



South Texas ISD

**Preparatory  
Academy**

GRADES 7-8 | EDINBURG

# STUDENT PARENT HANDBOOK

2020-2021



Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. We have a student body and staff of whom we are extremely proud because of their extraordinary successes in many areas. STISD Preparatory Academy continues being an exemplary campus, designated as a Texas School To Watch by the Texas Middle School Association, a 2015 National Blue Ribbon School, a 2016-2019 Texas Honor Roll School, and a 2016-2019 Texas STEM Honor Roll Campus. The students, parents, and staff are well deserving of these honors because of their dedication towards success for all. The students and staff certainly lived up to the legacy of our mascot, the Spartans, who were from the ancient Greek city- state of Sparta. They were known as fearless warriors who pledged their lives and their honor to causes they deeply believed in. We at STISD Preparatory Academy have been fearless fighters for a cause, which is to become successful people who demonstrate strength, courage, and determination in the face of any problem; and who live with honor, heart, and spirit without ever giving in to weaknesses and difficulties. Show Spartan Pride in all you are and in all you do. This includes conducting ourselves well, doing all work until it is done well, achieving extraordinary success in the classroom and on assessments, and having great attendance. Students, parents, teachers, and other staff must all work together to continue the legacy of success.

One way for the school to assist you along the way is to provide you with this handbook, a resource of information you will need during the school year. This book is divided into three sections:

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**—with information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

**Section II—OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**—organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

**Section III-- STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

**To Students:**

This handbook outlines the policies and procedures pertaining to student activities and responsibilities as set forth by the Board of Trustees of the South Texas Independent School District. It is the responsibility of each student to read, understand, and abide by the rules and regulations stated in this handbook.

**To Parents:**

The home is the greatest influence upon the child during the formative years; from these influences, the child develops their first habits and obtains most of their ideals and attitudes. The influence of a good home environment cannot be duplicated within the classroom. Therefore, it is imperative that the home and school work cooperatively for the maximum development of your child.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the South Texas I.S.D. Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found in Section III of this handbook or in the principal’s office.

The Student Handbook is updated annually; however, policy adoption and revisions may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing newsletter and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify the Student Handbook at any time. Notice of revisions will be provided as is reasonably practical.

Although the Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, it does not create additional rights for parents and students. It does not, nor is it intended to, represent a contract between any parent or student and the district.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child have questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact the principal's office.

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office or online at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net).

The policy manual includes:

- Legally referenced (LEGAL) policies that contain provisions from federal and state laws and regulations, case law, and other legal authorities that provide the legal framework for school districts.
- Board-adopted (LOCAL) policies that articulate the board's choices and values regarding district practices.

For questions about the material in this handbook, please contact the school principal.

Complete and return to the student's campus the following forms (provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon enrollment):

- Acknowledgment Form **Or** Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook

Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information, Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities), and

Consent/Opt-Out Form for participation in third-party surveys.

### **Accessibility**

**If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact [amanda.odom@stisd.net](mailto:amanda.odom@stisd.net) 956-565-2454.**

## PEOPLE TO KNOW CENTRAL OFFICE

Antonio Lara, Ed. D. , Superintendent

Jeff Hembree, Deputy Superintendent

Marla Knaub, Assistant Superintendent for Finance

Lissa Frausto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

Amanda Odom, Public Relations and Marketing Coordinator

J. P. Villarreal, Administrator for Support Services

Efrain Garza- Executive Director of Student Support

Ann Vickman, Lead Librarian

## STISD PREPARATORY ACADEMY ADMINISTRATION

Ana Castro, Principal

Mari Ochoa, Assistant Principal

Wilmer Romero, Assistant Principal

Maria G. Salinas, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor

Lillia Liguez, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor

Cynthia Ponce, Social Worker

Maricela Hinojosa, Wellness Specialist

Elisa Monteagudo, Principal's Secretary

Nathaly Garza, Librarian

Mary Edna Sandoval, Librarian

Alex Medrano, Instructional Tech.

Vivian Galloso, Nurse

Rudy Hernandez, Trans. Coordinator

Adolfo Gutierrez -Maint. Coordinator

Maryvel Venegas, Cafeteria Manager

Monica Leal, Counselor's Secretary

Rolando Flores, Bookkeeper

Maricela Ramos, PEIMS/Attend. Clerk

Jesus Ortega, Campus Tech.

Ashlley Bautista, Recep./Secretary

Sandra Loya, Sp. Ed. Diagnostician

## FACULTY AND STAFF

Alejandro, Jocelyn-Mathematics

AuenSmith, Kristi-Theater Arts

Avalos, Nadia-Eng. Lang. Arts

Ayala-Gonzalez, Patricia-Eng. Lang. Arts

Berrones, Maribel-Technology

Bonura, Luke-Eng. Lang. Arts

Brown, Sonia-Math

Camarena, Nilda -Science

Campos, Georgina-Support Techer

Cavazos, Laura-Science

Cisneros, Gloria- Sp. Ed. Secretary

Comple, Alex-Social Studies

Cortez, Arnoldo-Art/Technology

Flores, Elizabeth-Support Teacher

Flores, Max-Classroom Aide

Garcia, Cassandra- Science

Garcia, Diana-Mathematics

Garza, Alfredo-Science

Garza, Herlinda-Phys. Education

Garcilazo, Raquel- HST

Gill, Roberto-Mathematics

Gonzalez, Alberto-Technology

Gonzalez, Rosa- Support Teacher

Guerra, Nytashah -Eng. Lang. Arts

Gutierrez, Jaclyn -Eng. Lang. Arts

Hinojosa, Maria-Classroom/Library Aide

Hernandez, Gabriel-Sp. Ed. Trans. Coord.

Jeter, Ying-Ching-Music

Kaiser, Sharon-Mathematics

Leo, Ruben-Social Studies

Lira, Armando-Technology

Lomas, Elizabeth-D.A.E.P. Aide

Magaña, Yaquelin-Mathematics

Maldonado, Cynthia-Social Studies

Martinez, Rozanne-Music

Mon, Maria Patricia-Science

Monteagudo, Gerardo-Phy. Education

Morales, Christopher-Science

Muhammad, Raheem-Phy. Education

Munoz, Jose -In-School Suspension

Nieto, Blanca-Science

Ortega, Idelia-Classroom Aide

Pena, Leticia- LSSP

Partida, Yolanda -Math/Spanish

Ramirez, Josette-Social Studies

Ramirez, Julia-Eng. Lang. Arts

Rodriguez, Isabel-Spanish

Rodriguez, Jacqueline-Phy. Education

Salas, Ruben-Social Studies

Salinas, Annalisa-Lang. Arts

Schmidt, Robert- Lang. Arts

Starr, Kathy- Technology

Torres, Eduardo-D.A.E.P. Teacher

Trevino, Daren-Science

Vacio, Lupita- Classroom Aide

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## *Student Code of Conduct*

Dear Student and Parent:

As required by state law, the board of trustees has officially adopted the Student Code of Conduct in order to promote a safe and orderly learning environment for every student.

We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it with your family. If you have any questions about the required conduct and consequences for misconduct, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher or campus administrator.

The student and parent should each sign this page in the space provided below, and then return the page to the student's school.

Thank you.

Dr. Antonio Lara, Superintendent of Schools

We acknowledge that we have received a copy of the South Texas Independent School District Student Code of Conduct for the 2020-2021 school year and understand that students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Code.

**Print** name of student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last, First Middle

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy

Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this page, remove it, and return it to the student's school. Thank you.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## *Student Code of Conduct and Campus Student Handbook Electronic Distribution*

Dear Student and Parent:

As required by state law, the board of trustees has officially adopted the Student Code of Conduct in order to promote a safe and orderly learning environment for every student.

We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it with your family. If you have any questions about the required conduct and consequences for misconduct, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher or campus administrator.

The student and parent should each sign this page in the space provided below, and then return the page to the student's school.

Thank you.

Dr. Antonio Lara, Superintendent of Schools

We acknowledge that we have been offered the option to receive a paper copy of the South Texas Independent School District Student Code of Conduct and Campus Student Handbook for the 2020-2021 school year or to electronically access them on the district's Web site at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net). We understand that students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Code.

We have chosen to:

- ☐ Receive a paper copy of the Student Code of Conduct and the Campus Student Handbook.
- ☐ Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Code of Conduct and Campus Student Handbook on the district's Web site.

**Print** name of student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last, First Middle

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Print name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School: South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy

Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this page, remove it, and return it to the student's school. Thank you.

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## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section of the South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

### **ACCESS TO BOARD MEETINGS**

A parent is entitled to complete access to any meeting of the board of trustees of the school district, other than a closed meeting held in compliance with Subchapter D and E, Chapter 551, Government Code.

The South Texas Independent School District's board meeting is held every fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 P.M. Meeting dates, time and place are posted at every campus.

The STISD board members and their corresponding areas are as follows:

Douglas E. Buchanan, President, Raymondville  
Henry LeVrier, Secretary, Brownsville

Yolanda Cuellar, Vice-President, Progreso Lakes

Gonzalez, Hector, Lyford  
Camargo, Graciela, Weslaco  
Cantu, Abiel, Raymondville  
Cantu, Eduardo L., Los Fresnos  
Castillo Jr, Martin, Edinburg  
Farias, Javier, McAllen  
Fleming, Richard., M.D., Mission  
Garcia, Adrian, Brownsville  
Garcia, Homero, Weslaco  
Garcia, Margarita, San Juan  
Kamel, Yolanda, McAllen

Lerma, Robert J., Brownsville  
Lopez, Sylvia, Brownsville  
Montalvo III, Ramon, Weslaco  
Perez-Trevino, Irma, Harlingen  
Quintanilla, Israel G., Raymondville  
Rodriguez, Eduardo R., Brownsville  
Sanchez Garza, Sylvia, Edinburg  
Solis, Jaime, Edinburg  
Villarreal, Rebecca, Penitas  
Villarreal, Rick, D.D.S., Brownsville

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

#### **Working Together**

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.



- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at (956) 381-5522 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact the school office.
- Participating in campus parent organizations. STISD Preparatory Academy's current parent organization is the Parent-Student-Teacher Organization (PSTO). For information contact the school office.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the principal's office.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

### **Parent Involvement Coordinator**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Mrs. A. Castro, Campus Principal. She may be contacted at (956) 381-5522.

### **Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights**

#### **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation or Provide a Mental Health Care Service**

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, screening, or treatment, without obtaining prior written parental consent.

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student except as permitted by law.

The district has established procedures for providing a parent with a recommendation for an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns or substance abuse or who has been identified as at risk of attempting suicide. The district's mental health liaison will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and a possible need for intervention and provide information about available counseling options.

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention.

The mental health liaison, Mrs. L. Pena, LSSP, can be reached at [www.Leticia.pena@stisd.net](mailto:www.Leticia.pena@stisd.net) or 956-318-8520. She will provide further information regarding these procedures as well as educational materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on- and off-campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

For further information, see **Mental Health Support** on page 51.

**Note:** An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

### **Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information**

Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

- Artwork,
- Special projects,
- Photographs,
- Original videos or voice recordings, and
- Other original works.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying a student's work on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district (such as a campus or classroom website), or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

### **Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if a Student is under Age 14**

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program. This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

### **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law**

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.
  - In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

### **Consent to Temporarily Remove a Student from the Classroom**

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate, conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

### **Directory Information**

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as "directory information." This "directory information" will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

### **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes**

The district often needs to use student information for school-sponsored purposes. If needed for school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child's name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, honors, awards, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent educational institution attended and participation in officially recognized activities. This information will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student, except as described above at **Directory Information**.

Unless you object to the use of your child's information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for school-sponsored purposes.

### **Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees**

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines. For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to access such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity.

The employee is required to include the student's parent as a recipient on all text messages.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

### **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights**

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

A parent can inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [See policy EF(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information**

The PPRA gives parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

- Any survey concerning protected information, regardless of funding.
- Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information to others.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student.

Exceptions are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA for more information.]

A parent may inspect:

- Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

### **Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3–12**

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all social studies classes provide:

- Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and
- A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3–12.

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence if:

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that his or her child be excused,
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

[See policy EHBK(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags**

A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 59 and policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

**Religious or Moral Beliefs**

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, the student must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

**Tutoring or Test Preparation**

A teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills based on:

- Informal observations,
- Evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or
- Results from diagnostic assessments.

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.

In accordance with state law and policy EC, without parental permission, districts are prohibited from removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.

Under state law, students with grades below 70 for a reporting period are required to attend tutorial services—if the district offers these services.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs contact the student's teacher, and see policies EC and EHBC.]

**Right of Access to Student Records, Curriculum Materials, and District Records/Policies Instructional Materials**

A parent has the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day.

A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

**Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent**

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LEGAL) for more information.]

**Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments**

In accordance with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to his or her child's participation in required assessments.

**Accessing Student Records**

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores
- Grades

- Disciplinary records
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child's classroom.
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term "intervention strategy" is defined by law

### **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and eligible students certain rights regarding student education records.

For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 7, are the right to:

- Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access;
- Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA;
- Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements. The office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20202

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance—including grades, test results, and disciplinary records—is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student's parent—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student:

- Reaches the age of 18,

- Is emancipated by a court, or
- Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution.

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student:

- When school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records.

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- Working with the student;
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
- Compiling statistical data;
- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs.

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer);
- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district's safe and supportive school program;
- A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.
- 

FERPA also permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information without written consent:

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.

- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [To prohibit this disclosure, see **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 7.]

Release of personally identifiable information to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wants to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.

The address of the principal's office is: 724 S. Sugar Rd, Edinburg, TX 78539.

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading guidelines.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports** on page 61, **Complaints and Concerns** on page 27, and Finality of Grades at policy FNG(LEGAL).]

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available at the principal's or superintendent's office [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net)

**Note:** The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available.

### **Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications**

A parent may request information regarding the professional qualifications of his or her child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

- Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
- Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived, and
- Is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification.



The parent also has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to the child.

### **A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances**

#### **Children of Military Families**

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements;
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities;
- Enrollment in the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN); and
- Graduation requirements.

The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:

- Called to active duty,
- On leave, or
- Returning from a deployment of at least four months.

The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](#).

### **Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments**

#### **Multiple-Birth Siblings**

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed in either the same classroom or separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB(LEGAL) for more information.]

#### **Safety Transfers/Assignments**

The board or its designee will honor a parent's request to transfer his or her child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom. The board will consult with the parent of a child who has engaged in bullying before deciding to transfer the child to another campus.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for more information.

[See **Bullying** on page23, and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

The district will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

[See policy FDE for more information.]

