



Barrow County School System Horizon Program

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2025-2026 Horizon Program Student Handbook

Handbook is subject to change during the school year at administrator discretion.

ASSIGNMENT TO THE HORIZON PROGRAM: Students are assigned to the Horizon Program either through the disciplinary tribunal process or by a parent waiving their right to a disciplinary tribunal. In addition, students transferring to Barrow County Schools from a Youth Detention Center may complete a transitional placement at the Horizon Program based on the decision of a placement meeting upon enrolling in the appropriate home school. Students who transfer to Barrow County Schools from another school district's alternative setting must complete the length of their original alternative setting assignment (either in the Horizon Program or via other means) before enrolling in the appropriate home school.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend school on a regular basis. A written note from the parents explaining the reason for any absence must be brought to the front office upon returning to school. We will be in contact regarding absences the following ways:

1. After three (3) unexcused absences – parents will be contacted by phone or by email by teachers
2. After five (5) unexcused absences - parents will be contacted by phone and letter
3. After ten (10) unexcused absences - parents will be contacted by letter, and a parent conference can be held
4. To facilitate student success, early checkouts are discouraged. Students who are present for at least one-half of the instructional day or three full periods, whichever is greater, shall be counted present for perfect attendance purposes. The accumulation of five (5) or more partial attendance days, in any combination of tardies and early dismissals, within a 9-week grading period shall disqualify a student from perfect attendance recognition. Tardies and early dismissals are both considered partial attendance and shall be treated in a similar manner.

BOOK BAG / PURSE POLICY: Students are not allowed to carry book bags, purses, or pencil pouches while on campus. Items allowed are empty water bottles, headphones, and a pen or pencil.

COMPUTER LAB POLICY: Students are expected to be respectful of staff, fellow students, and equipment while in a computer lab and report any malfunctions or issues to the overseeing staff member as soon as they become aware of them. Use of a computer lab is a privilege and will be rescinded if proper behavior is not observed. While in class, students will always remain seated unless directed otherwise by a staff member. At no time will any students attempt to open windows, adjust room temperature, or change the lighting in the room.

COMPUTER / INTERNET USAGE: The Horizon Program relies heavily upon computer technology for instructional programs. It is imperative that all Horizon Program students behave in a professional and responsible manner with this technology. The Barrow County Internet Use Policy is always in effect for all students. Minor violations of this policy will result in a reprimand. Serious violations of this policy may result in suspension or additional disciplinary action. Students are subject to all Barrow County School System Computer/Internet Usage Policies.

DAILY PARTICIPATION: Students are expected to come to school ready to work and participate in the instructional activities of the day. Taking notes is required in all classes, and students are required to bring binders to the school for that purpose that will stay at the school building. Students who elect to participate will be rewarded through increased academic achievement, as well as the incentives outlined in our PBIS program.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES: Students are expected to maintain acceptable behavior throughout their placement at the Horizon Program. All policies outlined in the Barrow County School System Student Code of Conduct apply to the Horizon Program. The staff reserves the right to implement additional expectations as needed. Discipline referrals while in the Horizon Program may result in placement in an alternative location, administrative detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension ranging from one to ten days, or other consequences as warranted. After multiple discipline referrals or exceptional discipline events, students may be recommended for expulsion from the Barrow County School System. In addition, serious violations such as fighting, assault upon a staff member or student, weapon, drug, or alcohol possession, or other incidents of a similar nature may result in a recommendation for expulsion from the Barrow County School System as well as referral to law enforcement officials.

DRESS CODE: The Horizon Program has in place a “uniform dress policy” that all students must follow. In addition to following the Barrow County School System dress policy, students must wear a collared shirt in one of the following solid colors: white, gray, or black. Students must wear solid khaki or black trousers (extending to the ankle and worn at the waist) and closed-toed closed-heel sneakers in neutral colors. Undergarments should not be visible. There should be no extraneous garments worn underneath the uniform, such as shorts underneath the trousers. Jackets must be solid colored in the same colors as shirts. If jackets are worn, students must still wear an appropriate shirt. All clothing must be school appropriate and free of language or images that interfere with learning safety, or school culture as deemed appropriate by school administration. Clothing and accessories should be free of tags or stickers. In addition, the Horizon Program administration reserves the right to alter the student dress code as circumstances dictate. Specifically, failure to comply with dress code expectations may result in disciplinary consequences and/or changes to individual student dress codes. Students who meet the Horizon Program expectations will earn PBIS points. Students will have the opportunity to use their PBIS points to purchase “dress down” allowing them the option to wear clothing of their choice so long as it complies with the BCSS dress code.

