

Blanton Elementary Parent Handbook

2023-2024

Absences and Attendance

Students are expected to attend school regularly and be on time for classes in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, responsibility, and self-discipline. Students who have good attendance are generally more successful and enjoy school to a greater degree.

Attendance policies are not at the discretion of the building but are state law. State law states that any child enrolled in school is considered truant if 3 or more unverified absences/tardies occur during a 4-week period or if 10 or more unverified absences/tardies occur within a 6-month period. The district recognizes the following absences as verified as long as the parent/guardian affirms the absence within 72 hours:

- Personal illness. On the 5th consecutive day, a doctor's note will be required along with the parent note
- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders.
- A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus; and
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
 - Mental health or therapy appointments; or
 - Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in activities outside of school hours.

When a student is unable to attend school, parents should call the Blanton front office (940)369-0700. Always include the following information: student's name, grade, teacher's name, name and relationship of the person leaving the message, and the reason for the absence. Voicemail will pick up 24 hours a day.

Please note that this call does not replace the electronic submission required for documentation when your child returns to class.

If your child has missed 1-4 days, please utilize the absence link at <https://forms.dentonisd.org/Forms/absence-note>. If your child misses 5 days or more, a doctor's note which states the days the child is absent and the reason, must also be uploaded at the link above. All notes should be uploaded within three (3) school days after a student's return to school.

If a child must be absent for a portion of the school day due to a medical appointment, the child may be counted present if the parent sends a note from the medical office. In addition, parents who take their children out of school early without a documented reason are subject to consequences for truancy in accordance with state attendance laws. Early dismissal from school without documentation is considered to be missed parts of days.

The Blanton Attendance Committee will review all absences. If a student has established a questionable pattern of absences, the school Attendance Committee may also require a physician's or clinic's statement of illness after a single day's absence as a condition of classifying the absence as one for which there are extenuating circumstances. In these cases, a parent note will no longer be accepted as documentation.

When a student is absent, he or she will miss the quality instruction provided by our staff which may not involve paper/pencil tasks. For this reason, all students should be in school every day unless they are ill.

For questions about attendance, please visit the [Attendance Matters](#) site.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival Procedures:

- **Pre-K** students and their siblings are dropped off at the cafeteria door from 7:15-7:30. After that time, there is no Pre-K staff present to greet students. If students are eating breakfast at school, we ask that you come as close to 7:15 as possible.
- **Kindergarten - 5th Graders:**
 - Student drop-off (for non-breakfast eaters) is at the front of the school. Parents are to enter the drive in front of Harpool and drive all the way possible (please pull to the far right). Students will enter the building through the front doors.
 - Students eating breakfast can be dropped off at the cafeteria beginning at 7:15. They will eat in the cafeteria. Breakfast service ends at 7:35 and students will be dismissed to their classroom.
 - Students not eating breakfast will go to morning engagement activities in either the gym, computer lab, or library. Staff will direct them according to the day's activities.
 - Bus/Day Care drop-off is also in the front of the school. Please be mindful of the traffic.
- Bike Riders will walk their bike to the bike rack at the back of the school and enter through the door next to the bike rack. A staff member will be present to direct our bike riders. Students arriving late (parking bike after 7:40) must walk around to the front of the school to enter.

Dismissal Procedures:

Car riders - Dismissal is at 3:00 p.m. and will be in the cafeteria circle behind the school. Please enter through the drive off Stacey Lane on the side of the school. Car riders will be gathered according to number in the back of the school until their car tag number is called. We ask that you follow the direction of our staff members and remain in your car. Staff members will walk the students to the cars as they arrive at the loading zone. This keeps our students and staff members safe. Please do not park your car in the driveway or in the parking lot and come to get your child. Students will only be released to those in

vehicles and with visible car tags. We request that **all students enter their car on the passenger side for the safety of students and teachers**.

Carpooling is allowed as long as the car picking up the student has the car tag visible for every student in the carpool. ***No student will be released to a car without the appropriate car tag for that student.*** We appreciate your cooperation as the safety of each student is of utmost importance.

Bus Riders, Daycare – Bus riders and daycare students will be escorted to the buses at the front of the school and will load their bus immediately upon leaving the building. Students may not ride home on the bus unless they are registered for bus transportation. In addition, students are only permitted to ride the bus to which they have registered.

Extended Day - Students who have registered for the Extended Day program will be escorted to the gathering place for this program by the ESD staff.

Bike Riders - Bike riders will get their bikes, and be walked around the front of the building to the crosswalk on Stacey Lane. At that point, they will begin riding home. Please talk to your bikers about safety when going home.

Walkers - Walkers will be dismissed and escorted across the crosswalk on Stacey Lane. Parents who are meeting their children may do so at that point or closer to the Madison community. We ask that parents of Kindergarten students meet their children at the crosswalk on Stacey or communicate to the teacher who will be meeting the child. We will not allow kindergarteners to start walking on their own without first getting parent permission. All other grade levels will begin walking home once we help them across the crosswalk.