The board will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to another district campus or another district if the child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

### **Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal**

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within ten district business days.

### **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)**

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year.

The district will grant partial course credit by semester when the student only passes one semester of a two-semester course

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries—or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries—is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest-grade level at that particular school.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

- Assist the student with the completion of applications for admission or financial aid;
- Arrange and accompany the student on campus visits;
- Assist in researching and applying for private or institution-sponsored scholarships;
- Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy;
- Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); and
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

[See **Credit by Examination** on page33, **Course Credit** on page 33, and **A Student in Foster Care** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined..**]

### **A Student Who Is Homeless**

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements;
- Immunization requirements;
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);

- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules;
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester course;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

Federal law allows a student who is homeless to remain enrolled in the “school of origin” or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a student who is homeless in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district’s eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

[See **Credit by Examination** on page 33, **Course Credit** on page 33, and **Students who are Homeless** on page 15.]

### **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

### **Special Education Referrals**

If a parent makes a **written request** for an initial evaluation for special education services to the director of special education services or to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than **15 school days** after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

**Note:** A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior-written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district decides to evaluate the student, it must complete the student’s initial evaluation and evaluation report no later than 45 school days from the day it receives a parent’s written consent. However, if the student is absent from school during the evaluation period for three or more school days, the evaluation period will be extended by the number of school days equal to the number of school days that the student is absent.

There is an **exception** to the 45-school-day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

Additional information regarding special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

### **Contact Person for Special Education Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is Mrs. S. Loya at 956-381-5522.

### **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes:

- Notice,
- An opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records,
- An impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and
- A review procedure.

### **Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals**

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services are:

- Contact person for 7<sup>th</sup> grade: Mr. W. Romero
- Contact person for 8<sup>th</sup> grade: Ms. M. Ochoa
  - Phone Number (956)381-5522

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page17.]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)

### **Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education**

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

### **A Student Who Receives Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home**

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the household be transferred to the same campus—if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

### **A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English**

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English.

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

[See **English Learners** on page 42 and **Special Programs** on page 67.]

### **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law—and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services—may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine whether the student needs services and supports under Section 504 in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 16 and policy FB for more information.]

## **SPARTANS HOLD TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD**

## **Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students**

This section contains important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements.

It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact the Administration office at (956)381-5522.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's

mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences.

Two important state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance and the other with how attendance affects the award of a student’s final grade or course credit—are discussed below.

### **Compulsory Attendance**

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 19 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and applicable subject area.

### **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student’s return to campus.
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
- An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
- Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student’s participation in the activity outside of school hours.

For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments.

The district will allow a student in grades 6–12 to be absent for the purpose of sounding “Taps” at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.

### **Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

#### ***All Grade Levels***

School employees must investigate and report violations of the compulsory attendance law.

A student absent without permission from school, any class, any required special program, or any required tutorial will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

## **Students with Disabilities**

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

### **Ages 6–18**

When a student ages 6–18 incurs three or more unexcused absences within a four-week period, the law requires the school to send notice to the parent.

The notice will:

- Remind the parent of his or her duty to monitor the student's attendance and require the student to attend school;
- Request a conference between school administrators and the parent; and
- Inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures, including a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, referrals to counseling or other social services, or other appropriate measures.

The truancy prevention facilitator for STISD Preparatory Academy is Mrs. C. Ponce. For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student age 12–18 incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

[See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

## **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)**

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend the class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days may receive credit or a final grade if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the class's instructional requirements. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

If a student attends fewer than 75 percent of the class days or does not complete the principal-approved plan, then the attendance review committee will determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade. [See policy FEC for more information.]

All absences, excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement. To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

If makeup work is completed, absences listed under **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** on page 18 will be considered extenuating circumstances.

A transfer or migrant student incurs absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.

Absences incurred due to the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances if the student makes up the work missed in each class.

The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences

The committee will consider whether the student or student's parent had any control over the absences.

The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.

The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and discuss ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

### **Documentation after an Absence (All Grade Levels)**

A parent must provide an explanation for any absence upon the student's arrival or return to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent. The campus may accept a phone call from the parent but reserves the right to require a written note.

A note signed by the student will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law.

The campus will document in its attendance records whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

**Note:** The district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence, unless the absence is an exemption under compulsory attendance laws.

### **Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)**

Upon returning to school, a student absent for more than two consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence. Otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence to determine whether an absence will be excused or unexcused.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL) for more information.]

### **Accountability under State and Federal Law**

South Texas ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of accountability is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, including:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district, compiled by TEA;
- The district's financial management report, which includes the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA; and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

Accountability information can be found on the district's website at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division](#) and the [TEA homepage](#).



## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy offers an excellent program not only to prepare our students to be successful at a South Texas ISD magnet high school, but to be successful in post-secondary education. The school counselors provide students and their parent's information regarding the academic programs. Below is the sequence of courses offered at STISD Preparatory Academy to prepare our students:

<b>7<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
Language Arts 7 Honors (meets every day) Reading 7 if required for the student	Language Arts 8 Honors ♦ • English I Honors Reading 8 if required for the student
Math 8 Honors Math 8 (meets every day)	♦ Algebra I Honors ♦ Algebra I C.P. (meets every day) ♦ Geometry Honors
♦ IPC Honors (meets every day) ♦ IPC C.P. (meets every day) Integrated Physics & Chemistry	♦ Biology Honors (meets every day) ♦ Biology C.P. (meets every day)
Texas History Honors U.S. History Honors	U.S. History Honors ♦ • World Geography Honors
Physical Education	Physical Education
♦ Fundamentals of Computer Science	♦ PLTW Gateway to Technology ♦ Principals of Health Science ♦ Robotics I

**\*Important Notice:** One year of a fine arts course is required for all students in grades 6-8.

<b>Enrichment Courses</b>	<b>Enrichment Courses</b>
♦ Robotics I	♦ Fundamentals of Computer Science
♦ Art I ♦ Theater Arts I ♦ Music Instrumental Ensemble ♦ Music Strings I ♦ Music Choir I	♦ Art I ♦ Theater Arts I ♦ Music Instrumental Ensemble ♦ Music Strings I ♦ Music Choir I
	♦ Spanish I Honors ♦ Chinese I Honors

- ♦ High School Course (credit will be posted on high school transcript)
- English I Honors & W. Geo Honors (Pre-requisite: Credit by Exam)

### **Academic Dishonesty/Cheating/Plagiarism**

Academic dishonesty, cheating or plagiarism is not acceptable. Cheating includes the copying of another student's homework, class work, test answers, etc. as one's own. Plagiarism is the use of another person's original ideas or writing without giving credit to the true author. A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty will be subject to loss of credit for the work in question, as well as disciplinary penalties, according to the Student Code of Conduct

### **Awards and Honors**

STISD Preparatory Academy recognizes individual students for their outstanding accomplishments at the end of the school year. In order for a student to be eligible for recognition they must excel in a club, organization, or academics. Each organization has established their own eligibility criteria to recognize their participants. Please verify with sponsors for the set criteria.

Please note, criteria for each organization is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances and/or deemed by administration.

### **BACKPACKS**

Backpacks are allowed at STISD Preparatory Academy to carry materials to and from school. Backpacks are to remain in the student's locker throughout the academic day. They are not allowed in the classrooms for safety precautions. Backpacks may be clear, mesh or regular, but must be small enough to fit inside a locker.

### **BELL SCHEDULE**

The schedule below is the usual daily schedule for STISD Preparatory Academy. There may be times when the bell schedule is altered.

<b>SEVENTH GRADE</b>		<b>EIGHTH GRADE</b>	
First Period	8:30 - 9:50	First Period	8:30 - 9:50
Second Period	9:55 - 11:15	Second Period	9:55 - 11:15
Lunch	11:15 - 11:45	Spartan Academic Mentoring (SAM)	11:15 - 11:45
Spartan Academic Mentoring (SAM)	11:45 - 12:15	Lunch	11:45 - 12:15
Third Period	12:20 - 1:40	Third Period	12:20 - 1:40
Fourth Period	1:45 - 3:05	Fourth Period	1:45 - 3:05
Support/Enrichment Time	3:10 - 4:00	Support/Enrichment Time	3:10 - 4:00

### **BULLYING**

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;

- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined in state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, any other internet-based communication tool.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by completing the Anonymous Issue & Concern Report at [www.preparatoryacademy.stisd.net/students](http://www.preparatoryacademy.stisd.net/students)

The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

If an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may, in certain circumstances, notify law enforcement. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying.

Available counseling options will be provided to the affected individuals, including any student who witnessed the bullying.

Any retaliation against a student who reports an incident of bullying is prohibited.

Upon recommendation of the administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district.

The parent of a student who has been determined to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 14.]

A copy of the district's bullying policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook as an appendix.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 14, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 34, **Hazing** on page 45, policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.

### **CAFETERIA**

See "School Facilities."

## **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS**

South Texas Preparatory Academy offers career and technical education programs in the following areas: PLTW Gateway to Technology, Principals of Health Science, Robotics I. These programs will be offered without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. South Texas ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and CTE programs.

## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

### **Warning signs of Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has been or is being sexually abused may exhibit physical, behavioral, or emotional warning signs, including:

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches;
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior; or
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 34.]

### **Warning Signs of Trafficking**

Child trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently contact victims online.

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude;
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology);
- Tattoos or branding;
- Refillable gift cards;
- Frequent runaway episodes;
- Multiple phones or social media accounts;
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone;
- Unexplained injuries;

- Isolation from family, friends, and community; and
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips;
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit;
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students;
- Owning a large debt and being unable to pay it off;
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours;
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss;
- Not being in control of his or her own money;
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver; and
- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

### **Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Children may be more reluctant to disclose sexual abuse than physical abuse and neglect and may only disclose sexual abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, it is important to be calm and comforting if your child or another child confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing by telling you.

If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs.

To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#).

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to the CPS division of the DFPS at 1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)).

### **Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

The following websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet](#)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](#)
- [Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team](#)
- [Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](#)
- [Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault](#)
- [National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking](#)

## **CLASS SCHEDULES**

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day.

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy FNG(LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net). The complaint forms can be accessed online at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) or at the principal's or superintendent's office.

- To file a formal complaint a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form.
- In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner.
- If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may request a conference with the superintendent.
- If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

## **CONDUCT**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

All students are entitled to enjoy the basic rights of citizenship recognized and protected by law for persons of their age and maturity. STISD Preparatory Academy will foster a climate of mutual respect for the rights of others. Students are expected to respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and District staff.

The District's rules of conduct and discipline are established to achieve and maintain order in the school. Students who violate the rights of others or who violate District or school rules will be subject to disciplinary measures designed to correct the misconduct and to promote adherence by all students to their responsibilities as citizens in the STISD Preparatory Academy community.

### **Campus Behavior Coordinator**

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The campus behavior coordinators are Ms. M. Ochoa and Mr. W. Romero.

**Deliveries**

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch.

**Disruptions of School Operations**

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district.

**Relationships among students**

Many friendships develop during the Jr. High school years. However, a public display of affection is not considered appropriate behavior for students, and will not be tolerated on campus.

**Social Events**

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

Parents, we know that your child's safety is your number one concern no matter how old they are or what sort of event they're attending/celebrating. Due to limited space in our pick up/parking area, no party buses or limousine vehicles are permitted on STISD Preparatory Academy's school grounds

## Student Discipline Referral Chart

South Texas Preparatory will use a discipline chart for all students who have violated school rules or the Code of Conduct. The chart is an attempt to standardize as much as possible the consequences which a student faces when he/she has violated rules or the Student Code of Conduct. Furthermore, it is a useful tool for the student and parent to visualize where the student is in the discipline process.

As a student continues to violate policy, depending upon the assigned level of an infraction, the student will move into more serious stages of consequences. Hopefully, the student will alter his or her behavior upon realizing the current and future consequences.

The goal, of course, is two-fold: a safer, more peaceful learning environment and a greater chance of success for the student. Research has shown that academic success for the individual and for the student body is closely tied to a student's behavior and the overall atmosphere of the school.

Students will be rewarded by taking school sponsored field trips throughout the year when they follow the criteria set per semester. In order for the student to participate for every field trip per semester, a student must not have more than the following items:

A student must not have more than **5** lunch detentions assigned by administrator only;

A student must not have more than **3** after school detentions per semester;

A student must not have more than **1** referral; and

A student must not serve any type of school suspension or other alternative placement.

Students may be assigned detention outside of school hours (for not more than an hour at a time) on one or more days if a student violates the school's code of conduct. The detention shall be assigned for the following day so that the teacher and student may notify his/her parents of detention. Failure to attend an assigned detention or violation of detention hall rules will result in further disciplinary action by an administrator.

The following is a representation of the Student Discipline Chart. Parents are encouraged to go over it with their child and to encourage good behavior for his/her success. Rules and policies subject to change based on extraordinary circumstances deemed by administration.

