



Stafford Municipal School District

Student Handbook

Stafford Municipal School District

1633 Staffordshire Road

Stafford, Texas 77477

281-261 -9200

Stafford Municipal School District Student Handbook

2023-2024 School Year (Updated August 2023)

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact: Sharon Gilmore at 281-261-9342 OR via email at sgilmore@staffordmsd.org.

District Handbook URL

<https://www.staffordmsd.org/fs/resource-manager/view/4b2c66da-7827-4f9d-8ab4-e84e5aea92cf>

Mission Statement

The mission of SMSD is to ensure that 100% of our students will be college or career ready, without remediation.

Board of Trustees

Manuel Hinojosa – Board President

Ash Hamirani – Board Vice President

Jacqueline Jean-Baptiste – Board Secretary

Dawn Reichling – Trustee

Patricia Soza- Montelongo - Trustee

Suzette Thompson- Trustee

Adam Sanchez - Trustee

Board Meetings

The Board of Trustees of the Stafford Municipal School District meets on the second Monday of each month in the SMSD Administration Building, 1633 Staffordshire Road, Stafford, Texas. Regular meetings begin at 6:30 pm and the public is invited to attend.

Central Office Administration

Dr. Robert Bostic, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Dawn DuBose, Chief of Schools

Dr. Kadir Almus, Chief Academic Officer

Ms. Christina Campos, Chief Financial Officer

CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION

Twyla Hynes Stafford Early Childhood Center, School Principal
Diana De La Rosa Stafford Elementary School Principal- Interim
 Ginny Liang Stafford STEM Magnet Academy School Principal
Marissa Vanison Stafford Middle School Principal
 Raymond Root Stafford High School Principal
Jeffery Williams Stafford Alternative Education Center (DAEP)
 Silas Garcia QUEST (OFSDP)

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Robert Bostic	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Dawn DuBose	Chief of Schools
Dr. Kadir Almus	Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Christina Campos	Chief Financial Officer-Interim
 Ceisly Delco	Human Resource Director
 Ken Savannah	Director of Athletics
 Sergio Hinojosa	Associate Director of Athletics
Dr. Evelyn Castro	Director of ESL/Bilingual/Dual Language
 Debbie Nordt	Director of College & Career Center
Danny McDonald	Director of Child Nutrition
 Jorge Rodriguez	Director of Technology
Dr. LaKenya Perry-Allen	Director of STEM
 Jaci Phenix	Director of Operations
 Shaunte Norris	Interim Director of Federal and State Program
The resa Almendarez	Business Office Manager
 Regina Taiwo	PEIMS Coordinator
Horace Shane Kenney	District Librarian
 Juanita Sanchez	Transportation Supervisor

Handbook Summary

The Stafford MSD phone directory may be reached by dialing 281-261-9200.

Visitors

Visitors must show Driver's License at each campus office to obtain a visitor's tag. Please be aware that, as part of our safety procedures, your license or identification will be retained in the front office until you check out and return your visitor badge.

Stafford MSD Campus Hours

Stafford Elementary School	8:00 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.
Stafford Intermediate School	8:00 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.
Stafford STEM Magnet Academy	7:00 a.m. – 3:40 p.m.
Stafford Middle School	7:30 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.
Stafford High School	7:30 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.
Stafford Alternative Education Center	7:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Quest Program- OPFSD	9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Stafford STEM Academy, Middle & High School
Bell Schedule

1 st period	7:30 a.m. - 8:17 a.m.
2 nd period	8:22 a.m. – 9:09 a.m.
3 rd period	9:14 a.m. – 10:01 a.m.
4 th period	10:06 a.m. – 10:53 a.m.

<u>A- LUNCH</u>	<u>10:53 a.m. – 11:23 a.m.</u>
5 th Period	11:28 a.m. - 12:33 p.m.