Any changes in dismissal procedures for a student can be submitted online at (<https://forms.gle/qX2GLia47wBnQDpi9>). Transportation changes should be submitted before 2:30 and will be communicated to the child's teacher. As a safety precaution, school personnel will NOT take a child's word for dismissal changes. Without notification from you, your child will go home via their "normal" mode. Teachers check their email and phone messages during their conference period or sometimes not until after school. For this reason, we ask that you call the office for ride changes and not depend on the email getting to the teacher in time.

If a student is leaving early for a medical or dental appointment, the parent must provide a note from the doctor or dentist verifying the appointment upon their return to school. Office staff members have the obligation of asking for the reason why a child is being picked up before 3:00 p.m. due to the fact that attendance policies apply to students who leave early without any medical documentation. Students who are checked out through the front office will be allowed to leave only with those individuals listed as

guardians or emergency contacts. Proper ID will also be checked. Both parents/legal guardians will have the right to pick up their children unless the school has legal documents that designate otherwise.

Please follow these procedures for checking out your children prior to dismissal:

- Pull up in front of the school in the drive.
- Call the office after you have arrived at 940-369-0700 and let us know the following information: your name, name of student you are picking up, and the reason. We appreciate your understanding of the questions as our office staff must enter the reason for the early dismissal.
- Please have your driver's license ready in case the Blanton staff member does not recognize you.

Cafeteria

Each student has an individual lunch account that will pay for any "extras" your child wishes to purchase. Money may be placed in a child's account by sending cash or checks made out to the Blanton Elementary Cafeteria, or by paying online through the Denton ISD Home Page www.dentonisd.org ([For Parents Tab](#)).

Additional helpful cafeteria information:

- Breakfast begins at 7:15 a.m. and ends at 7:35 a.m. If your child is eating breakfast at school, please ensure your child gets to school as close to 7:15 as possible to be able to finish eating prior to 7:35.
- Students are discouraged from bringing soda/soft drink type beverages to the cafeteria.
- Ice cream will be available for purchase
- No food is shared between students, whether purchased from the cafeteria or brought from home.
- Purchase restrictions can be applied to your child's Schoolcafe account.

Parents wanting to join their child for lunch may do so. After checking in with the office, parents will wait for their child on the cafeteria stage. Parents may eat only with their child (no other children will be invited to join). Thank you for helping us ensure that the cafeteria is a safe and pleasant place for everyone to enjoy.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Several of our students own cell phones and utilize them to communicate with parents before and after school hours. As a result of this, cell phones are allowed to be in the building with students. However, during instructional time, they are to be **turned off** and placed into backpacks unless the teacher has chosen for them to be used educationally during a lesson. Electronic devices such as I-pods, portable games, and/or laptops are not to be brought to school unless there has been a pre-approved instructional reason communicated to you by the classroom teacher. These items can be damaged, lost or stolen and it is best they stay at home. Further information can be found in the DISD Student Code of Conduct via the Denton ISD Home Page www.dentonisd.org (For Parents Tab).

Change of Address, Telephone Numbers or Emergency Contacts

It is very important that every student maintain an up-to-date address, telephone number and emergency contact list in the front office. The names you list during registration are the ones you are authorizing to pick up your children from school. If information changes, please notify the front office immediately, so the appropriate items can be updated to reflect changes. The phone numbers you provide are the only way we have of contacting you in case of an emergency. It is your responsibility to make sure we have the most current information. If you move, you must provide a new proof of address or complete a transfer application, should your new address be located outside the Blanton attendance zone.

Classroom Parties

There will be three classroom parties during the year: Winter Holiday, Valentine's Day and End of the Year. Classroom parties are under the direction and discretion of the classroom teachers. There will be no in-class birthday parties at any grade level. If students wish to provide treats for classmates as a birthday celebration, please clear it with the classroom teacher ahead of time. Balloon bouquets, flowers, birthday baskets, etc, are discouraged and will not be delivered to the classroom in order to not disrupt the learning environment. It is also suggested that parents wanting to provide a birthday treat give consideration to non-food items to help with allergy concerns. Any food treats provided, should be store-bought and individual servings (such as cookies or cupcakes). We request no cookie cakes unless they are pre-cut.

Conferences

Because we believe frequent, positive communication is vital to the success of our students, parent/teacher conferences are encouraged! A parent may schedule a conference with their child's teacher at any time during the school year. You may call a teacher on their voicemail or send an email with your request. If you would like to schedule a conference with a teacher, we ask that it be held before/after school or during the teacher's daily conference period.

Conferences may be held in person or virtually.

Court Documents

Any court documents pertaining to educational rights, custody or visitation rights of a child must be provided to the front office. Without official documents on file, we will not be able to enforce any portion of the orders.