### South Texas ISD Student Discipline Chart

<b><u>Level One</u></b>		
<p>— Student moves to Level Two after three infractions at Level One or committing a Level Two infraction.</p> <p>— Student does not return to this level after he or she is at Level Two.</p>		
<b>Possible Level-One Consequences</b>	<b>Level-One Infractions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Detention (administrative discretion)</li> <li>- 1 – 3 days in-school suspension</li> <li>- Parent conference</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Confiscation</li> <li>- Behavior contract</li> <li>- Service</li> <li>- Grade reduction</li> <li>- Filing of charges</li> <li>- Combination of above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Failing to comply with directives (insubordination) (mild, administrator's discretion)</li> <li>- Showing disrespect, rudeness (mild, admin.'s discretion)</li> <li>- Disrupting class (mild, administrator's discretion)</li> <li>- Misbehaving</li> <li>- Using or having cell phone on when not allowed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in inappropriate public display of affection</li> <li>- Horse playing</li> <li>- Cheating or copying</li> <li>- Leaving school grounds or activity without permission</li> <li>- Skipping class</li> <li>- Skipping detention</li> <li>- Skipping intervention</li> <li>- Behaving in any way that disrupts the school</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using any digital or electronic device when not allowed</li> <li>- Not following directions/refusing to cooperate</li> <li>- Violating dress code</li> </ul>	environment or educational process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Violating safety rules</li> <li>- Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL TWO</b></p> <p>— Once at Level Two, student does not begin at or return to Level One.</p> <p>— Student moves to Level Three after two Level Two infractions or committing a Level Three infraction.</p> <p>— Student does not return to this level after he or she is at Level Three</p>		
<b>Possible Level – Two Consequences</b>	<b>Level-Two Infractions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 –10 days in-school suspension</li> <li>- 1 – 3 days out-of-school suspension</li> <li>- Parent Conference</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Removal from activities, class, or transportation</li> <li>- Behavior contract</li> <li>- Service</li> <li>- Filing of charges</li> <li>- Combination of above</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repeatedly violating Level One infractions</li> <li>- Disrupting class (serious, administrator’s discretion)</li> <li>- Misbehaving in in-school suspension or detention</li> <li>- Showing disrespect, rudeness (serious, admin.’s discretion)</li> <li>- Disobeying school bus rules</li> <li>- Being truant</li> <li>- Failing to comply with directives (insubordination) (serious, administrator’s discretion)</li> <li>- Refusing to accept consequences assigned by teacher</li> <li>- Falsifying school documents including paper records and computer records</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scuffling</li> <li>- Using vulgar language or obscene gestures (not to staff)</li> <li>- Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct (mild, administrator’s discretion)</li> <li>- Recording the voice or image of another without prior consent or in any way that disrupts</li> <li>- Damaging or vandalizing the property of another (under \$50.00)</li> <li>- Stealing or assisting in stealing the property of others (under \$50.00)</li> <li>- Possessing fireworks, stink or smoke bombs, or any pyrotechnic device</li> <li>- Possessing or using a laser pointer for other than school-approved use</li> <li>- Possessing matches or a lighter</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL THREE</b></p> <p>— Once at Level Three, student does not begin at or return to lower levels.</p>		
<b>Possible Level-Three Consequences</b>	<b>Level-Three Infractions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10+ days in-school suspension</li> <li>- 1 – 3 days out-of-school suspension</li> <li>- Parent conference</li> <li>- Restitution</li> <li>- Removal from class, activity or transportation</li> <li>- Behavior Contract</li> <li>- Service</li> <li>- Combination of above</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repeatedly violating Level-Two infractions</li> <li>- Refusing to accept consequence given by an administrator</li> <li>- Misbehaving on bus to the point of distracting the driver, drivers of other vehicles, or pedestrians</li> <li>- Bullying-name calling, ethnic or racial slurs, or derogatory statements that school officials have reason to believe will disrupt the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distributing or sharing personal student contact/confidential information</li> <li>- Committing extortion or blackmail</li> <li>- Damaging or vandalizing the property of others (\$50-\$100)</li> <li>- Damaging or defacing school property, including using graffiti (including, but not limited to textbooks, lockers, furniture, equipment, walls) (under \$50.00)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- program or incite violence</li> <li>- Harassing</li> <li>- Using vulgar language to staff</li> <li>- Causing an individual to act through use of threat of force (coercion)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using fireworks, stink or smoke bombs, or any pyrotechnic device</li> <li>- Using matches or a lighter</li> <li>- Possessing any tobacco products</li> <li>- Possessing a razor, box cutter, pocketknife, any small knife, or similar item</li> <li>- Inciting/encouraging a fight or scuffle</li> <li>- Gambling</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LEVEL FOUR</b></p> <p>— Once a student completes Level Four consequences, he or she will resume at Level Two for all infractions lower than Level Three.</p>		
<b>Possible Level –Four Consequences</b>	<b>Level-Four Infractions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disciplinary hearing</li> <li>- Alternative Education Program (AEP) placement (to be determined at disciplinary hearing)</li> <li>- Expulsion hearing with superintendent or designee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repeatedly violating Level-Three infractions (15-30 school days)</li> <li>- Repeated misbehavior causing disruption of the normal bus activities or route (10-30 school days)</li> <li>- Using a razor, box cutter, pocketknife, small knife, or similar item in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily harm (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing a look-alike weapon (first offense 20- 35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing or using an air gun or bb gun (15-30 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing or using a stun gun (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing or using pepper spray or mace (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing ammunition (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing or using any articles not generally considered to be weapons when the principal or designee determines that danger exists (15-30 School days)</li> <li>- Use or distribution of any tobacco product on a school grounds, bus, or at any school activity (15-30</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Having or taking prescription drugs or over-the counter drugs at school or at activity other than as provided by district policy (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Threatening a student, employee, or volunteer (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Making hit lists (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36- 60 school days, Third offense 61- 90 school days)</li> <li>- Engaging in gang-like activity (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Sexually harassing (also gender-based harassment) (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days.</li> <li>- Engaging in conduct that constitutes dating violence (abuse) (First Offense 20-35 school days, Second Offense 36-60 school days, Third Offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Engaging in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts (First Offense 20-35 school days, Second Offense 36-60 school days, Third Offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Participating in hazing (First Offense 20-35 school days, Second Offense 36-60 school days, Third Offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Causing an individual to act through the use of threat or violence (coercion) (First Offense 20-35 school days, Second</li> </ul>

	<p>school days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possessing, distributing, or using illegal drugs, alcohol, inhalants, paraphernalia, or look- alike drugs (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Possessing, distributing, or abusing prescription drugs (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Being under the influence of over-the-counter drugs (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Fighting (First offense 20- 35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<p>Offense 36-60 school days, Third Offense 61-90 school days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engaging in inappropriate physical or sexual contact (First Offense 20-35 school days, Second Offense 36-60 school days, Third Offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Damaging or vandalizing property of another individual (\$100+) (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Damaging or defacing school property pertaining to the school dwelling (\$50.00+) (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Stealing or assisting to steal property of another individual (\$50+) (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Aggressive, disruptive action or group demonstration that substantially disrupts or materially interferes with school activities (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> <li>- Violating any local, state, or federal laws. (First offense 20-35 school days, Second offense 36-60 school days, Third offense 61-90 school days)</li> </ul>
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### **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS**

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

## **COUNSELING**

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

- A guidance curriculum to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives;
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development; and
- Systems to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

The district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum, available to parents to review during school hours.

### **Academic Counseling**

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings. Each spring, students in grade seven will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities. In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction related to how the student can best prepare for high school, college, and a career.

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should talk to the counselors' secretary. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

## **COURSE CREDIT**

A student in grades 9-12, or in a lower grade when a student is enrolled in a high school credit-bearing course, will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1 credit) course, the student's grades for both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

## **CREDIT BY EXAM**

Students may use credit by exam to earn credit for acceleration (must score 80 +) or credit recovery (must score 70+). Students must obtain permission and make arrangements for credit by exam with their counselor, and they must take the exam and receive results before the first day of school. A student may take an exam no more than twice.

## **DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION**

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH.]

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, threats to harm a student's current dating partner, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

### **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

### **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance

Students must not engage in harassment behaviors motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, or disability directed toward another student.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Students are expected to treat other students and District employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop.

The District encourages parental and student support in its efforts to address and prevent harassment in any form in the public schools. Students and/or parents are encouraged to discuss their questions or concerns about the expectations in this area with a teacher, counselor, principal or designee.

A student who believes he or she has been harassed by another student or by a District employee is encouraged to report the incident to the principal. The allegations will be investigated and addressed. A substantiated complaint against a student will result in disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense and the Student Code of Conduct.

The student or a parent may appeal the decision of the principal regarding the outcome of the investigation in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL). [See also policy FNCL.]. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on the district's website.

### **Sexual Harassment and Gender-based Harassment**

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person, who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, and assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or any other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH (LOCAL) for the appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.

## **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the district that it is investigating the matter and requests that the district delay its investigation, the district will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation. In limited circumstances, a student in grade 8 may also be eligible to enroll in a course through the TxVSN.

Depending on the TxVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the "no pass, no play" rules. In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TxVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the counselor.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the TxVSN in order to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district will not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS**

#### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal and sponsor/teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL). Any student who posts non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

#### **Non-school Materials...from others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal or designee for prior review. The principal or designee will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA or GF.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD (LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB (LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

#### **District's Jurisdiction**

The district has jurisdiction over its students during the regular school day and while going to and from school on district transportation. The district's jurisdiction includes any activity during the



school day on school grounds, and attendance at any school related activity, regardless of time or location. The District's rules of student conduct apply to all school-sponsored and school-related activities, on or off campus. Students who violate these rules will be subject to disciplinary consequences. Please refer to the STISD Preparatory Academy Student Code of Conduct for additional information on discipline. Students who violate the code of student conduct may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **DISTRICT ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (DAEP)**

South Texas I.S.D. maintains a state-mandated alternative education program. Students may be placed in for any infraction against the student code of conduct. However, it is usually used for serious offenses and repeated offenses. Recommendation for a student's placement in the DAEP is at the discretion of the assistant principal, and placement is usually by the principal after the student is afforded due process at a disciplinary hearing.

### **DRESS AND GROOMING**

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with district and school guidelines.

If the principal or designee determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student will be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Students are expected to adhere to the following standards of dress and grooming:

- Students should come to school well-groomed and appropriately dressed. Note: Examples of inappropriate dress would include: backless or semi-backless blouses, see-through apparel, mesh stockings/blouses/shirts, low cut blouses, pajamas, pajama slippers, jeans worn at a level between the knees and waist, jeans with cutoff waistbands, leather jewelry and other accessories with metallic studs, blouses with one shoulder only, blouses with straps less than three fingers in width, excessively tight clothing, gang or cult-related clothing, rainbow or related hue-colored hair causing distraction, absence of foundation garments, etc. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive.
- Caps may be worn in the halls. Each teacher has the right to have students remove their caps in his/her classroom.
- Female students are not allowed to wear short blouses that will reveal the waistline area.
- All students are required to wear appropriate footwear while on school premises. Note: Due to safety reasons in laboratory situations, students are not allowed to wear shower or beach thongs to school.
- Apparel of any kind of obscene slogans, endorsements of any alcoholic beverages or tobacco products, emblems, or writing that is deemed inappropriate by the administration will not be worn.

- Males and females may wear shorts. The length of the shorts shall be fingertip length, i.e. the student may wear shorts that are at least as long as his/her own hand, held alongside the body. Students are not allowed to wear cut-off jeans as shorts.
- Males and females may wear earrings. Piercing in any other location of the body will not be worn at school.

### **SUPPLEMENTAL DRESS CODE FOR SOUTH TEXAS PREPARATORY ACADEMY**

South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy has established additional dress code requirements, which supplement that of the South Texas Independent School District. The dress code is in effect anytime a student is on campus or at a school-related activity.

Administrators/designees may conduct checks to ensure compliance. Judgment of dress code/grooming violation/compliance is determined by the administrator/designee. If an administrator/designee determines that a student's grooming, manner of dress, or accessories violates the dress code, the student will be given the opportunity to correct the problem immediately. If this is not immediately possible, the administrator/designee will assign the student to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day or until the violation is corrected. Also, a student may be removed from a school activity if he/she is in violation. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary consequences.

☛ **Finally, since styles and fads come and go, it is impossible to anticipate all changes before they appear in students' dress and grooming to be able to incorporate them into the dress code. It is, therefore, at the judgment of the administrator/designee to adapt the dress code at any time to these changes.**

**Students are expected to adhere to the following standards of dress and grooming:**

- The length of any skirt or dress cannot be more than two inches above the kneecap, nor may slits in clothing extend two inches or more above the knee.
- No gang/cult-related clothing, accessories, or imagery is permitted.
- Chains attached at the waistline are not permitted.
- Undergarments may not be worn as outer garments nor may sleepwear (including slippers) be worn.
- Science and Gateway to Technology classes will follow OSHA standards as it regards dress code and safety, including footwear.
- Male students should not wear sleeveless shirts.
- Frayed/tattered jeans are allowed, provided there is no exposed skin above the knees.

### **Halloween Costume Guidelines**

Students may dress up for Halloween. Costumes must conform to STISD Preparatory Academy's dress code. Spartan dress code is strictly enforced, no revealing clothing, appropriate shoes must be worn and the length of the skirt/dress must be no more than two inches above the knee cap, nor may slits in clothing extend two inches or more above the knee.

Basic Costume Restrictions:

1. For safety reasons, costumes may not have parts that interfere with learning:
  - No masks or face paintings that cover the student's face are permitted.

- Costumes that restrict movement or vision, prevent sitting at desks, or prevent participation in physical education class.
- Costumes must not obstruct movement in the hallways.
- 2. Costumes may not be violent or suggestive.
- 3. Costumes may not promote violence or have accessories or props that could be used as a weapon.
- 4. Costumes should not include items with sound effects, lights or other distracting components.
- 5. Costumes must be sensitive to all religious and ethnic groups; free from any language or symbols that target or inappropriately identify groups of students.
- 6. Students, if in doubt, see an administrator.

## **DRILLS**

See information under “Safety.”

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

### **Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones**

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal cell phones; however, these devices must remain turned off and not visible during the instructional day. Cell phones may be used for personal purposes before/after school, and during lunch (note: privilege may be revoked by administration). Cell phone use may be permitted for approved instructional purposes by the classroom teacher.

All electronic devices with internet capabilities is strictly prohibited during all testing scheduled.

The use of cell phones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event.

Telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers and I-Pods, etc. are permitted on campus for school use. They may be used during lunch, and after school as well. These items are for personal use only and when using, earphones must be used. Telecommunication devices may be used in the classroom as part of planned educational exercises.

**The school shall not be responsible for any loss or theft of any electronic devices. If a student brings such an item to school, it is his/her responsibility to keep it secure.**

Students who violate cell phone policy shall be subject to established disciplinary measures. Students who have a visible or activated cell phone during class time without permission (including passing periods) shall receive the following disciplinary consequences:

1. The first offense, during a semester, the student shall receive a warning;
2. The second offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone getting turned over to an administrator and returned to the student at the end of the school day;
3. The third offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone being turned over to an administrator and returned only to the parent after a conference is held.
4. The fourth offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone being confiscated and held by the principal. The confiscated cell phone shall be returned to the parent at the end of the school year after a conference is held.

The fifth or further offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone being confiscated and held by the principal. A hearing with the principal shall be held, which may result in suspension and/or an alternative center placement for the student.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use. When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in the use of district-owned technology resources for instructional purposes; specific resources may be issued individually to students. Use of these technological resources, which include the district's network systems and use of district equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### **Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources**

Students are prohibited from sending, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

This type of behavior may constitute bullying or harassment, as well as impede future endeavors of a student. We encourage parents to review with their child the ["Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course](#), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of sexting.

Any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of the district's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In some cases, the consequence may be expulsion.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school will need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL-CLOSING INFORMATION**

In case of an emergency, the school will notify the proper authorities as to the closing of the school. Information is available on local radio and television.

### **END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS**

[See Standardized Testing on page 67.]

### **ENGLISH LEARNERS**

A student who is an English learner is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), consisting of both district personnel and at least one parent representative, will determine whether the student qualifies for services. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an English learner and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make instructional and assessment decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

## **EXAMS**

All teachers give semester exams in their courses. The exams count as twenty-five percent of the semester grade.