<u>B- LUNCH</u>	<u>11:28 p.m. – 11:58 p.m.</u>
5 th Period	10:58 a.m. – 11:28 p.m.
5 th Period	12:03 a.m. - 12:33 p.m.

<u>C- LUNCH</u>	<u>12:03 p.m. – 12:33 p.m.</u>
5 th Period	10:58 a.m. – 11:58 p.m.

6 th period	12:38 p.m. -1:25 pm.
7 th period	1:30 p.m. – 2:17 p.m.
8 th period	2:22 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Stafford MSD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may or may not; use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form, so you can communicate your wishes about these issues.

SMUSD has designated the following information as directory information: student name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams.

*****Please indicate your preference on the Directory Information section of the Parent/Student Consent Checklist*****

Please note that if the Parent/Student Consent Checklist is not returned within the specified timeframe above, the district will assume that permission has been granted for the release of this information.



Stafford MSD 2023-2024 Calendar

1633 Staffordshire Road • Stafford, TX 77477 • 281.261.9200 • www.staffordmsd.org

IMPORTANT DATES:

July 24.....	Novice Teachers/New to SMSD Training
July 25-27.....	Novice/New Teachers to SMSD (Counts for Flex Days) Last 4 Day Week (off Friday)
Aug. 1.....	Convocation & 1st Day for 187 Teachers
Aug. 2-3.....	Campus Professional Development Days
Aug. 4 & 7.....	District Professional Development Days
Aug. 8.....	Teacher Work Day
Aug. 9.....	First Day of School
Sept. 1.....	Early Dismissal- Half Day Flex Day
Sept. 4.....	Labor Day
Sept. 28.....	Early Dismissal 1/2 PD Day
Sept. 29.....	Fort Bend County Fair Day
Oct. 11-13.....	Fall Intercession Days
Nov. 3.....	Full Day District PD
Nov. 17.....	Early Dismissal- Flex Day
Nov. 20-24.....	Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 12-15.....	Finals- Early Dismissal- SMA, SMS & SHS Only
Dec. 15.....	Early Dismissal: All schools
Dec. 18-Jan. 2.....	Winter Break
Jan. 3.....	1st Day of 2nd Semester- Students & Teachers Return
Jan. 12.....	Early Dismissal- 1/2 Day PD Non-Flex
Jan. 15.....	Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday- District Holiday
Feb. 2.....	Early Dismissal- 1/2 Day Non-Flex
Feb. 16.....	Early Dismissal- 1/2 Day Flex
Feb. 19.....	President's Day
March 8.....	Early Dismissal- 1/2 Flex Day
March 11-15.....	Spring Break
March 29.....	Holiday- Good Friday
Apr. 19.....	SMSD District Holiday
May 10.....	Early Dismissal- 1/2 Day Flex
May 24.....	Early Dismissal- Campus Planning Non-Flex
May 27.....	Memorial Day
May 28-31.....	Finals- Early Dismissal: SMA, SMS & SHS Only
May 31.....	Early Dismissal: Last Day of School
June 1.....	SHS Graduation
June 6 - June 28.....	HB 3 Additional Days Elementary Summer I STEM Magnet (16 Days)
June 19.....	Juneteenth Holiday
July 8-18.....	HB 3 Additional Days Elementary Summer II STEM Magnet (9 Days)

Stafford Day Care Closure Dates:

Daycare Summer Closure July 1-15th

Daycare Summer PD July 17 & 18

Daycare PD & Workday Oct. 13, March 8 & May 31

New to SMSD - Teacher Training

Novice Teacher Training

District Professional Development - No students

Teacher Planning & Campus PD - No students

Teacher Workday - No students

Holiday - employees and students off

Intercession - interventions, tutorials, enrichment, and UIL activities will occur on these days

