dismissal begins at 2:45. Car riders will be dismissed after the buses leave. **NOTICE: If your child has a change in transportation plans, he/she must bring a note from home stating the change in plans. Please make arrangements in the morning before your child leaves home. If you must make transportation changes during the school day, call the front office.**

BULLETINS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notices of upcoming school events are posted on the sign in front of the school. You will also see information posted on our school's Facebook page (Benton Elementary School). Teachers also use Remind and send notes home.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles that have been found should be taken to the designated lost and found area. You may claim lost articles by proper identification. It is a good idea to clearly mark all your personal items with your name, so they can be returned without delay. All items not claimed at the end of the year will be donated to charity.

TELEPHONE

The telephones in the office are for school business only. Students will not be called to the office to receive a telephone call. Students will not be allowed to make a phone call unless it is an emergency.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOOKS

Textbooks and library books issued to the student are the property of the Polk County Board of Education. Parents will be responsible for books that are lost, stolen, or damaged. Failure to pay for such books may result in a court citation.

DRESS CODE POLICY

- Clothing should be appropriate both to age and to the weather.
- You must wear or bring tennis shoes on days you have P.E.
- No halter tops, spaghetti straps, midriff tops, or bathing suits.
- Personal appearance must not be distracting to the classroom environment.
- All shorts must be no shorter than 3 inches above the knee and fit at the waist.
- The American flag must not be worn in an unpatriotic manner.
- No article of clothing may be worn that implies or otherwise mentions alcohol, sex, tobacco, drugs, or offensive language.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- Hats and caps are not to be worn inside the school building.
- No shoes with wheels.

Students who wear inappropriate clothing will be asked to change into something more suitable, may be called upon to have their parents bring alternative clothing, or may be sent home for the day.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

Your child must have an adequate certificate of immunizations on file in the school office. All out-of-state transfer students and students who transfer from a non-public school **MUST** be cleared through the Polk County Health Department before they will be allowed to enroll.

ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS AND DIRECTORY INFORMATION

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents and eligible students (those 18 years or older) have the right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of a written request.
- Request the amendment of education records that they believe are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
- Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-8520

Directory Information

FERPA allows schools to disclose certain "directory information" without written consent unless parents or eligible students request otherwise in writing. Directory information includes, but is not limited to: the student's name, address, telephone listing, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of athletic team members, dates of attendance, awards received, and previous schools attended.

To opt out of directory information sharing, a written request must be submitted to the school principal within 10 days of receiving this handbook.

For more information, please contact your school principal.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of severe inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, the school may be closed, starting time delayed, or dismissed early. Announcements about school closings will be made on the following stations: Chattanooga Channels 3, 9, 12, and Fox 61, and radio station US 101 FM. Polk County Schools will also send out a phone call through School Reach and post on our Facebook page. If inclement weather occurs during the school day, please be aware that the school may dismiss early. We will make every effort to notify parents of car riders, but you and your child should have an emergency plan in case we are unable to contact you. **You must keep your emergency information in the school office up-to-date.**

DISMISSAL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

For your child's protection, a student will not be permitted to leave school before the regular dismissal time unless the parent comes to the school for the student and clears the dismissal with the office. The parent must come to the office window, show a photo ID, sign the student out with destination, time of departure, and the person's signature who is picking up the child, and then wait for the student to be called to the office.

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome at Benton Elementary School. However, for the safety of your child, all visitors **MUST** check in at the office and get a visitor's pass. Parents and other citizens must enter by the front doors only and must obtain permission from the administration before entering the classroom. All visitors are expected to leave promptly when their business is completed. Parents who walk their children to school and walk them into the building should leave promptly so that the classroom routine is not disturbed. If you need to talk to your child's teacher, you may send a note or schedule a conference for a time convenient for all.

WITHDRAWALS

If you are withdrawing your child from BES, you must come in and fill out a withdrawal form in the office. All textbooks and library books must be returned, and all school debts must be cleared before the student secures a transfer record to another school.