Study guides for semester and/or final exams will be provided to students two weeks prior to scheduled exam week. Before exam week, a three-day minimum of review will be provided for classes that meet daily, and a two-day minimum of review will be provided for classes that meet every other day.

Students who are absent for a semester exam may make up the exam. All accommodated exams will be administered after student returns from personal leave. A written request stating details must be submitted to the school principal, Mrs. A. Castro, with at least two weeks' notice.

***There will be no re-test on semester final exams.***

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor.

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. [See <http://www.uil texas.org> for additional information.]

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ten absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

## **Standards of Behavior**

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

## **Offices and Elections**

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for student officers. These groups establish their own criteria for these elections with approval from the principal or designee.

## **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, etc.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Each student will receive one identification card free of charge. The ID will be utilized for several purposes and must be worn at all times. If lost, there will be a \$5.00 fee for any replacements. Student must notify his/her homeroom teacher (SAM) for replacement request.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal or designee. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

### **FUND-RAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least thirty days before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

### **GANG-FREE ZONES**

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

### **GRADING GUIDELINES**

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be provided.

***There will be no retest on semester final exams.***

### **HAZING**

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated to, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students.

- Any type of physical brutality;
- An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
- An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; and
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.



## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrhea illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions. Contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

**All immunizations or exemption statements will be submitted to the school before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school.**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch, 1100 West 49th Street, Austin, Texas 78756; or online at <https://corequest.dshs.texas.gov/>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, varicella (chicken pox), and meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB (LEGAL) and the Department of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

## **Bacterial Meningitis**

State law specifically requires the district to provide the following information:

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms.

Children (over 1-year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing, sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects,

such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.

\*Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination for a student ages 11 to 12 or for a student enrolling in grades 7 through 12, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between ages 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age.

### **Food Allergies**

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment.

### **State Mandated Health Screenings**

The school nurse will be performing the required visual examination of **your child's spine**. The purpose of spinal screenings is to detect the signs of abnormal spinal curvatures at their earliest stages so that the need for treatment can be determined.

The procedure for screening is to look at your child's back while he/she stands and then bends forward. Boys and girls will be screened separately and individually. Parents will be notified of the results of the screenings only if medical follow-up is necessary. These screening procedures do not replace your child's need for regular health care and check-ups. If for any reason, you do not want your child screened, please submit an affidavit of exemption to the school nurse.

Acanthosis Screening – 7<sup>th</sup> grade only

Vision & Hearing Screenings – All new to district

Spinal Screening Policy Effective 2020-2021 School Year:

**Scoliosis** (spinal screenings)- Girls to be screened in grade 7

Boys to be screened in grade 8

### **Head Lice Protocols**

If a student is referred by the parent/guardian, school staff, or is a self – referral for signs or symptoms of head lice, health service staff will:

1. Screen the student for evidence of head lice. An instrument such as an applicator stick may be used to part the hair.
2. Provide privacy during the examination and prevent any breach of confidentiality.

If head lice and or nits are found:

1. Students will not be excluded from school. Effective December, 2012, the Texas Administrative Code and the Texas Department of State Health Services has removed the exclusion requirements for head lice.
2. Positive or negative findings will not be reported to the teacher or other school staff members due to confidentiality.
3. Health Service Personnel will contact the parent/guardian and:
  - a) Inform them that evidence of head lice has been found:
  - b) Inform them that they may pick the child up to treat them or the child may remain at school until the end of the school day.
  - c) Urge that the student and all family members with evidence of head lice be treated.
  - d) Inform them that a Head Lice Information Sheet will be sent home with the student.
  - e) Advise to contact their physician or pharmacist for information regarding approved head lice treatment.
4. Health Service Personnel will provide age appropriate education to the child regarding prevention.

If head lice and or nits are Not found:

1. Send student back to class.
2. As stated in #2 above – “Positive or negative findings will not be reported to the teacher or other school staff members due to confidentiality”.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](#).

## MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, unexpired, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
- In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
- When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse.

In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse for information. [See policy FFAC (LEGAL).]

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school. For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

### **Mental Health Support**

The district has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention;
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community);
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the district has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the district's mental health liaison for further information.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication that is intended to alter perception, emotion, mood, or behavior.

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [See policy FFEB for more information.]

For related information, see:

- **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation or Provide a Mental Health Care Service** on page 6 for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information;
- **Counseling** on page 33 for the district's comprehensive school counseling program;
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** on page 51 for campus and community mental and physical health resources; and
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** on page 51 for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

## **Psychotropic Drugs**

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

## **Physical Activity for Students in Middle School**

Students in junior high school will engage in thirty minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters.

## **Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education**

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will not actively participate in skill demonstration but will remain in class to learn the concepts of the lessons

## **Physical Health Screenings / Examinations**

### ***Athletics Participation***

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

- A district athletics program.
- District marching band.
- Any district extracurricular program identified by the superintendent.

This examination is required to be submitted annually to STISD Preparatory Academy.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder. A student may request an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to his or her required physical examination.

See the UIL's explanation of [sudden cardiac arrest](#) for more information.

## **Other Examinations and Screenings**

Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for Type 2 diabetes at the same time the district screens students for hearing and vision issues or for abnormal spinal curvatures.

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

## **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing school health

services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, and employee wellness. See policies at BDF and EHAA.

Information regarding the District's School Health Advisory Council, including the number of meetings scheduled or held during the year is available from the principal. [See also policies BDF and EHAA.]

### **Seizures**

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder.

### **Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)**

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of all tobacco products, e-cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies FNCD and GKA for more information.]

### **Other Health-Related Matters**

#### **Physical Fitness Assessment (FitnessGram)**

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the principal or designee to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

#### **Vending Machines**

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines.

#### **Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited**

The district and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products, electronic cigarette and (E-Cigarettes) by students and others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies at FNCD and GKA.]

#### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, and is available in the administration office. If you have any questions, please contact the maintenance and transportation office.

#### **Pest Management Plan**

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact maintenance and transportation office.



## **HOMEWORK**

Students can expect nightly homework, whether it is reading, studying, working on projects, etc. Because of the nature of the A-B block schedule, students are encouraged to do homework as soon as possible and not put it off so that they do not fall behind. A student will receive no more than thirty minutes of homework every time class meets.

Parents are expected to check on students' work routinely and encourage them to do their very best. Each student receives a planner in which to record assignments and deadlines. Parents should regularly check these planners. Before entering this school, students signed a compact in which they agreed to take on a number of commitments so that they can be successful. One of these reads, "I will take responsibility for completing and returning my assignments on time." However, there are some who, for some reason, do not do so. Since student achievement is of primary importance, students who do not complete assignments are assigned intervention techniques and eventually disciplinary consequences. Not completing assignments is unacceptable at STISD Preparatory Academy. If a student misplaces the planner, there will be a \$5.00 fee for a replacement.

## **HONOR ROLL**

Students are recognized on the honor roll each nine-week period. Students maintaining honor status in all their course work through the third nine weeks will be recognized at the annual awards assembly.

## **I.D. CARDS**

After i.d. cards are made available, students must carry them at all times when on campus or on school-sponsored trips or activities. I.D. Cards will be required to enter any school function or activities. Students must give the card over to any school personnel, including bus drivers, custodians, and security guards, when requested to do so. Failure to surrender the i.d. card will result in a disciplinary consequence for not following a directive. If lost, there will be a \$5.00 fee for any replacements. Student must notify his/her homeroom teacher (SAM) for replacement request.

## **IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION (ISS)**

In-school suspension is a disciplinary consequence option in which a student is placed for various types of misbehavior. The student remains in the ISS room under supervision throughout the day. He or she is expected to complete work assigned by his or her own teacher, comply with directives given by the ISS moderator, and follow all school rules. The number of days assigned is at the discretion of the administrator based on the misbehavior and the student's discipline record.

## **LATE ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL**

If a student arrives before 8:45 a.m., he or she is considered late, and should report directly to class. The teacher will issue a detention slip for the tardy if the teacher believes it is justified. However, if a parent escorts a student to the office and presents an acceptable reason for the tardiness, an administrator or designee can excuse the tardy. Repeated occurrences of this type of tardiness is considered unacceptable.

If a student arrives at 8:45 a.m. or after, he or she is considered absent, and should report to the attendance office accompanied by a guardian to obtain an Attendance Permit to present to teacher.

### **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

#### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

#### **Students Taken into Custody**

State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a law enforcement office to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- By a law enforcement office to obtain fingerprints of photographs to establish a student's identity where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a law enforcement officer, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

## **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register a sex offender.

[For further information, see policies FL (LEGAL).]

## **LEAVING CAMPUS**

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also note that picking up a child early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place in order to document parental consent:

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

## **When on School Grounds**

- Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.
- Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Important Note: ***No Early Dismissal after 3:30 p.m.***

When picking up a student, the parent/guardian must remain in the front office to wait for the student to arrive. For the child's safety, the office staff must confirm that the student is accompanied by the approved parent/guardian listed on the school's communication system.

No over the phone authorizations will be allowed when making changes on individuals who may pick-up your child from campus. Any changes to the emergency card need to be made in person.

## **LIBRARY**

See under "School Facilities."

## **LOST AND FOUND**

A lost and found collection box is located in the campus office. A student who loses an item should check the lost and found box. The district discourages bringing personal items of high monetary value to school, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### **Makeup Work Because of Absence**

For any class missed, the student must be given the opportunity to make up their assignments. The teacher will assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy FEC (LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding attendance for credit or final grade.

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify his or her teachers ahead of time about any absences.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

### **DAEP Makeup Work**

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum courses in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA (LEGAL).]

### **In-school Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work**

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FO (LEGAL).]

### **MEETINGS (NON-CURRICULUM RELATED GROUPS)**

See under "School Facilities."

### **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the district does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to admission and employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX Coordinator (see below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, the Boy Scouts Act, and Title II.

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual

harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment: Mr. J. Hembree, Deputy Superintendent, 100 Med High Dr. Mercedes, TX 78570, 956-565-2454, [www.jeff.hembree@stisd.net](mailto:www.jeff.hembree@stisd.net). Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator: Mr. J. Hembree, Deputy Superintendent, 100 Med High Dr. Mercedes, TX 78570, 956-565-2454, [www.jeff.hembree@stisd.net](mailto:www.jeff.hembree@stisd.net).
- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the superintendent: Mr. A. Lara, 100 Med High Dr. Mercedes, TX 78570, 956-565-2454, [www.antonio.lara@stisd.net](mailto:www.antonio.lara@stisd.net)

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD for more information.]

### **OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION**

Out of school suspension is a disciplinary consequence option in which a student is placed for various types of misbehavior. The student is to remain at home to serve the consequence. Teachers will be notified of placement and assignments will be provided electronically. The student is expected to complete the work assigned by their teachers and submit once they return to campus. The number of days assigned is at the discretion of the administrator based on the misbehavior and the student's discipline record.

### **PHONE MESSAGES FOR STUDENTS**

The office staff will try their best to deliver messages to students. However, no messages will be given to students after 2:30 p.m.

No over the phone authorizations will be allowed when making changes on individuals who may pick-up your child from campus. Any changes to the emergency card need to be made in person.

### **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

One minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first-class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. [See policy EC (LEGAL) for more information.]

### **PRAYER**

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **PROHIBITED ITEMS**

Students may not bring, possess, use the following items to school: blankets, stuffed animals (etc.); costumes (unless school related); musical instruments (unless for music class); sports equipment (unless provided by staff); amplifiers or other amplified electronic devices; portable speakers, skate boards, skates, or scooters; pen laser lights; paint balls; hookah pens; any items meant for pranks, energy drinks, or snacks, cupcakes, cakes that are given/shared with others. Behavioral consequences can be assigned for bringing the listed items or any other items that have potential for disruption, health risk, or hazard.

### **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment, and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In order to be promoted to grade 9, student enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment.

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policy EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student at the middle school or junior high level who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a school counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the school counselor and policy EIF (LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

### **REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every nine weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent is requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher; if the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG (LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject.

### **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

What are Restorative Practices?

Because we want every member of our STISD Preparatory Academy community to feel seen, heard and respected, we are excited to be one of the first and few schools in the state to be implementing Restorative Practice, a positive school climate strategy.

Restorative practices are positive school climate strategies intended to cultivate a culture in which everyone feels like they belong. These practices build a sense of connectivity, care and community in which every member (student, teacher, staff member, and parent) feels that they are seen, heard, and respected.



At STISD Preparatory Academy, these strategies are primarily being used during the Spartan Academic Mentoring period through the use of circles (students and teachers sit in a circle) where discussions on relationship building, empathy, academic strengthening, self-discipline, accountability and other topics take place. Implementation of restorative circles take place at least twice per week.

Restorative Practices are about:

- \*Building relationships
- \*Improving campus climate
- \*Instilling a strong sense of belonging
- \*Student Engagement
- \*Meaningful accountability

Also, Restorative Practices can help set things right when the integrity of the community is challenged by harmful behaviors. Circle dialogue is a fundamental element of restorative dialogue. Circles support the two main goals of restorative practices: building community and responding to harms through dialogue that sets things right.

<b>Traditional Discipline Asks</b>	<b>Restorative Discipline Asks</b>
<b>What rule was broken?</b>	<b>What happened?</b>
<b>Who broke it?</b>	<b>Who was affected?</b>
<b>What should be the punishment?</b>	<b>What needs to be done to make it right?</b>

### 3 Goals of Restorative Practice

1. **Accountability** – Students have an opportunity to be accountable for the harm caused as well as the opportunity to repair the harm.
2. **Community Safety** – Students are empowered to help resolve conflict and maintain an environment where learning can occur.
3. **Skill Development** – Restorative Practice works to address underlying factors that lead people to cause harm and gives students necessary tools for creating and maintaining community.

### **SAFETY**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the district. Although the district has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, campus behavior coordinator, teachers, or bus drivers.

- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by completing the Anonymous Issue & Concern Report at [www.preparatoryacademy.stisd.net/students](http://www.preparatoryacademy.stisd.net/students).
- Be aware of the emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### **Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

Periodically, the school will conduct preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

### **Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed**

The district will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students enrolled in in grades 7–12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

The district will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

### **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete a Student Census / Emergency Card to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early because of severe weather or another emergency. If the student needs to leave during school hours, they will only be released to the people noted by parent/guardian on the Student Census / Emergency Card. Anyone that is not on the list will not be permitted to take your child. For safety purposes, we will not accept over the phone authorizations or written notes brought in by other than student guardian. Parents are welcome to make changes to this card anytime in person. These regulations are strictly enforced for the safety of your child. It is a District policy that a Photo Identification (ID) is presented when signing out any child.