First Day of School/Semester

State Testing

Early Dismissal: STEM Magnet/Middle/High- 11:30 AM

Early Dismissal: All Schools SMA/MS/HS- 11:30 AM, ECC/ES- 12 pm

Board Meeting

Flex Day

★ End of Grading Cycle

Grading Cycle: 1st Semester- Days 85

Aug 9 - Sept 15

Sept. 18 - Oct. 27

Oct. 30 - Dec 15

2nd Semester- Days 95

Jan. 3 - Feb. 16

Feb. 20 - April 12

April 15 - May 31

*Teacher Work Days- 187/197 Magnet, Instructional Days- 180 (Due to ASDY)

*All schools- 480 Instructional Minutes Per Day, % Days 240 Instructional Minutes

*Stafford Early Childhood Center- ECC/Elementary- SES (Instructional Minutes- 79,720)

*Stafford Middle School- BMS/High- SHS (Instructional Minutes- 78,600)

*STEM Magnet School- (Instructional Minutes- 78,400)

*HB 2042 requires 75,000 Instructional Minutes and at least a minimum bank of 840 Instructional Minutes

All Early Dismissal Days- Sept. 1*, Sept. 28, Nov. 17*, Dec. 12-14 (Finals- Secondary Only), Dec. 15*, Jan. 12, Feb. 2, Feb. 19*, March 8*, May 10*, May 24, May 29-30 (Finals- Secondary Only), & May 31.

*Indicates Teacher Flex Day

Major Testing Dates: Assessment Window Dec. 5-8, 2023 (STAAR H&I), April 2-6, 2024 (STAAR + make-up dates),

April 30- May 17, 2024 (STAAR + make-up), and June 18-28.

Intercession Days can be used for tutorials, interventions, enrichment, extracurricular activities, or make-up days

School Hours:

ECC/Elementary 8:00 AM-3:40 PM • Early Release 3:00 AM-12:00 PM

STEM Magnet/Middle/High Schools 7:30 AM-3:10 PM • Early Release 7:30 AM-11:30 AM

AUGUST AGOSTO 2023						
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MAY MAYO 2024						
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JUNE JUNIO 2024						
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JULY JULIO 2024						
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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@SMSD82

@StaffordMSD

Approved by the SMSD Board of Trustees: February 13, 2023

Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education

(High School Only)

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent. [See Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education on page 3 for more information.]

*****Please indicate your preference on the Release of Student Information section of the Parent/Student Consent Checklist*****

Please note that if the Parent/Student Consent Checklist is not returned with the other materials identifying what the district considers directory information, the district will assume that permission has been granted for the release of this information.

COMPUTER RESOURCES/ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP) FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Stafford Municipal School District (SMSD) is pleased to offer our students access to computer resources and electronic networks such as the internet. These computer resources are a privilege, not a right. This access will increase learning opportunities allowing students to explore thousands of current information sources from around the world. These resources are to be used in a legal, ethical and appropriate manner to support district educational goals. The safety and security of minors is of the utmost importance to SMSD and the district has taken precautions to restrict access to controversial information with the use of filtering software. Although it is impossible to control all materials, the valuable information and interaction available on this worldwide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with district educational goals. The district has established the following guidelines for Acceptable Use and asks students and their parent or guardian to read and discuss them together. All student access of the internet on district computers and devices will be monitored by at least one member of the district instructional staff. The unsupervised use of the internet by student(s) is prohibited.

CIPA

The Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) is a federal law enacted by Congress in December 2000 to address concerns about access in schools and libraries to the Internet and other information. In August of 2011, the FCC released a new ruling on the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) requiring that school Internet safety policies must address further regulations for E-Rate regarding Protecting Children in the 21st

Century Act of 2008. SMSD is a CIPA compliant district and the district Employee/ Student Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) addresses the issues required to maintain compliance. SMSD filters all internet enabled computers used by students, patrons and staff to prevent inappropriate material and websites from being accessed online. The filter settings will only be disabled on an as needed basis for bona fide research or other lawful purposes. SMSD will only allow safe and secure use by minors of direct electronic communications such as student email, use of chat rooms, and instant messaging.