EARLY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES: Students will not be allowed to leave the Horizon Program during school hours unless they are checked out by an authorized adult (with proper identification) who is listed on the student’s contact information in Infinite Campus. Students must be checked out in person if they leave prior to 2:45PM. If students drive to campus, they may bring a note from home and will be allowed to leave only if someone on their contact sheet may be reached by phone to verify the written dismissal. If parent(s) and/or guardian(s) wish to add someone to their student’s contact sheet, they must come to the school and make the necessary changes to their contact sheet in writing. Additions will not be made via phone correspondence.

EARLY RETURN POLICY: Some students will be eligible for “early release” to return to the traditional education setting if this option is a part of the assignment/waiver process and is stated in writing on their assignment waiver or tribunal decision letter. Both the Horizon Program administrator and the assigning school principal must agree to the “early release” decision. Factors considered in early release include but are not limited to academic performance, student conduct, and attendance.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Electronic devices (including but not limited to cell phones, tablets, smart watches, wireless headphones, handheld gaming devices, etc.) are not allowed at the Horizon Program. Electronic devices may not be stored in the front office and must remain at home or with the parent/guardian at drop-off. If students fail to adhere to the above procedure, disciplinary consequences will be issued, and any item(s) will be returned to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s). Searches will not be conducted for lost or stolen electronic devices. In addition, please note that the Horizon Program is not responsible for lost or damaged electronic devices under any circumstances.

ENROLLMENT AT THE HORIZON PROGRAM: Students may enroll in the Horizon Program after being assigned through one of the procedures detailed above. Students will not be allowed to enroll in the Horizon Program until the individual student and their parent(s) and/or guardian(s) are present during an admissions conference to discuss the placement, review policies and procedures outlined in this document, and to answer any questions from either the student or their parent(s)/guardian(s). This admissions conference is very important and takes approximately thirty minutes and may be arranged as soon as a placement is finalized.

FOOD / DRINK POLICY: Food, candy, gum, and drinks other than bottled water are not permitted in classrooms. Drinks not purchased at school are subject to confiscation or inspection. Students should bring an empty water bottle each day, labeled with their name. The bottles may be filled up at our water fountains.

GANG RELATED ACTIVITY: The Horizon Program has a “zero-tolerance” policy regarding any gang activity. This includes the wearing of “colors”, gang related graffiti on student possessions, gang tattoos, vandalism, and any other activity as defined by the Horizon Program administration and/or law enforcement. Changes in this policy will be updated in accordance with the relevant Georgia criminal codes (OCGA 16-15-3 and OCGA 16-15-4).

HALLWAY TRAFFIC: Students are not to be in the hallways during instructional times without a hall pass from a staff member and are not to be in any area of the campus prior to **7:45 AM** and after **3:30 PM**, unless under the direct supervision of a Horizon Program staff member.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING: The Horizon Program will attempt to meet the scheduling requirements of any high school student enrolling in the program. However, alternate scheduling may be necessary. The Horizon Program does not offer the complete list of courses available at the home schools. Horizon and the home school may determine alternative courses to meet the student’s academic needs. This determination is based on course availability, length of time remaining in the course, and incoming academic achievement.

HOME SCHOOL: The “home school” is defined as the school to which the student is officially assigned by the Barrow County School System. Students may be assigned to the Horizon Program from Bear Creek Middle School, Haymon-Morris Middle School, Russell Middle School, Westside Middle School, the Arts and Innovation Magnet Program, Barrow Academy of Arts and Sciences, Apalachee High School, or Winder-Barrow High School.

LUNCH: Students may order a school lunch or bring lunch from home, but the Horizon Program will not provide refrigerators to store lunches. In addition, any food brought into the building is subject to inspection. Lunch orders will be placed upon arrival at school. If a student is on the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Policy at their home school, that status will apply to the Horizon Program as well. Per BCSS policy, students are not allowed to charge lunches.

MEDICATION POLICY: By Georgia state law, no student is allowed to possess any prescription or over-the-counter medication in a Georgia public school, unless sanctioned by a 504 plan. All medications (whether prescription or over the counter) must be given to an administrator or an assigned designee. All medications must be in original containers, and a “medication authorization” form must be completed by parent(s) and/or guardian(s) before any medications will be dispensed at the Horizon Program. Students are not allowed to have any medications, including over-the-counter medication, synthetic supplements, or nutritional supplements, in their possession at any time while at the Horizon Program. The Horizon Program is not allowed to provide any medications to a student.