### **Security Guards**

For the safety of the students, staff, and visitors and for good order, the district employs security guards for each campus. Security guards are to be respected and obeyed by the students. Parents are requested to follow directives given by the security guards, especially during student drop off and pick up times, to ensure safety and to expedite the flow of traffic.

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

### **Use by Students Before, During and After School**

Before, during, or after the school day, STISD Preparatory Academy students are not allowed to go to the high school buildings or grounds unless they have authorized permission or a class.

Before school and during lunch STISD Preparatory Academy students may only be in the cafeteria, the library, or the area between the cafeteria and the library unless they have authorized permission to be elsewhere.

**After school students must be either in the bus loading area or in the student pick-up area at the south side parking lot. All others must be in tutorial sessions, detention, meetings, or practices. After school, students should NOT be where there is no adult supervision, examples: quad area, track area, cafeteria surrounding, and roaming campus grounds. Loitering on campus is not allowed.**

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

The campus is open to students before school, beginning at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 4:00 p.m.

Unless a teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus. After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately or wait for their rides in the south-side pick-up area.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

### **Conduct Before and After School**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

### **When on School Grounds**

- Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.
- Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Use of Hallways during Class Time**

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass/planner to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a

pass/planner will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. In order to keep STISD Preparatory Academy a safe and orderly place, students are asked to walk on the right in the hallways. Students are asked to be quiet, courteous, and should show respect for fellow classmates by keeping their hands, feet, and objects to themselves. Students are expected to go directly to class.

### **Cafeteria Services**

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Information can be obtained from the Cafeteria Manager, Ms. Maryvel Venegas (956) 318-8521.

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO (LEGAL).] Students may bring a packed lunch, but families may only provide a meal and drink for their own child (ren). Policy does not allow a parent or student to bring food into the cafeteria to serve to other students, e.g., cakes and snacks for birthday parties, etc. If a parent or guardian brings fast food from any restaurant for his/her child, it may not be taken into the cafeteria and it must be consumed at the office. Also, students are not allowed to take cafeteria food outside the facility.

Parents are strongly encouraged to continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is depleted, cafeteria personnel will notify the student. The student will be allowed to continue purchasing meals for up to 3 days or up to \$12.00, whichever occurs first, and the district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance. If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the student's meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive an alternate meal.

Students are instructed to form a single line while waiting in the serving area. Food trays are not to be taken out of the cafeteria. Students are required to dispose of empty trays and silverware properly in trash cans after each meal. They are expected to help keep the dining area as clean as possible at all times. There will be no yelling, whistling, or boisterous conduct in the cafeteria.

### **Library**

The library Gateway to the World, is a learning laboratory with books, digitized resources, web subscription databases and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. It is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:15 p.m., Monday-Thursday and 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. on Friday. During class time, a student may go to the library only if he or she has a library pass which is issued at the teacher's discretion. Students may use the library before school or during lunch. A student must obtain a pass from their teacher to be able to utilize the library after school. It is imperative that all students have their ID badge when signing in at the KIOSK and for checking out items at the library. Students need to be aware of the library's purpose and not use it for social gatherings. Special services include interlibrary loan, research assistance, reading incentives and art exhibitions. Visit us on the web at <http://gateway.stisd.net/>.

### **Meetings of Non-Curriculum-Related Groups**

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB (LOCAL).

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

### **SCHOOL-SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS**

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes.

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need.

### **SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

District officials may search students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for example, reasonable suspicion or voluntary consent or pursuant to district policy providing for suspicion-less security procedures, including the use of metal detectors.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

### **Students' Desks and Lockers**

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. Lockers are assigned to students for their use in storing books and personal items. Responsibility for lost or stolen items is not assumed by the school or the administration. Every locker left unlocked will be considered out of use and its contents removed.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

### **Electronic Devices**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed. [See policy FNF (LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Trained Dogs**

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials. [For further information, see policy FNF (LOCAL).]

### **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the principal or designee.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's [Talking Book Program](#) provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

#### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)**

##### **Grades 7–8**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grade 7- Math 8,
- Reading, annually in grades 7–8,
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grade 7
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grade 8 is required by law in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. A student may be exempt from this requirement if:

- The student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level; or
- The student is enrolled in a special education program and the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee concludes the student has made sufficient progress in his or her individualized education plan (IEP). [See Promotion and Retention on page **Error! Bookmark not defined..**]

STAAR Alternate 2, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

### **End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments for Students Taking Courses for High School Credit**

At STISD Preparatory Academy students taking Algebra I, English I, and Biology will take End-of-Course Assessments. Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation and will also affect the plan under which the student may graduate. There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. A student who does not achieve the minimum required score on any individual assessment will be required to retake that assessment.

A student may choose to retake an EOC assessment in situations other than those listed above as well.

STAAR Alternate for students receiving special education service, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee. These particular EOC assessments may have different testing windows than the general assessments, and the ARD committee will determine whether successful performance on the assessments will be required for graduation.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The TDSHS maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/transition/mhsa.aspx>.

### **SUICIDE AWARENESS**

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access the following Web sites or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention and to find mental health services available in your area:

- <http://www.texasuicideprevention.org>

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Depending upon the circumstance, students who fail English Language Arts, mathematics, science, or social studies may make up the courses during summer school or may fulfill a contract offered by a teacher if the student is eligible. Summer school is offered four days per week during the summer session and it is held at STISD Preparatory Academy.

## **TARDY POLICY AND DETENTION**

1. The student must be completely inside the classroom before the tardy bell rings; otherwise, the student will be counted **tardy**. Fifteen minutes after the tardy bell rings, students not present will be considered “**absent**”. If the student is considered “absent” they must bring an admittance slip from the attendance office in order to enter class.
2. The following situations will not be counted against students:
  - For students who are tardy for off-campus medical reasons, the student must bring a note of verification to the attendance office for an admit slip. This slip must be presented to the teacher in order to get into class.
  - For students who are tardy because they are detained by a teacher, counselor, nurse, or an administrator, the student must have a note from the staff member who detained the student. The note must be presented to the teacher in order to get into class.
3. All other tardy situations will be recorded by the teacher and counted against students. Teachers are responsible for accountability and issuing detention consequences for tardiness.

**Note:** A student who arrives at school and reports to class between 8:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m., will be considered tardy. This student is to report directly to class where he or she will receive a detention slip if the teacher believes it is justified. However, if a parent escorts a student to the office and offers a reason for the late arrival, an administrator or designee can excuse the tardy if he or she considers the reason acceptable. Repeated occurrences of this type of tardy may be considered unacceptable.

Something to think about---

**Better late than never, but never late is better.**

### **Tardy Procedure**

Number of Tardy	Consequence
3	One hour of after-school detention
4	One day of in-school suspension and parent conference
5	Two days of in-school suspension and mandatory parent conference with administrator or counselor
6	Three days of in-school suspension and mandatory parent conference with administrator or counselor and the possibility of stricter consequences, including alternative school (persistent misbehavior), may be applied.



**Detention**

Students may be assigned detention outside of school hours (for not more than an hour at a time) on one or more days if a student violates the school's code of conduct. The detention shall be assigned for the following day so that the teacher and student may notify his/her parents of detention. Failure to attend an assigned detention or violation of detention hall rules will result in further disciplinary action by an administrator.

Students may ride the tutorial bus home.

**TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT**

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Issued books must be treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks and equipment for use at school during the school day.

**TRANSFERS**

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

**TRANSPORTATION****School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. If a parent or designated adult picks up the student before the trip ends, proper I.D. must be presented to a trip sponsor. The trip sponsor must then verify with the front office to make sure the parent or designated adult is allowed to pick up the student.

**Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact campus transportation director.

Prior permission from the transportation department is required for a temporary change in a student's bus stop. The parent needs to contact and submit a written request to the administration office explaining reasons for change before 2:30 p.m. Students will be directed to the transportation office where they will receive final approval from the transportation director before any change can be granted.

**No temporary changes are allowed on Fridays due to limited spacing on the bus.**

Parents or other person dropping off student are expected to be at the bus stop on time to drop off

a student. The driver is not allowed to stop the bus once it is moving to accommodate a late student.

For the sake of the student's safety, during pick-up or drop-off times, parents or guardians need to utilize the south parking area located in the Sprague Road entrance and in a timely fashion.

The district does not provide transportation to the district's alternative education program.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.

**Students must:**

- Remain out of the roadway while waiting for the bus.
- Follow the driver's directions at all times. The driver is allowed to assign seats.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle. The driver is not responsible for any objects left in the bus.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not place head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules. Conversations should take place in normal tones of voice. A sudden scream or yell is dangerous.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Not open the emergency door.

Helpfulness and cooperation will ensure a safe and comfortable bus ride for everyone.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

**PARTY BUSES/LIMOUSINE VEHICLES**

We understand that important milestones for your child will happen throughout the school year. Unfortunately, due to limited space in our pick up/parking area, no party buses or limousine vehicles are permitted on STISD Preparatory Academy's school grounds.

## **VANDALISM**

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

Parents are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the administration office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. All visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

### **Unauthorized Persons**

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

## **Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students**

### ***Business, Civic, and Youth Groups***

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

### **Career Day**

During the month of October, South Texas ISD Preparatory Academy offers the Annual Career & College Presentation. Preparatory Academy invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

### **Volunteers**

The district invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Campus Secretary, Mrs. E. Monteagudo, for more information and to complete an application.

The district does not require state criminal history background checks for volunteers who are parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district.

Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, other volunteers will be subject to a state criminal history background check, and the volunteer must pay all costs for the background check.

### **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

## Glossary

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to help an individual student acquire the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

**ARD** is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

**Attendance review committee** is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

**CPS** stands for Child Protective Services.

**DAEP** stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the Student Code of Conduct.

**EOC assessments** are end-of-course tests, which are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments will be required for graduation. These exams will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History.

**ESSA** is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**IEP** stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services.

**IGC** is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

**ISS** refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

**PGP** stands for Personal Graduation Plan, which is recommended for all students entering grade 9 and is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

**SAT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

**SHAC** stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, as well assist with other students and employee wellness issues.

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

**STAAR Alternate** is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the eighth-grade test is a condition for promotion. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAC** stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

**TEA** stands for the Texas Education Agency, which oversees primary and secondary public education in Texas.

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

**TSI** stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

**TxVSN** is the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors, and courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.



*Always Innovating*

**South  
Texas ISD**

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY | GRADES 7-12**

## **South Texas Independent School District Student Code of Conduct 2020–2021 School Year**

Approved by the South Texas ISD Board of Directors on June 23, 2020

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact Ms. Amanda Odom at (956) 514-4255 or [amanda.odom@stisd.net](mailto:amanda.odom@stisd.net).

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## **Student Code of Conduct**

### **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact Ms. Amanda Odom at (956) 514-4255 or [amanda.odom@stisd.net](mailto:amanda.odom@stisd.net).

### **Purpose**

The Student Code of Conduct (“Code”) is the district’s response to the requirements of Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.

The Code provides methods and options for managing students in the classroom and on school grounds, disciplining students, and preventing and intervening in student discipline problems.

The law requires the district to define misconduct that may—or must—result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences including removal from a regular classroom or campus, out-of-school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP), or expulsion from school.

This Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the South Texas ISD Board of Trustees and developed with the advice of the district-level committee. This Code provides information to parents and students regarding standards of conduct, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline. It remains in effect during summer school and at all school-related events and activities outside the school year until an updated version adopted by the board becomes effective for the next school year.

In accordance with state law, the Code shall be posted at each school campus or shall be available for review at the office of the campus principal. Additionally, the Code shall be available at the office of the campus behavior coordinator and posted on the district’s website. Parents shall be notified of any conduct violation that may result in a student being suspended, placed in a DAEP or JJAEP, expelled, or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under Chapter 37 of the Education Code.

Because the Student Code of Conduct is adopted by the district’s board of trustees, it has the force of policy; therefore, in case of conflict between the Code and the Student Handbook, the Code shall prevail.

**Important note:** The discipline of students with disabilities who are eligible for services under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) is subject to the provisions of those laws.

## **School District Authority and Jurisdiction**

School rules and the authority of the district to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

The district has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity on district transportation;
2. During lunch periods in which a student is allowed to leave campus;
3. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
4. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
5. When retaliation against a school employee, board member, or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
6. When a student engages in cyberbullying, as provided by Education Code 37.0832;
7. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
8. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line;
9. For certain offenses committed while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
10. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
11. When the student is required to register as a sex offender.

## **Campus Behavior Coordinator**

As required by law, a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The designated person may be the principal of the campus or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline. The district shall post on its website and in the Student Handbook, for each campus, the email address and telephone number of the person serving as campus behavior coordinator. Contact information may be found at [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) and at [http://www.stisd.net/parents\\_\\_\\_family/resources](http://www.stisd.net/parents___family/resources).

## **Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team**

The campus behavior coordinator or other appropriate administrator will work closely with the campus threat assessment safe and supportive school team to implement the district's threat assessment policy and procedures, as required by law, and shall take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

## **Searches**

District officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with state and federal law and district policy. Searches of students shall be

conducted in a reasonable and nondiscriminatory manner. Refer to the district's policies at FNF(LEGAL) and FNF(LOCAL) for more information regarding investigations and searches.

The district has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable suspicion to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the district.

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice.

### **Reporting Crimes**

The principal or campus behavior coordinator and other school administrators as appropriate shall report crimes as required by law and shall call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

### **Security Personnel**

To ensure sufficient security and protection of students, staff, and property, the board employs security personnel. In accordance with law, the board has coordinated with the campus behavior coordinator and other district employees to ensure appropriate law enforcement duties are assigned to security staff. The law enforcement duties of district security personnel are: to maintain safety and security of students, staff, parents, and the school environment; assist administration and local law enforcement to maintain safety and security.

### **“Parent” Defined**

Throughout the Code of Conduct and related discipline policies, the term “parent” includes a parent, legal guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child.

### **Participating in Graduation Activities**

The district has the right to limit a student's participation in graduation activities for violating the district's Code.

Participation might include a speaking role, as established by district policy and procedures.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks at graduation shall be notified by the campus principal. Notwithstanding any other eligibility requirements, in order to be considered as an eligible student to give the opening or closing remarks, a student shall not have engaged in any misconduct in violation of the district's Code resulting in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

The valedictorian and salutatorian may also have speaking roles at graduation. No student shall be eligible to have such a speaking role if he or she engaged in any misconduct in violation of the district's Code resulting in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

## **Unauthorized Persons**

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer shall have the authority to refuse entry or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

1. The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
2. The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting, and the person persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL), as appropriate. However, the timelines for the district's grievance procedures shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the person to address the board in person within 90 days, unless the complaint is resolved before a board hearing.