Students are responsible for appropriate behavior on the school's computer network just as they are in a classroom or other school location. The district Code of Conduct applies while students are utilizing any school resources, including technology resources and the internet. It is expected that users will comply with district standards and the specific rules set forth below. The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked if abused. The user is personally responsible for his/her actions in accessing and utilizing the school's computer resources.

- Network administrators have the right to search student network storage locations and review data to maintain system integrity to ensure students are using the system responsibly.
- Students must follow all copyright laws.
- Students shall not give anyone other than authorized staff members their login/password or files for any reason.
- Students with individual accounts are always responsible for their login information and the proper use of their account.
- Students will receive training, through English/Reading class library rotation, on appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking sites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.
- Students will be actively monitored and supervised at all times when using district technology resources and/or accessing the internet regarding safe and appropriate online practices and activities.
- Students can use their personal or district storage for school projects and class work only (no music, games, personal files, etc.)
- Students are prohibited from accessing, copying, renaming or deleting anyone else's files.
- Students are not allowed to access social networking sites such while using a computer connected to the Stafford MSD network and are prohibited from disclosing any personal identification information such as their name, phone number, address or age.
- Students are prohibited from accessing proxy sites or any other sites which bypass the district filters or hide his/her identity.
- Students are prohibited from uploading/downloading or installing any commercial software, shareware, freeware, music or games onto network drives, disks or personal devices (flash drives, cell phone, iPod, etc.), from "hacking," changing any computer configurations and/or settings and from damaging any computer, peripheral or the network in any way.
- Any attempt to alter, destroy, or disable district computer equipment, district data, the data of others, or networks connected to the district's system, (even if the offense is initiated off school property and/or the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment) is prohibited.
- Students shall not use a computer or any other electronic device for any unlawful purposes including: cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, threatening, harassing, and libeling a district employee or student.
- Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another person's reputation, or illegal (**even if the offense is initiated off school property such that the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment**) is prohibited.
- Using any type of electronic communication or websites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety is prohibited.
- Notify an adult immediately, if by accident, you encounter materials which violate appropriate use.

Consequences of Agreement Violation

Any attempt to violate the provisions of this agreement may result in revocation of the student's access to the use of district computer resources and/or the Network/Internet. In addition, school disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken. With just cause, the building principal and/or designee, may deny, revoke, or suspend computer or Network/Internet access as required, pending an investigation. Any attempt to break the law using a Stafford MSD Network/Internet account, may result in litigation against the offender by the proper authorities. If such an event occurs, Stafford MSD will fully comply with the proper authorities to provide any information necessary for the litigation process.

Permission to have Internet Access

Stafford MSD offers students access to a computer network and the Internet. To gain access to the internet, all students must obtain parental permission as verified by the signature on the form below.

*****Please indicate your preference on the Computer Resources/Acceptable Use Policy section of the Parent/Student Consent Checklist*****

PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO/AUDIO RECORD OF A PARTICULAR SMSD STUDENT

The **Texas Education Code, Sec. 26.009**, allows videotaping of a student for the purposes of safety, instruction, media coverage, or co-curricular or extracurricular activity. In addition, representatives of the local media or the superintendent's office of Stafford MSD may want to photograph, videotape, or audiotape students in our schools for purposes other than those stated directly in the code. This is most often done to highlight the achievements of our schools and their students or to provide general information about school programs or issues. These photos or videos may appear on the local news or in district publications that focus on the achievements of our students and our district.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact your campus principal.

*****Please indicate your preference on the Photograph/Video/Audio Record Release section of the Parent/Student Consent Checklist*****

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Preface:

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2023–24 school year! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Stafford MSD Student Handbook is designed to provide basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. The handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I: Parental Rights offers 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 is organized alphabetically by topic, and, where possible, further divided by applicability to ages and/or grade levels, for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “parent,” unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of the student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Stafford MSD 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 on the district’s website at www.staffordmsd.org and is available in hard copy upon request.