OFFICE PHONE: Use of the office phone is restricted for emergencies only. Students may use the phone after **2:15 PM** for transportation related calls. All use of the office phone is at the discretion of staff.

RELEASE FROM THE HORIZON PROGRAM: Students will be released from the Horizon Program when the requirements of the tribunal, waiver, or placement letter have been met. If a student withdraws from school before completion of an alternative school placement, the student will be required to complete the placement upon re-enrollment in Barrow County Schools only if the re-enrollment is prior to the end date of their original placement. If the end date of their placement has passed, they will be returned to their home school.

REQUEST OF EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS: In compliance with the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act, the Barrow County School System would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student’s teacher(s) and/or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student’s teacher(s) –
 - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade level and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
 - is teaching under an emergency or provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
 - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

● Whether your child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications. If you wish to request information concerning your child’s teacher’s and/or paraprofessional’s qualifications, please contact the directors of the Horizon Program or Meggan McNally, Barrow County School System Director of Planning and Personnel at 770-867-4527.

SAFETY CHECK POLICY: Students are subject to safety checks upon arrival or at any time while on campus. Multiple means of search may be used during these safety checks, including but not limited to walk-through weapons detectors, walk-through metal detectors, handheld metal detectors, and drug-sniffing dogs.

SCHOOL HOURS: The Horizon Program school hours are **7:45AM** until **2:45 PM**. Students are to immediately report to the office upon arrival. Students will be released from class once their rides have arrived in the afternoon. Students should leave campus by **3:30 PM**. Any student wishing to work beyond normal instructional hours should make specific arrangements with their teacher(s) and administration. Any students who are not picked up by a parent or guardian at the end of the staff workday will be subject to intervention from local or state agencies.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: The Horizon Program participates in student assistance programs, which may be recommended for students by the staff. Parental permission is necessary for a student to take part in these activities.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES: Students are expected to arrive at school with adequate instructional supplies each day. Specifically, students are expected to bring writing implements, headphones, and other necessary supplies needed for instructional activities.

SPECIAL SERVICES: Students who are served by an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 plan, ELL plan, or other student service will continue to receive these services at the Horizon Program.

TARDIES TO SCHOOL: All students are expected to report to school on time each day.

TESTING: Students are required to participate in all local and state testing requirements such as the Georgia Milestones, Measures of Academic Progress, end-of-pathway assessments, end-of-course assessments, and end-of-grade assessments.

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN CLASSES: Students are to report directly to their next assigned location immediately upon release from a given class. Students should not go to the restrooms, or any other part of the campus, during transition times. No student should be in the restroom without a hall pass at any time. Students must take all possessions with them during transitions and will not be allowed to return to another class to retrieve items. All students will be monitored by staff during transition times.

TRANSPORTATION: Barrow County School System does not provide bus services to or from the Horizon Program unless these services were established through the student's individualized education plan (IEP) prior to the student's assignment to the Horizon Program, or if a student qualifies for services under the McKinney-Vento Protection Act. **In addition, students are not permitted to use ridesharing services (Uber, Lyft, et. al.) when travelling to and from school without written guardian permission ahead of time. Note that many ridesharing services require passengers to be eighteen or older.**

TRESPASS NOTICE: Current Horizon Program students are not allowed to be on any other Barrow County School System campus at any time. This includes community activities that take place on a campus. Students assigned to the Horizon Program are not allowed to attend any Barrow County School System event, including "away" activities at other locations. Students found in violation of this policy may be referred to law enforcement for trespassing.

HORIZON PROGRAM MASTER SCHEDULE:

7:45 – 8:00	Homeroom / Breakfast / Continuing Education / PBIS
8:00 – 9:30 <i>(1st Period)</i>	1 st Period Instruction
9:30 – 11:00 <i>(2nd Period)</i>	2 nd Period Instruction
11:00 – 11:30	Lunch (with 2 nd Period Classroom)
11:30– 11:45	Advisement / Character Strong / Continuing Education / PBIS
11:45 – 1:15 <i>(3rd Period)</i>	3 rd Period Instruction
1:15 – 2:45 <i>(4th Period)</i>	4 th Period Instruction
2:45 – 3:30	Dismissal / Continuing Education / PBIS Doors Lock at 3:30