See **DAEP—Restrictions During Placement** on page 24, for information regarding a student assigned to DAEP at the time of graduation.

## **Standards for Student Conduct**

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- Attend all classes, regularly and on time.
- Prepare for each class; take appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet district and campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other district staff and volunteers.
- Respect the property of others, including district property and facilities.
- Cooperate with and assist the school staff in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct. .

Adhere to the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.

## **South Texas ISD Dress Code**

The district's dress code is established to reinforce good grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, promote a disruption free educational environment, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. Students are expected to adhere to the following standards of dress and grooming:

- Students should come to school well-groomed and appropriately dressed.  
(Note: Examples of inappropriate dress would include: backless or semi-backless blouses, see through apparel, mesh stockings/blouses/shirts, low cut blouses, jeans worn at a level between the knees and waist, jeans with cutoff waistbands, leather jewelry and other accessories with metallic studs, blouses with one shoulder only, blouses with straps less than three fingers in width, excessively tight clothing, gang or cult-related clothing, rainbow –or related hues- colored hair, absence of foundation garments, etc. This list is not meant to be all-inclusive.)
- Caps may be worn in the halls. Each teacher has the right to have students remove their caps in his/her classroom.
- Female students are not allowed to wear short blouses that will reveal the waistline area.
- All students are required to wear appropriate footwear while on school premises. (Note: Due to safety reasons in laboratory situations, students are discouraged from wearing shower or beach thongs to school.)
- Apparel of any kind having obscene slogans, endorsements of any alcoholic beverages or tobacco products, emblems, or writing that is deemed inappropriate by the principal will not be worn.

- Males and females may wear shorts. The length of the shorts shall be “fingertip” length, i.e. the student may wear shorts that are at least as long as his/her own hand, held alongside the body. Students are not allowed to wear cut-off jeans.
- Males and females may wear earrings. Piercing in any other location of the body will not be worn at school.

If a student is found in violation of the dress code, parents/guardians will be called and asked to bring appropriate attire. If a parent/guardian is unable to come, the student will be placed in in-school suspension.

Individual campuses may have additional dress and/or grooming standards. These standards shall be communicated in the campus student handbook.

## General Conduct Violations

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school, in vehicles owned or operated by the district, and at all school-related activities, but the list does not include the most severe offenses. In the subsequent sections on **Out-of-School Suspension** on page 19, **DAEP Placement** on page 20, **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 27, and **Expulsion** on page 30, certain offenses that require or permit specific consequences are listed. Any offense, however, may be severe enough to result in **Removal from the Regular Educational Setting** as detailed in that section on page 17.

### Disregard for Authority

Students shall not:

- Fail to comply with directives given by school personnel (insubordination).
- Leave school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
- Disobey rules for conduct in district vehicles.
- Refuse to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or principal.

### Mistreatment of Others

Students shall not:

- Use profanity or vulgar language or make obscene gestures.
- Fight or scuffle. (For assault, see **DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 27.)
- Threaten a district student, employee, or volunteer, including off school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists. (See **glossary** for all four terms.)
- Release or threaten to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student’s consent.



- Engage in conduct that constitutes sexual or gender-based harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct, directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer.
- Engage in conduct that constitutes dating violence. (See **glossary**.)
- Engage in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
- Participate in hazing. (See **glossary**.)
- Cause an individual to act through the use of or threat of force (coercion).
- Commit extortion or blackmail (obtaining money or an object of value from an unwilling person).
- Engage in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, or volunteer.
- Record the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individual being recorded or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.

### Property Offenses

Students shall not:

- Damage or vandalize property owned by others. (For felony criminal mischief, see **DAEP— Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 27.)
- Deface or damage school property—including textbooks, technology and electronic resources, lockers, furniture, and other equipment—with graffiti or by other means.
- Steal from students, staff, or the school.
- Commit or assist in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Penal Code. (For felony robbery, aggravated robbery, and theft, see **DAEP— Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 27.)

### Possession of Prohibited Items

Students shall not possess or use:

- Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
- A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
- A “look-alike” weapon that is intended to be used as a weapon or could reasonably be perceived as a weapon;
- An air gun or BB gun;
- Ammunition;
- A hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown;
- Knuckles;
- \*A location-restricted knife;
- \*A club;
- \*A firearm;

- A stun gun;
- A pocketknife or any other small knife;
- Mace or pepper spray;
- Pornographic material;
- Tobacco products; cigarettes; e-cigarettes; and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device;
- Matches or a lighter;
- A laser pointer for other than an approved use; or
- Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists.

\*For weapons and firearms, see **DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 27. In many circumstances, possession of these items is punishable by mandatory expulsion under federal or state law.

### **Possession of Telecommunications or Other Electronic Devices**

- Personal telecommunications or other electronic devices may be possessed and used on campus and school buses as long as district and campus rules are followed. Personal telecommunications or other electronic devices may be used in the classroom under the direction of the teacher and to support the instructional goals and activities of the class. The districts acceptable use policy must be followed at all times while on all district property, on buses, or utilizing district network services. The district assumes no liability for any personal telecommunications or other electronic devices. The District shall not be responsible for any loss, damage, or theft. The school district shall assist in conduct interviews, searches, or spending reasonable time on any other activities related to the loss, damage, or theft of these personal communication devices in support of a positive school environment. However, students and parents agree to accept the risk of loss, damage, or theft upon bringing their personal devices on the bus and to any school property.

### **Penalties for Violation of Cell Phone Policy**

Students who violate this policy shall be subject to established disciplinary measures. Students who have an activated or visible cell phone, or students who have cell phone that causes a disruption during class time without prior teacher approval for use as part of instruction shall receive the following disciplinary consequences:

1. The first offense, during a semester, the student shall receive a warning.
2. The second offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone getting turned over to an administrator and returned to the student at the end of the school day.
3. The third offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone being turned over to an administrator and returned only to the parent after a conference is held.
4. The fourth offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone being confiscated and held by the principal. The confiscated cell phone shall be returned to the parent at the end of the school year after a conference is held.

5. The fifth or further offense, during a semester, shall result in the cell phone being confiscated and held by the principal. A hearing with the principal shall be held, which may result in suspension and/or an alternative center placement for the student. The confiscated cell phone shall be returned to the parent at the end of the school year.

### **Possession of Electronic Music Devices**

- The possession and use of electronic music devices is permissible on campus and during bus rides with the use of personal earphones only. These devices shall not be used in classrooms during class time without prior permission of the teacher. Students and parents, not the school district, are responsible for the safety of any such items. The district assumes no liability for any personal electronic music devices. The school district assumes no control over such items and is not in any way responsible for their loss, damage, or theft. The school district shall assist in conduct interviews, searches, or spending reasonable time on any other activities related to the loss, damage, or theft of these personal electronic music devices in support of a positive school environment. However, students and parents agree to accept the risk of loss, damage, or theft upon bringing their personal electronic music devices on the bus and to any school property.

### **Illegal, Prescription, and Over-the-Counter Drugs**

Students shall not:

- Possess, use, give, or sell alcohol or an illegal drug. (Also see **DAEP Placement** on page 20 and **Expulsion** on page 30 for mandatory and permissive consequences under state law.)
- Possess or sell seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
- Possess, use, give, or sell paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance. (See **glossary** for “paraphernalia.”)
- Possess, use, abuse, or sell look-alike drugs or attempt to pass items off as drugs or contraband.
- Abuse the student’s own prescription drug, give a prescription drug to another student, or possess or be under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event. (See **glossary** for “abuse.”)
- Abuse over-the-counter drugs. (See **glossary** for “abuse.”)
- Be under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that cause impairment of the physical or mental faculties. (See **glossary** for “under the influence.”)
- Have or take prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs at school other than as provided by district policy.

### **Misuse of Technology Resources and the Internet**

Students shall not:

- Violate policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student’s parent regarding the use of technology resources.

- Attempt to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the district, students, or employees or upload or create computer viruses, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Attempt to alter, destroy, or disable district technology resources including, but not limited to, computers and related equipment, district data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the district's system, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Use the internet or other electronic communications to threaten or harass district students, employees, board members, or volunteers, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Send, post, deliver, or possess electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including cyberbullying and "sexting," either on or off school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Use the internet or other electronic communication to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.

### **Safety Transgressions**

Students shall not:

- Possess published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
- Engage in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
- Make false accusations or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety.
- Engage in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
- Throw objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause.

### **Miscellaneous Offenses**

Students shall not:

- Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Student Handbook.
- Cheat or copy the work of another.
- Gamble.
- Falsify records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.

- Repeatedly violate other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.

The district may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code.

These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code.

## **Discipline Management Techniques**

Discipline shall be designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action shall draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques, including restorative practices. Discipline shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

Because of these factors, discipline for a particular offense, including misconduct in a district school bus, unless otherwise specified by law, may bring into consideration varying techniques and responses.

Since the district's primary responsibility in transporting students in a district bus is to do so as safely as possible, the operator of the bus must focus on driving and not have his or her attention distracted by student misbehavior. Therefore, when appropriate disciplinary management techniques fail to improve student behavior or when specific misconduct warrants immediate removal, the principal may restrict or revoke a student's transportation privileges, in accordance with law.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The discipline of students with disabilities is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct. To the extent any conflict exists, the district shall comply with federal law. For more information regarding discipline of students with disabilities, see policy FOF(LEGAL).

In accordance with the Education Code, a student who receives special education services may not be disciplined for conduct meeting the definition of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists (see **glossary**) until an ARD committee meeting has been held to review the conduct.

In deciding whether to order suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the district shall take into consideration a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct.

### **Techniques**

The following discipline management techniques may be used alone, in combination, or as part of progressive interventions for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Cooling-off time or a brief "time-out" period, in accordance with law.
- Seating changes within the classroom or vehicles owned or operated by the district.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Rewards or demerits.

- Behavioral contracts.
- Counseling by teachers, school counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Behavior coaching.
- Anger management classes.
- Mediation (victim-offender).
- Classroom circles.
- Family group conferencing.
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- Detention, including outside regular school hours.
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area, or to in-school suspension.
- Assignment of school duties, such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Restriction or revocation of district transportation privileges.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in **Out-of-School Suspension** on page 19.
- Placement in a DAEP, as specified in **DAEP** on page 20.
- Placement and/or expulsion in an alternative educational setting, as specified in **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 27.
- Expulsion, as specified in **Expulsion** on page 30.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the district.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

### **Prohibited Aversive Techniques**

Aversive techniques are prohibited for use with students and are defined as techniques or interventions intended to reduce the reoccurrence of a behavior by intentionally inflicting significant physical or emotional discomfort or pain. Aversive techniques include:

- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain, other than corporal punishment as permitted by district policy. [See policy FO(LOCAL).]
- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain by electric shock or any procedure involving pressure points or joint locks.
- Directed release of noxious, toxic, or unpleasant spray, mist, or substance near a student's face.

- Denying adequate sleep, air, food, water, shelter, bedding, physical comfort, supervision, or access to a restroom facility.
- Ridiculing or demeaning a student in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning or mental health of the student or constitutes verbal abuse.
- Employing a device, material, or object that immobilizes all four of a student's extremities, including prone or supine floor restraint.
- Impairing the student's breathing, including applying pressure to the student's torso or neck or placing something in, on, or over the student's mouth or nose or covering the student's face.
- Restricting the student's circulation.
- Securing the student to a stationary object while the student is standing or sitting.
- Inhibiting, reducing, or hindering the student's ability to communicate.
- Using chemical restraints.
- Using time-out in a manner that prevents the student from being able to be involved in and progress appropriately in the required curriculum or any applicable individualized education program (IEP) goals, including isolating the student by the use of physical barriers.
- Depriving the student of one or more of the student's senses, unless the technique does not cause the student discomfort or complies with the student's IEP or behavior intervention plan (BIP).

### **Notification**

The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent by phone or in person of any violation that may result in in-school or out-of-school suspension, placement in a DAEP, placement in a JJAEP, or expulsion. The campus behavior coordinator shall also notify a student's parent if the student is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under the disciplinary provisions of the Education Code. A good faith effort shall be made on the day the action was taken to provide to the student for delivery to the student's parent written notification of the disciplinary action. If the parent has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5:00 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action was taken, the campus behavior coordinator shall send written notification by U.S. Mail. If the campus behavior coordinator is not able to provide notice to the parent, the principal or designee shall provide the notice.

Before the principal or appropriate administrator assigns a student under age 18 to detention outside regular school hours, notice shall be given to the student's parent to inform him or her of the reason for the detention and permit arrangements for necessary transportation.



## **Appeals**

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the teacher, campus administration, or campus behavior coordinator, as appropriate. Appeals or complaints regarding the use of specific discipline management techniques should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of the policy may be obtained from the principal's office, the campus behavior coordinator's office, or the central administration office or through Policy On Line at the following address: [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) (click on the About Us menu and choose the Policies link).

The district shall not delay a disciplinary consequence while a student or parent pursues a grievance.

## **Removal from the School Bus**

A bus driver may refer a student to the principal's office or the campus behavior coordinator's office to maintain effective discipline on the bus. The principal or campus behavior coordinator must employ additional discipline management techniques, as appropriate, which can include restricting or revoking a student's bus riding privileges.

Since the district's primary responsibility in transporting students in district vehicles is to do so as safely as possible, the operator of the vehicle must focus on driving and not have his or her attention distracted by student misbehavior. Therefore, when appropriate disciplinary management techniques fail to improve student behavior or when specific misconduct warrants immediate removal, the principal or the campus behavior coordinator may restrict or revoke a student's transportation privileges, in accordance with law.

## **Removal from the Regular Educational Setting**

In addition to other discipline management techniques, misconduct may result in removal from the regular educational setting in the form of a routine referral or a formal removal.

### **Routine Referral**

A routine referral occurs when a teacher sends a student to the campus behavior coordinator's office as a discipline management technique. The campus behavior coordinator shall employ alternative discipline management techniques, including progressive interventions. A teacher or administrator may remove a student from class for a behavior that violates this Code to maintain effective discipline in the classroom.

### **Formal Removal**

A teacher may also initiate a formal removal from class if:

1. The student's behavior has been documented by the teacher as repeatedly interfering with the teacher's ability to teach his or her class or with the student's classmates' ability to learn; or
2. The behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that the teacher cannot teach, and the students in the classroom cannot learn.