The Student Handbook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that it is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance.

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

Please be aware that the Student Handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed board policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing newsletters and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.

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

If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact your student’s campus principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following forms provided in the forms packet distributed at the beginning of the year or upon the student’s enrollment:

1. Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook;

2. Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information;
3. 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
4. Consent/Opt-Out Form.

[See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 18 and **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation** on page 18 for more information.]

Note: References to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to board policy. The district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/485>].

Accessibility

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact: 281.261.9345 OR via email Sharon Gilmore at sgilmore@staffordmsd

Section I: Parental Rights

This section of the SMSD Student Handbook includes information related to certain rights of parents as specified in state or federal law.

Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights

Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation

A district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without obtaining prior written parental consent unless the examination, test, or treatment is required under state or federal law regarding requirements for special education or by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for child abuse investigations and reports.

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

Teachers may display students' work, which may include personally identifiable student information, in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, original videos or voice recordings, and other original works on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom website, and in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

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

A student under the age of 14 must have parental permission to receive instruction in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to participate in the instruction. This program, developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE), is incorporated into the district's health education classes.

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

The Board prohibits the use of corporal punishment in the District. Students shall not be spanked, paddled, or subjected to other physical force as a means of discipline for violations of the Student Code of Conduct FO(LOCAL).

Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Otherwise Permitted by Law

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity;
- When it relates to media coverage of the school; or
- When it relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

The district will seek parental consent through a written request before making any other video or voice recording of your child not otherwise allowed by law.

[See **Video Cameras** on page 106 for more information, including a parent's right to request video and audio equipment be placed in certain special education settings.]

Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to use electronic communication with students within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

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

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

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee or if you have questions related to the use of electronic media by district employees, please contact the campus principal. **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent. "Directory information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Examples include a student's photograph for publication in the school yearbook; a student's name and grade level for purposes of communicating class and teacher assignment; the name, weight, and height of an athlete for publication in a school athletic program; a list of student birthdays for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition; a student's name and photograph posted on a district-approved and -managed social media platform; and the names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period. Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of a student's directory information. 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.

[See the "Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information" included in the forms packet.]

The district has identified the following as directory information: student name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams.

If you object to the release of the student information included on the directory information response form, your decision will also apply to the use of that information for school-sponsored purposes, such as the honor roll, school newspaper, the yearbook, recognition activities, news releases, and athletic programs.

Also review the information at **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records** on page 23.

Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form included in the forms packet is available if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

Participation in Third-Party Surveys

Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation

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.
- Sex 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 parent.
- 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.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

[For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

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

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child's participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information.

Note: This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.

- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance 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.]

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Removing a Student from Instruction or Excusing a Student from a Required Component of Instruction

Human Sexuality Instruction

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for such instruction.

State law requires that any instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) must:

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior;
- Emphasize that abstinence is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

Annual Notification

Students receive instruction related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

In accordance with state law, below is a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

The district has selected Choosing the Best curriculum for their human sexuality instruction. This curriculum is an "Abstinence-centered" sex education curriculum that is a holistic, "risk avoidance" approach that strongly **promotes abstinence as the best and healthiest choice, while also teaching students about goal-setting, healthy relationships, refusal skills, and character building**. Choosing the Best informs students about the significant risks associated with casual sex, including unplanned pregnancy, STDs, and negative emotional consequences. Choosing the Best also emphasizes the benefits of waiting, empowering students to make an informed choice about their sexual behavior.

As a parent, you are entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, you may remove your child from any part of the human sexuality instruction with no academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. You may also choose to become more involved with the development of curriculum used for this purpose by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. Please see the campus principal for additional information.

Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

The district has established procedures for recommending to a parent an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. 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 provide information about available counseling options.