Discipline

It is the goal of the Blanton staff that our school be a positive learning environment. Students are recognized for positive behaviors that are exhibited throughout the building. Our staff members also implement a school-wide behavior management program called Restorative Practices. Students and teachers co-create criteria for their classroom environment and agree how to treat each other through a Treatment Agreement. The areas of the Treatment Agreement include: Student to Student, Student to

Teacher, Teacher to Student, and Student to Classroom. In addition to the classroom, there are universal expectations for behavior and teachers will utilize common language so that students clearly understand what the expectations are across settings (classroom, cafeteria, special areas, etc.)

Blanton has a Bully Buster Program (located on our website). Bullying happens when someone continues to hurt others over and over again through words or actions. It is unfair and not right. Our Bully Buster Program does work if and only if we get reports. It is crucial that if your child is being hurt by another child during his or her school day there must be a report made. Please call the teacher, the counselor or the principals. The program works only if reports are filed. We cannot help your child if we do not know about the hurtful behaviors.

Every classroom has general expectations for student behavior. If a student is disrupting the learning environment on a regular basis or exhibits inappropriate behavior, this may result in an office referral. Repeated violations for misconduct could result in larger consequences such as in-school suspension, out of school suspension, or mandatory removal from campus to an alternative campus. Further information can be found in the DISD Student Code of Conduct via the Denton ISD Home Page www.dentonisd.org (For Parents Tab).

Dress Code

If a student is improperly dressed, he or she will call home for a change of clothes. If a change of clothes is not available, the school nurse will provide a change of clothes, if possible. Otherwise, a student may be sent home for improper attire. Denton ISD has determined that the following items are considered to be inappropriate to wear:

- bike pants or bare midriffs
- halter tops or tank tops see-through apparel, mesh/net clothing
- saggy/baggy pants
- strapless dresses/blouses
- short shorts/skirts (mid-thigh length)
- unnatural hair color
- display of undergarments
- hats
- shirts open at the sides (excessively large armholes)
- flip-flops (except in high schools, or as determined by the administration on all campuses)
- ragged or intentionally cut/torn clothing as determined inappropriate by the campus principal or designee
- garments containing offensive or obscene words or phrases, pictures, symbols, or images
- garments which promote or advertise alcohol, tobacco, or other prohibited products

Further information can be found in the DISD Student and Parent Handbook located at this link:

<https://www.dentonisd.org/documents>

Dropping Things Off for Students

Our ultimate goal is to help our students learn to be responsible for their things. Occasionally, we all forget something. If a parent needs to drop something off for a student, we ask that you bring it to the front office already labeled with your child's name and the name of the teacher. We will have a table between our two sets of doors where it can be placed. A staff member will notify the child of the delivery.

Emergency Drills

Blanton Elementary will follow the DISD Guidelines found in the district Emergency Management Plan that requires regular drills for student safety. Regular drills will include fire, weather, lockdown and evacuation. Parents will be notified via our Messenger system after a drill has been conducted to allow you the opportunity to discuss how it went with your child.

Home Communication

Regular communication between home and school is essential. Information for parents is sent home weekly from the classroom teacher/team. Each teacher/grade level is also required to inform parents of upcoming curriculum and events. Classroom teachers have websites with beneficial information for both parents and students. Parents may also access school information via the Blanton Elementary Webpage (<http://www.dentonisd.org/blantones>) and Facebook (Blanton Knights) as well as district information via the Denton ISD Home Page at www.dentonisd.org.

Lost and Found

Please help us by labeling all lunchboxes, sweatshirts, sweaters, jackets, and water bottles. Lost and found articles such as clothing and lunchboxes will be placed in the lost and found in the cafeteria area. Items that are personal in nature such as glasses, keys, phones, wallets/purses and jewelry will be brought to the front office.

Medications

All medications administered by school personnel must be accompanied by a doctor's order including all prescription and over-the-counter medicines. You must come to the nurse's office and fill out a medication form for the file in the nurse's office. If you have questions about a medication your child takes, please contact our school nurse Stephanie Paiva at (940) 369-0710.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Report cards for all grade levels are generally issued the Wednesday following the close of each nine-week grading period. All students will receive a standards-based report card each nine-week period with progress information related to mastery of skills. Parents may access their child's grades for each reporting period by registering for the online monitoring system (HAC). If you have not registered for a

HAC account, information may be obtained through the Denton ISD Home Page www.dentonisd.org ([For Parents Tab](#)). No paper copies of report cards are issued, except by written request of the parent to the administration.

PTA

Our PTA is a very involved and essential component of the Blanton Elementary community. They provide services and support to students, parents and staff. We encourage each family to become members of this organization. The PTA holds regular meetings throughout the school year so that parents can be active in decision making to benefit our school and student body.

Visitors

All visitors must check in through the front office. We ask that you have your identification ready.

Volunteers

We are indebted to our volunteers at Blanton Elementary. All who wish to volunteer in any capacity, will need to complete a background check at the Denton ISD Home Page at www.dentonisd.org ([Community Involvement/Volunteer Program](#)).