CAFETERIA

A nutritious breakfast and lunch are served daily; therefore, all students are encouraged to participate in our food services program. All students will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge. Students in grades 2-5 may bring money to buy ice cream or extra food items from the salad bar at lunch. Those items purchased from the salad bar cannot be charged. We want students to enjoy their lunchtime, and talking in the cafeteria is permitted. However, yelling, visiting other tables, and improper table manners are unacceptable. Students who eat breakfast at school must report directly to the cafeteria upon arrival at school.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in your child's success at school. It is difficult to make up work missed when you are absent, and there is no substitute for participation in the daily classroom activities. Regular attendance is required by state law. Polk County Schools allow three (3) parent notes per semester to be used as excused absences. After these three (3) parent notes are used, a child must have a doctor's note to have an excused absence. At three (3) unexcused absences, a student and his/her parents enter into truancy.

- Tier I- 3rd unexcused absence- call/letter from the principal
- Tier II- 4th unexcused absence- scheduled meeting with the principal
- Tier III-5th unexcused absence- campus court
- After Tier III- court citation

When your child returns to school after an absence, he/she should have a note explaining the absence.

MAKE-UP WORK

It is the student's responsibility to make up all assignments missed while absent. Your child's teacher will notify you of his/her policy for making up missed assignments.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

Students who become ill at school must report to their teacher, who may then refer the child to the school nurse when available. Parents will be contacted, so the school must have a current telephone number where the parent/guardian may be reached. **Students must be symptom-free (no fever, no vomiting, etc.) for 24 hours before returning to school.**

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency drills are held at regular intervals during the school year. Your teacher will instruct you on the drill procedure.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Report cards are issued after each nine-week grading period ends. Please sign and return your child's report card after it has been issued. Progress reports are issued after each 4 ½ week grading period during the nine weeks.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled after the first and third nine-week grading periods. Your child's teacher will be happy to arrange a conference with you at any time if you so request.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is required by the State Department of Education as a part of your child's educational program. Students will not be excused from P.E. except by a doctor's note. If your child has a medical condition that the P.E. teacher should be aware of, please be sure to notify them in writing of the problem. **NOTICE: Students must wear tennis shoes and appropriate clothing for P.E.**

DISCIPLINE

To guarantee a positive school climate, students need to understand that high standards of behavior will be insisted upon at all times. Discipline will be administered fairly, but firmly, when any individual's action interferes with the right of teachers to teach and students to learn. You will be notified of your classroom teacher's discipline plan. Students are reminded that any teacher or staff member has the right to correct unruly behavior at any time. Misbehavior may be punished by the following measures: verbal reprimand, restricting activities, behavior modification, loss of privileges, corporal punishment, or suspension from school. **Possession of weapons or controlled substances (drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products) will result in the enforcement of the School Board's zero-tolerance policy.**

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY
Personal Communication Devices (Cell Phones)

Students may possess personal communication devices (PCDs) while on school property. However, the PCD must be in the OFF mode and must be kept in a backpack, purse, or similar personal carry-all and may not be used unless the principal or the principal's designee may specifically grant permission for a student to use a PCD during class time for a specific academic purpose or at other times for other purposes that the principal deems appropriate.

Violation of Personal Communication Devices

- 1st Offense: On the 1st offense of this policy, the student can pick up at the end of the day.
- 2nd Offense: On the 2nd offense, the parent or their designee may pick up the PCD the next day after the communication with the principal or the principal's designee, agreeing upon who will be able to pick up the PCD. If the PCD is unable to be picked up by the parent or the designee, the school will continue to keep the PC for up to 5 working days. At this time, the PCD can be turned over to the student.
- 3rd Offense: On the 3rd offense, the PCD will be held for 5 calendar days by the school. After 5 calendar days, the PCD can be given back to the student.

Further offenses of this policy for PCD will result in repeating the rules for the 3rd offense.

RULES FOR THE SCHOOL BUS RIDERS

AT THE BUS STOP:

- Be at the bus stop before the bus comes.
- Walk to the bus stop.
- Stay away from the road and wait in a safe place.
- If you must cross the street, wait for the bus to arrive and cross when the driver gives you a signal.
- Line up properly when you get on the bus. Sit down in the first available seat unless you have an assigned seat.

ON THE BUS:

- Students should not be destructive. Do not damage seats or any part of the bus.
- Respect the rights, safety, and property of other persons.
- Keep hands, arms, feet, and head inside the bus at all times.
- Do not throw anything inside the bus or out the window.
- Do not change seats unless told to by the driver when the bus is stopped.
- No shouting, loud noises, roughhousing, horseplay, or bad language will be allowed.
- No eating or drinking is allowed on the bus.
- You must have a note signed by the office to get off at a different place.
- Respect and obey the bus driver.