Within three school days of the formal removal, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference with the student's parent, the student, the teacher who removed the student from class, and any other appropriate administrator.

At the conference, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and the proposed consequences. The student shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

When a student is removed from the regular classroom by a teacher and a conference is pending, the campus behavior coordinator or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

A teacher or administrator must remove a student from class if the student engages in behavior that under the Education Code requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP or expelled. When removing for those reasons, the procedures in the subsequent sections on DAEP or expulsion shall be followed.

### **Returning a Student to the Classroom**

When a student has been formally removed from class by a teacher for conduct against the teacher containing the elements of assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder, the student may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent.

When a student has been formally removed by a teacher for any other conduct, the student may be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent if the placement review committee determines that the teacher's class is the best or only alternative available.

## **Out-of-School Suspension**

### **Misconduct**

Students may be suspended for any behavior listed in the Code as a general conduct violation, DAEP offense, or expellable offense.

### **Process**

State law allows a student to be suspended for no more than three school days per behavior violation, with no limit on the number of times a student may be suspended in a semester or school year.

Before being suspended a student shall have an informal conference with the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator, who shall advise the student of the alleged misconduct. The student shall have the opportunity to respond to the allegation before the administrator makes a decision.

The campus behavior coordinator shall determine the number of days of a student's suspension, not to exceed three school days.

In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

The appropriate administrator shall determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

### **Coursework During Suspension**

The district shall ensure a student receives access to coursework for foundation curriculum courses while the student is placed in in-school or out-of-school suspension, including at least one method of receiving this coursework that doesn't require the use of the internet.

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district.

## **Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Placement**

The DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom.

Summer programs provided by the district shall serve students assigned to a DAEP in conjunction with other students.

A student who is expelled for an offense that otherwise would have resulted in a DAEP placement does not have to be placed in a DAEP in addition to the expulsion.

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

### **Discretionary Placement: Misconduct That May Result in DAEP Placement**

A student may be placed in a DAEP for behaviors prohibited in the General Conduct Violations section of this Code.

In accordance with state law, a student **may** be placed in a DAEP if the superintendent or the superintendent's designee has reasonable belief (see **glossary**) that the student has engaged in conduct punishable as a felony, other than aggravated robbery or those listed as offenses in Title 5 (see **glossary**) of the Penal Code, that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event, if the student's presence in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process.

The campus behavior coordinator **may**, but is not required to, place a student in a DAEP for off-campus conduct for which DAEP placement is required by state law if the administrator does not have knowledge of the conduct before the first anniversary of the date the conduct occurred.

### **Mandatory Placement: Misconduct That Requires DAEP Placement**

A student **must** be placed in a DAEP if the student:

- Engages in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school. (See **glossary**.)
- Commits the following offenses on school property or within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
  - Engages in conduct punishable as a felony.
  - Commits an assault (see **glossary**) under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1).

- Sells, gives, or delivers to another person, or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug in an amount not constituting a felony offense. A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (School-related felony drug offenses are addressed in **Expulsion** on page 30.) (See **glossary** for “under the influence.”)
- Sells, gives, or delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage; commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony offense. (School-related felony alcohol offenses are addressed in **Expulsion** on page 30.)
- Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
- Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure. (See **glossary**.)
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of an offense of harassment against an employee under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1), (2), (3), or (7).
- Engages in expellable conduct and is between six and nine years of age.
- Commits a federal firearms violation and is younger than six years of age.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of retaliation against any school employee or volunteer on or off school property. (Committing retaliation in combination with another expellable offense is addressed in **Expulsion** on page 30.)
- Engages in conduct punishable as aggravated robbery or a felony listed under Title 5 (see **glossary**) of the Penal Code when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and:
  1. The student receives deferred prosecution (see glossary),
  2. A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct (see glossary), or
  3. The superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief (see glossary) that the student engaged in the conduct.

### **Sexual Assault and Campus Assignments**

If a student has been convicted of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children or convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student on the same campus, and if the victim’s parent or another person with the authority to act on behalf of the victim requests that the board transfer the offending student to another campus, the offending student shall be transferred to another campus in the district. If there is no other campus in the district serving the grade level of the offending student, the offending student shall be transferred to a DAEP.

### **Process**

Removals to a DAEP shall be made by the campus behavior coordinator.

### ***Conference***

When a student is removed from class for a DAEP offense, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference within three school days with the student's parent, the student, and the teacher, in the case of a teacher removal.

At the conference, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall inform the student, orally or in writing, of the reasons for the removal and shall give the student an explanation of the basis for the removal and an opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal.

Following valid attempts to require attendance, the district may hold the conference and make a placement decision regardless of whether the student or the student's parents attend the conference.

### ***Consideration of Mitigating Factors***

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct, or
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

### ***Placement Order***

After the conference, if the student is placed in the DAEP, the campus behavior coordinator shall write a placement order. A copy of the DAEP placement order shall be sent to the student and the student's parent.

Not later than the second business day after the conference, the board's designee shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the placement order and all information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the student is placed in the DAEP and the length of placement is inconsistent with the guidelines included in this Code, the placement order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

### ***Coursework Notice***

The parent or guardian of a student placed in DAEP shall be given written notice of the student's opportunity to complete a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal and which is required for graduation, at no cost to the student. The notice shall include information regarding all methods available for completing the coursework.



## **Length of Placement**

The principal or campus behavior coordinator shall determine the duration of a student's placement in a DAEP.

The duration of a student's placement shall be determined case by case based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misconduct, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The maximum period of DAEP placement shall be one calendar year, except as provided below.

Unless otherwise specified in the placement order, days absent from a DAEP shall not count toward fulfilling the total number of days required in a student's DAEP placement order.

The district shall administer the required pre- and post-assessments for students assigned to DAEP for a period of 90 days or longer in accordance with established district administrative procedures for administering other diagnostic or benchmark assessments.

### ***Exceeds One Year***

Placement in a DAEP may exceed one year when a review by the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees.

The statutory limitations on the length of a DAEP placement do not apply to a placement resulting from the board's decision to place a student who engaged in the sexual assault of another student so that the students are not assigned to the same campus.

### ***Exceeds School Year***

Students who commit offenses requiring placement in a DAEP at the end of one school year may be required to continue that placement at the start of the next school year to complete the assigned term of placement.

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond the end of the school year, the campus behavior coordinator or the board's designee must determine that:

1. The student's presence in the regular classroom or campus presents a danger of physical harm to the student or others, or
2. The student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior (see **glossary**) that violates the district's Code.

### ***Exceeds 60 Days***

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond 60 days or the end of the next grading period, whichever is sooner, a student's parent shall be given notice and the opportunity to participate in a proceeding before the board or the board's designee.

## **Appeals**

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the campus administration.

Student or parent appeals regarding a student's placement in a DAEP should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of this policy may be obtained from the principal's

office, the campus behavior coordinator's office, the central administration office, or through Policy On Line at the following address: [www.stisd.net](http://www.stisd.net) (click on the About Us menu and choose the Policies link).

Appeals shall begin at level one at the campus with the campus principal or the campus behavior coordinator.

The district shall not delay disciplinary consequences pending the outcome of an appeal. The decision to place a student in a DAEP cannot be appealed beyond the board.

### **Restrictions During Placement**

The district does not permit a student who is placed in a DAEP to participate in any school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular or cocurricular activity, including seeking or holding honorary positions and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.

A student placed in a DAEP shall not be provided transportation unless he or she is a student with a disability who is entitled to transportation in accordance with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

For seniors who are eligible to graduate and are assigned to a DAEP at the time of graduation, the last day of placement in the program shall be the last instructional day, and the student shall be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities unless otherwise specified in the DAEP placement order.

### **Placement Review**

A student placed in a DAEP shall be provided a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the campus behavior coordinator or the board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus. The student may not be returned to the classroom of a teacher who removed the student without that teacher's consent.

### **Additional Misconduct**

If during the term of placement in a DAEP the student engages in additional misconduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the campus behavior coordinator may enter an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

### **Notice of Criminal Proceedings**

When a student is placed in a DAEP for certain offenses, the office of the prosecuting attorney shall notify the district if:

1. Prosecution of a student's case was refused for lack of prosecutorial merit or insufficient evidence and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication (see **glossary**), or deferred prosecution will be initiated; or

2. The court or jury found a student not guilty, or made a finding that the student did not engage in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision, and the case was dismissed with prejudice.

If a student was placed in a DAEP for such conduct, on receiving the notice from the prosecutor, the superintendent or designee shall review the student's placement and schedule a review with the student's parent not later than the third day after the superintendent or designee receives notice from the prosecutor. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the review.

After reviewing the notice and receiving information from the student's parent, the superintendent or designee may continue the student's placement if there is reason to believe that the presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers.

The student or the student's parent may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal. In the case of an appeal, the board shall, at the next scheduled meeting, review the notice from the prosecutor and receive information from the student, the student's parent, and the superintendent or designee, and confirm or reverse the decision of the superintendent or designee. The board shall make a record of the proceedings.

If the board confirms the decision of the superintendent or designee, the student and the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner of Education. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal.

### **Withdrawal During Process**

When a student violates the district's Code in a way that requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP and the student withdraws from the district before a placement order is completed, the campus behavior coordinator may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order. If the student then re-enrolls in the district during the same or a subsequent school year, the district may enforce the order at that time, less any period of the placement that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district. If the campus behavior coordinator or the board fails to issue a placement order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order.

### **Newly Enrolled Students**

The district shall continue the DAEP placement of a student who enrolls in the district and was assigned to a DAEP in an open-enrollment charter school or another district.

A newly enrolled student with a DAEP placement from a district in another state shall be placed as any other newly enrolled student if the behavior committed is a reason for DAEP placement in the receiving district.

If the student was placed in a DAEP by a school district in another state for a period that exceeds one year, this district, by state law, shall reduce the period of the placement so that the total placement does not exceed one year. After a review, however, the placement may be

extended beyond a year if the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or employees or the extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

### **Emergency Placement Procedure**

When an emergency placement is necessary because the student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with classroom or school operations, the student shall be given oral notice of the reason for the action. Not later than the tenth day after the date of the placement, the student shall be given the appropriate conference required for assignment to a DAEP.

### **Transition Services**

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services to a student returning to the regular classroom from an alternative education program, including a DAEP. See policy FOCA(LEGAL) for more information.

## **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses**

This section includes two categories of offenses for which the Education Code provides unique procedures and specific consequences.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

Upon receiving notification in accordance with state law that a student is currently required to register as a sex offender, the district must remove the student from the regular classroom and determine appropriate placement unless the court orders JJAEP placement.

If the student is under any form of court supervision, including probation, community supervision, or parole, the placement shall be in either DAEP or JJAEP for at least one semester.

If the student is not under any form of court supervision, the placement may be in DAEP or JJAEP for one semester or the placement may be in a regular classroom. The placement may not be in the regular classroom if the board or its designee determines that the student's presence:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interests of the district's students.

### **Review Committee**

At the end of the first semester of a student's placement in an alternative educational setting and before the beginning of each school year for which the student remains in an alternative placement, the district shall convene a committee, in accordance with state law, to review the student's placement. The committee shall recommend whether the student should return to the regular classroom or remain in the placement. Absent a special finding, the board or its designee must follow the committee's recommendation.

The placement review of a student with a disability who receives special education services must be made by the ARD committee.

### **Newly Enrolled Student**

If a student enrolls in the district during a mandatory placement as a registered sex offender, the district may count any time already spent by the student in a placement or may require an additional semester in an alternative placement without conducting a review of the placement.

### **Appeal**

A student or the student's parent may appeal the placement by requesting a conference between the board or its designee, the student, and the student's parent. The conference is limited to the factual question of whether the student is required to register as a sex offender. Any decision of the board or its designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

### **Certain Felonies**

Regardless of whether placement or expulsion is required or permitted by one of the reasons in the DAEP Placement or Expulsion sections, in accordance with Education Code 37.0081, a

student may be expelled and placed in either DAEP or JJAEP if the board or campus behavior coordinator makes certain findings and the following circumstances exist in relation to aggravated robbery or a felony offense under Title 5 (see **glossary**) of the Penal Code. The student must:

- Have received deferred prosecution for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been charged with engaging in conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense; or
- Have received probation or deferred adjudication or have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense.

The district may expel the student and order placement under these circumstances regardless of:

1. The date on which the student's conduct occurred,
2. The location at which the conduct occurred,
3. Whether the conduct occurred while the student was enrolled in the district, or
4. Whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct.

### ***Hearing and Required Findings***

The student must first have a hearing before the board or its designee, who must determine that in addition to the circumstances above that allow for the expulsion, the student's presence in the regular classroom:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interest of the district's students.

Any decision of the board or the board's designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

### ***Length of Placement***

The student is subject to the placement until:

1. The student graduates from high school,
2. The charges are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense, or
3. The student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

### ***Placement Review***

A student placed in a DAEP or JJAEP under these circumstances is entitled to a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the campus behavior coordinator or board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress

toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall have the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus.

***Newly Enrolled Students***

A student who enrolls in the district before completing a placement under this section from another school district must complete the term of the placement.

## Expulsion

In deciding whether to order expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

### Discretionary Expulsion: Misconduct That May Result in Expulsion

Some of the following types of misconduct may result in mandatory placement in a DAEP, whether or not a student is expelled. (See **DAEP Placement** on page 20)

#### **Any Location**

A student **may** be expelled for:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Conduct that contains the elements of assault under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer.
- Criminal mischief, if punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of one of the following offenses against another student:
  - Aggravated assault.
  - Sexual assault.
  - Aggravated sexual assault.
  - Murder.
  - Capital murder.
  - Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
  - Aggravated robbery.
- Breach of computer security. (See **glossary**)

Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school.



***At School, Within 300 Feet, or at a School Event***

A student **may** be expelled for committing any of the following offenses on or within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:

- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony. A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (See **glossary** for "under the influence.")
- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of assault under Section 22.01(a)(1) against an employee or a volunteer.
- Engaging in deadly conduct. (See **glossary**.)

***Within 300 Feet of School***

A student **may** be expelled for engaging in the following conduct while within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line:

- Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
- Arson. (See **glossary**.)
- Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
- Indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, or aggravated robbery.
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children.
- Felony drug- or alcohol-related offense.
- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person a handgun or a location-restricted knife, as these terms are defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Possession of a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See **glossary**.)

***Property of Another District***

A student **may** be expelled for committing any offense that is a state-mandated expellable offense if the offense is committed on the property of another district in Texas or while the student is attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of a school in another district in Texas.

**While in DAEP**

A student may be expelled for engaging in documented serious misbehavior that violates the district's Code, despite documented behavioral interventions while placed in a DAEP. For purposes of discretionary expulsion from a DAEP, serious misbehavior means:

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code; or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
  - a) Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;
  - b) Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;
  - c) Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;
  - d) Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
  - e) Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

**Mandatory Expulsion: Misconduct That Requires Expulsion**

A student **must** be expelled under federal or state law for any of the following offenses that occur on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:

**Under Federal Law**

- Bringing to school or possessing at school, including any setting that is under the district's control or supervision for the purpose of a school activity, a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See **glossary**.)

**Note:** Mandatory expulsion under the federal Gun Free Schools Act does not apply to a firearm that is lawfully stored inside a locked vehicle, or to firearms used in activities approved and authorized by the district when the district has adopted appropriate safeguards to ensure student safety.

**Under the Penal Code**

- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person the following, in the manner prohibited by Penal Code 46.02:
  - A handgun, defined by state law as any firearm designed, made, or adapted to be used with one hand. (See **glossary**.)  
**Note:** A student may not be expelled solely on the basis of the student's use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm that occurs at an approved target range facility that is not located on a school campus, while participating in or preparing for a school-sponsored, shooting sports competition or a shooting sports educational activity that is sponsored or supported by the Parks and Wildlife Department, or a shooting sports sanctioning organization working with the department. [See policy FNCG(LEGAL).]
  - A location-restricted knife, as defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined in state law. (See **glossary**.)

- Behaving in a manner that contains elements of the following offenses under the Penal Code:
  - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
  - Arson. (See **glossary**.)
  - Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
  - Indecency with a child.
  - Aggravated kidnapping.
  - Aggravated robbery.
  - Manslaughter.
  - Criminally negligent homicide.
  - Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children.
  - Behavior punishable as a felony that involves selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol.
- Engaging in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer combined with one of the above-listed mandatory expulsion offenses.

### **Under Age Ten**

When a student under the age of ten engages in behavior that is expellable behavior, the student shall not be expelled, but shall be placed in a DAEP. A student under age six shall not be placed in a DAEP unless the student commits a federal firearm offense.

### **Process**

If a student is believed to have committed an expellable offense, the campus behavior coordinator or other appropriate administrator shall schedule a hearing within a reasonable time. The student's parent shall be invited in writing to attend the hearing.

Until a hearing can be held, the campus behavior coordinator or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

### **Hearing**

A student facing expulsion shall be given a hearing with appropriate due process. The student is entitled to:

1. Representation by the student's parent or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district,
2. An opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense, and

3. An opportunity to question the witnesses called by the district at the hearing.
4. After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the district may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student or the student's parent attends.

The board of trustees delegates to the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent authority to conduct hearings and expel students.

### ***Board Review of Expulsion***

After the due process hearing, the expelled student may request that the board review the expulsion decisions. The student or parent must submit a written request to the superintendent within seven days after receipt of the written decision. The superintendent must provide the student or parent written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board will review the decision.

The board shall review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting unless the parent requests in writing that the matter be held in an open meeting. The board may also hear a statement from the student or parent and from the board's designee.

The board shall hear statements made by the parties at the review and shall base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. The board shall make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. Consequences shall not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing.

### ***Expulsion Order***

Before ordering the expulsion, the board or campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

If the student is expelled, the board or its designee shall deliver to the student and the student's parent a copy of the order expelling the student.

Not later than the second business day after the hearing, the Superintendent shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the expulsion order and the information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the length of the expulsion is inconsistent with the guidelines included in the Student Code of Conduct, the expulsion order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

## **Length of Expulsion**

The length of an expulsion shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The duration of a student's expulsion shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. The maximum period of expulsion is one calendar year, except as provided below.

An expulsion may not exceed one year unless, after review, the district determines that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees, or
2. Extended expulsion is in the best interest of the student.

State and federal law require a student to be expelled from the regular classroom for a period of at least one calendar year for bringing a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school.

However, the superintendent may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Students who commit offenses that require expulsion at the end of one school year may be expelled into the next school year to complete the term of expulsion.

## **Withdrawal During Process**

When a student has violated the district's Code in a way that requires or permits expulsion from the district and the student withdraws from the district before the expulsion hearing takes place, the district may conduct the hearing after sending written notice to the parent and student.

If the student then re-enrolls in the district during the same or subsequent school year, the district may enforce the expulsion order at that time, less any expulsion period that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district.

If the campus behavior coordinator or the board fails to issue an expulsion order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings.

## **Additional Misconduct**

If during the expulsion, the student engages in additional conduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the campus behavior coordinator or the board may issue an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

## **Restrictions During Expulsion**

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.

No district academic credit shall be earned for work missed during the period of expulsion unless the student is enrolled in a JJAEP or another district-approved program.

### **Newly Enrolled Students**

The district shall continue the expulsion of any newly enrolled student expelled from another district or an open-enrollment charter school until the period of the expulsion is completed.

If a student expelled in another state enrolls in the district, the district may continue the expulsion under the terms of the expulsion order, may place the student in a DAEP for the period specified in the order, or may allow the student to attend regular classes if:

1. The out-of-state district provides the district with a copy of the expulsion order, and
2. The offense resulting in the expulsion is also an expellable offense in the district in which the student is enrolling.

If a student is expelled by a district in another state for a period that exceeds one year and the district continues the expulsion or places the student in a DAEP, the district shall reduce the period of the expulsion or DAEP placement so that the entire period does not exceed one year, unless after a review it is determined that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees, or
2. Extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

### **Emergency Expulsion Procedures**

When an emergency expulsion is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm, the student shall be given verbal notice of the reason for the action. Within ten days after the date of the emergency expulsion, the student shall be given appropriate due process required for a student facing expulsion.

### **DAEP Placement of Expelled Students**

The district may provide educational services to any expelled student in a DAEP; however, educational services in the DAEP must be provided if the student is less than ten years of age.

### **Transition Services**

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services for a student returning to the regular classroom from placement in an alternative education program, including a DAEP or JJAEP. See policies FOCA(LEGAL) and FODA(LEGAL) for more information.

## Glossary

**Abuse** is improper or excessive use.

**Aggravated robbery** is defined in part by Penal Code 29.03(a) as when a person commits robbery and:

1. Causes serious bodily injury to another;
2. Uses or exhibits a deadly weapon; or
3. Causes bodily injury to another person or threatens or places another person in fear of imminent bodily injury or death, if the other person is:
  - a) 65 years of age or older, or
  - b) A disabled person.

**Armor-piercing ammunition** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as handgun ammunition used in pistols and revolvers and designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

**Arson** is defined in part by Penal Code 28.02 as:

1. A crime that involves starting a fire or causing an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:
  - a) Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
  - b) Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
    - 1) Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
    - 2) Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
    - 3) Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
    - 4) Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
    - 5) Knowing that it has located within it property belonging to another, or
    - 6) When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.
2. A crime that involves recklessly starting a fire or causing an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance and the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or
3. A crime that involves intentionally starting a fire or causing an explosion and in so doing:
  - a) Recklessly damages or destroys a building belonging to another, or
  - b) Recklessly causes another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

**Assault** is defined in part by Penal Code §22.01(a)(1) as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another; §22.01(a)(2) as intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury; and §22.01(a)(3) as intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another that can reasonably be regarded as offensive or provocative.

**Breach of computer security** includes knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system without the effective consent of the owner as defined in Penal Code 33.02, if the conduct involves accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a school district; and the student knowingly alters, damages, or

deletes school district property or information; or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system.

**Bullying** is defined in Section 37.0832 of the Education Code as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property;
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. (See below) This state law on bullying prevention applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Chemical dispensing device** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of dispensing a substance capable of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being. A small chemical dispenser sold commercially for personal protection is not in this category.

**Club** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death. A blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk are in the same category.

**Controlled substance** means a substance, including a drug, an adulterant, and a dilutant, listed in Schedules I through V or Penalty Group 1, 1-A, 2, 2-A, 3, or 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes the aggregate weight of any mixture, solution, or other substance containing a controlled substance. The term does not include hemp, as defined by Agriculture Code 121.001, or the tetrahydrocannabinols (THC) in hemp.

**Criminal street gang** is defined by Penal Code 71.01 as three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

**Cyberbullying** is defined by Section 37.0832 of the Education Code as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular



or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.

**Dangerous drug** is defined by Health and Safety Code 483.001 as a device or a drug that is unsafe for self-medication and that is not included in Schedules I through V or Penalty Groups 1 through 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes a device or drug that federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription or restricts to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

**Dating violence** occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense, as defined by Section 71.0021 of the Family Code.

**Deadly conduct** under Penal Code 22.05 occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, such as knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

**Deferred adjudication** is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Deferred prosecution** may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Delinquent conduct** is conduct that violates either state or federal law and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

**Discretionary** means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

**E-cigarette** means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. The term includes any device that is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description and a component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.

**Explosive weapon** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine and its delivery mechanism that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror.

**False alarm or report** under Penal Code 42.06 occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

1. Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;

2. Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**Firearm** is defined by federal law (18 U.S.C. 921(a)) as:

1. Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
  2. The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
  3. Any firearm muffler or firearm weapon; or
  4. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.
- Such term does not include an antique firearm.

**Firearm silencer** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as any device designed, made, or adapted to muffle the report of a firearm.

**Graffiti** includes markings with paint, an indelible pen or marker, or an etching or engraving device on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

**Handgun** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand.

**Harassment** includes:

1. Conduct that meets the definition established in district policies DIA(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL);
2. Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer; is sexually intimidating; causes physical damage to the property of another student; subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint; or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety, as defined in Section 37.001(b)(2) of the Education Code; or
3. Conduct that is punishable as a crime under Penal Code 42.07, including the following types of conduct if carried out with the intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another:
  - a) Initiating communication and, in the course of the communication, making a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene, as defined by law;
  - b) Threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;
  - c) Conveying, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury; and
  - d) Sending repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another.

**Hazing** is defined by Section 37.151 of the Education Code as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or

maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

1. Any type of physical brutality;
2. An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
3. An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; and
4. Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

**Hit list** is defined in Section 37.001(b)(3) of the Education Code as a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

**Improvised explosive device** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a completed and operational bomb designed to cause serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage that is fabricated in an improvised manner using nonmilitary components.

**Indecent exposure** is defined by Penal Code 21.08 as an offense that occurs when a person exposes the person's anus or any part of the person's genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person, and is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Intimate visual material** is defined by Civil Practices and Remedies Code 98B.001 and Penal Code 21.16 as visual material that depicts a person with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct. "Visual material" means any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide of any photographic reproduction or any other physical medium that allows an image to be displayed on a computer or other video screen and any image transmitted to a computer or other video screen.

**Location-restricted knife** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches.

**Knuckles** means any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

**Look-alike weapon** means an item that resembles a weapon but is not intended to be used to cause serious bodily injury.

**Machine gun** as defined by Penal Code 46.01 is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

**Mandatory** means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

**Paraphernalia** are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

**Possession** means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including, but not limited to, clothing, purse, or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including, but not limited to, an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; telecommunications or electronic devices; or any school property used by the student, including, but not limited to, a locker or desk.

**Prohibited weapon** under Penal Code 46.05(a) means:

1. The following items unless registered with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives or otherwise not subject to that registration requirement or unless the item is classified as a curio or relic by the U.S. Department of Justice:
  - a) An explosive weapon;
  - b) A machine gun;
  - c) A short-barrel firearm;
2. Armor-piercing ammunition;
3. A chemical dispensing device;
4. A zip gun;
5. A tire deflation device;
6. An improvised explosive device; or
7. A firearm silencer, unless classified as a curio or relic by the U.S. Department of Justice or the actor otherwise possesses, manufactures, transports, repairs, or sells the firearm silencer in compliance with federal law.

**Public Lewdness** is defined by Penal Code 21.07 as an offense that occurs when a person knowingly engages in an act of sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, or sexual contact in a public place or, if not in a public place, is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang** means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student. Educational organizations listed in Section 37.121(d) of the Education Code are excepted from this definition.

**Reasonable belief** is that which an ordinary person of average intelligence and sound mind would believe. Chapter 37 requires certain disciplinary decisions when the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that a student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony offense. In forming such a reasonable belief, the superintendent or designee may use all available information, including the notice of a student's arrest under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

**Self-defense** is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

**Serious misbehavior means:**

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;

3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code; or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
  - a) Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;
  - b) Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;
  - c) Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;
  - d) Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
  - e) Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

**Serious or persistent misbehavior** includes, but is not limited to:

- Behavior that is grounds for permissible expulsion or mandatory DAEP placement.
- Behavior identified by the district as grounds for discretionary DAEP placement.
- Actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Refusal to attempt or complete school work as assigned.
- Insubordination.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Falsification of records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Refusal to accept discipline assigned by the teacher or principal.

**Short-barrel firearm** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

**Terroristic threat** is defined by Penal Code 22.07 as a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

1. Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or other public place;
4. Cause impairment or interruption of public communications; public transportation; public water, gas, or power supply; or other public service;
5. Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
6. Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the district).

**Tire deflation device** is defined in part by Penal Code 46.01 as a device, including a caltrop or spike strip, that, when driven over, impedes or stops the movement of a wheeled vehicle by puncturing one or more of the vehicle's tires.

**Title 5 felonies** are those crimes listed in Title 5 of the Penal Code that typically involve injury to a person and may include:

- Murder, manslaughter, or homicide under Sections 19.02, – .05;

- Kidnapping under Section 20.03;
- Trafficking of persons under Section 20A.02;
- Smuggling or continuous smuggling of persons under Sections 20.05 – .06;
- Assault under Section 22.01;
- Aggravated assault under Section 22.02;
- Sexual assault under Section 22.011;
- Aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021;
- Unlawful restraint under Section 20.02;
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children under Section 21.02;
- Bestiality under Section 21.09;
- Improper relationship between educator and student under Section 21.12;
- Voyeurism under Section 21.17;
- Indecency with a child under Section 21.11;
- Invasive visual recording under Section 21.15;
- Disclosure or promotion of intimate visual material under Section 21.16;
- Sexual coercion under Section 21.18;
- Injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person of any age under Section 22.04;
- Abandoning or endangering a child under Section 22.041;
- Deadly conduct under Section 22.05;
- Terroristic threat under Section 22.07;
- Aiding a person to commit suicide under Section 22.08; and
- Tampering with a consumer product under Section 22.09.

[See FOC(EXHIBIT).]

**Under the influence** means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student "under the influence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

**Use** means voluntarily introducing into one's body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

**Zip gun** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a device or combination of devices, not originally a firearm, but adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

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