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

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a

portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

[See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

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

As a parent, you may request that your 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 in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 89 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

Religious or Moral Beliefs

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 and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

Tutoring or Test Preparation

Based on informal observations, evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or results from diagnostic assessments, a teacher may determine that a student is in need of additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills. 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, the school will not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent consents to this removal.

The school may also offer tutorial services, which students whose grades are below 70 will be required to attend.

[Also refer to policies EC and EHBC, and contact your student's teacher with questions about any tutoring programs provided by the school.]

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

As a parent, you have a 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 to your child.

You are also entitled to request that the school allow your child to take home any instructional materials used by the student. If the school determines that sufficient availability exists to grant the request, the student must return the materials at the beginning of the next school day if requested to do so by the student's teacher.

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent

Noncustodial parents may request in writing that they be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to parents related to their child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

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

You may request information regarding any state or district policy related to your child's participation in assessments required by federal law, state law, or the district.

Student Records

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 school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with your child, as the term intervention strategy is defined by law,

- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child’s classroom.

Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records

A federal law, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, affords parents and eligible students certain rights with respect to student education records. For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is age 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education. These rights, as discussed in this section as well as at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 17, are:

- The right to inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.
- The right to request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA.
- The right to 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.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW 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 any 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 primarily restricted to an eligible student or a student’s parent—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records.

Federal law requires that, as soon as a student reaches the age of 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a postsecondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parent may continue to have access to the records, however, 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, in the following circumstances:

- When district school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or district medical staff); a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular 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 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. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes 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 to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.
- 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, TEA, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, school district/system, or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or which the student 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 information, it has designated as directory information. [See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 17 for opportunities to prohibit this disclosure.]

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 wishes to inspect the student’s records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wishes to inspect. Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides 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 these records. The school district contact information is as follows:

Stafford Municipal School District	1633 Staffordshire Rd. Stafford, TX 77477	281.261.9200
Stafford Early Childhood Center	1350 Constitution Rd. Stafford, TX 77477	281.208.6100
Stafford Elementary School	1250 Constitution Rd. Stafford, TX 77477	281.261.9229
Stafford STEM Magnet Academy	200 Stafford Pride Rd. Stafford, TX 77477	281.208.6126
Stafford Middle School	1424 Constitution Rd. Stafford, TX 77477	281.261.9215
Stafford High School	100 Spartan Dr. Stafford, TX 77477	281.261.9239
Stafford Alternative Education Center (SAEC) & Quest	200 Stafford Pride Rd. Stafford, TX 77477	281.261.9270

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 in the record 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 the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information 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 general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom 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 policy. [See Finality of Grades at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 92, and **Complaints and Concerns** on page 46 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at: <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/485>.

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

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and whether the teacher is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Students with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances

Children of Military Families

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course, or educational program placement.
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the district. The parent should provide

written notification of an upcoming absence for this purpose, in advance of the absence(s). The district will permit no more than five (5) 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

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

Safety Transfers/Assignments As

a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying, which includes cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided for out-of- district transfers to Stafford MSD.

[See **Bullying** on page 38, and policies FDB and FFI.]

- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE.]
- Request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a 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 that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing 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.

Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)

A student who is currently in the conservatorship (custody) of the state and who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities outside the district's established testing windows, and the district will grant proportionate course credit by semester (partial credit) when a student only passes one semester of a two-semester course.

A student who is currently in the conservatorship of the state and who is moved outside of the district's or school's attendance boundaries, or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and who is moved outside the district's or school's boundaries, is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school.

In addition, 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 to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

In addition, 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 any applications for admission or for 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 any examination fees by the DFPS; and
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students who were formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

[See also **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 49, **Course Credit** on page 49, and **Students in Foster Care** on page 102 for more information.]

Students Who Are 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;
- The award of partial credit (awarding credit proportionately when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester course);
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 is homeless and transfers to another school district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

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

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 also **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 49, **Course Credit** on page 49, and **Homeless Students** on page 29 for more information.]

Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need 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.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school 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 the Director of Federal and State Programs at 281-261-9251.

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 is the Director of Federal and State Programs at 281-261-9251.

[See also **Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 32.]

The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

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

Notification to Parent of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Student in General Education

The district will annually notify parents that it provides assistance to students, other than those already enrolled in a special education program, who need assistance for learning difficulties, including intervention strategies

Students Who Receive 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, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. However, the district is not required to provide transportation to the other children in the household. The parent or guardian should speak with the principal of the school regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for any other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

Students Who Speak 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 extra 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.

Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected Under Section 504

A student determined to have 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 if the student is in need of services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law. [See policy FB.]

[See also **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 30 for more information.]

Section II: Other Important Information for Students and Parents

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical

order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student's age or grade level. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the principal.

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 state laws—one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children in school, e.g., compulsory attendance, the other with how a student's attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

Compulsory Attendance

Age 19 and Older

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If a student age 19 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

Between Ages 6 and 19

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.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

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/or applicable subject area.

Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

Students enrolled in prekindergarten and kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

All Grade Levels

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 U.S. citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, 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 arrival or return to campus; and
- 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.

As listed in Section I at **Children of Military Families**, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. [See page 27 for that section.]

Secondary Grade Levels

In addition, a junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided this has been authorized by the board under policy FEA(LOCAL), the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

An absence will also be considered an exemption if a student 17 years of age or older is pursuing enlistment in a branch of the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the absence does not exceed four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school and the student provides verification to the district of these activities.

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for:

- A student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; and
- A student serving as an election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed.

An absence of a student in grades 6–12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran will also be excused by the district.

Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

All Grade Levels

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special

programs, such as additional special instruction, termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials 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 committee or Section 504 committee will be notified, and the 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.

Age 19 and Older

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district will send the student a letter as required by law explaining that the district may revoke the student’s enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student’s enrollment, the district may implement an attendance improvement plan.

Between Ages 6 and 19

When a student between ages 6 and 19 incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student’s parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include an attendance improvement plan, school-based community service, or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is the Chief Academic Officer. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a student’s parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student ages 12–18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days 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).]

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (Kindergarten–Grade 12)

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the

class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, who allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class.

If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. [See policy FEC.]

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will review absences incurred based on the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made 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 absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- 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 to talk about 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).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)

The district must submit attendance of its students to the TEA reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. The official attendance accounting time for each campus is as follows:

STEM Magnet, Middle School and High School	9:25 am
Stafford Early Childhood and School	9:30 am
Stafford Alternative Education Center (SAEC)	9:25 am

A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

Documentation after an Absence (All Grade Levels)

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note.

The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused.

Note: Unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

Doctor’s Note after an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than five 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 student’s extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student’s absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be 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 student’s absence from school to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student’s attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student’s attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) and attendance form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)

SMSD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- The district's financial management report, which will include 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.

This information can be found on the district's website at www.staffordmsd.org. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

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

Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test

A student in grades 10–12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and consult with a military recruiter.

The test shall be offered in the Fall at Stafford High School.

Please contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

Awards and Honors (All Grade Levels)

All awards to students for participation in extracurricular activities or organizations must meet criteria set forth in the individual activity/organization's guidelines, as established by the teacher leading the activity/organization, in conjunction with board policy and/or procedures as well as approved by the campus principal.

Bullying (All Grade Levels)

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:

- 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 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.

The district is required to adopt policies and procedures regarding:

- 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;
- 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
- 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.

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, or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other 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. A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by emailing: Nobullyingallowed@staffordmsd.org.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. 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 these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to 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 by the district 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 28.]

A copy of the district's 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 in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's website.

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 28, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50, **Hazing** on page 73, policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas:

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources;
Arts, Audio/Video Technology and Communications;
Business Management and Administration;
Education and Training;
Health Science;
Hospitality and Tourism;
Information Technology;
Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security;
Manufacturing;
Marketing;
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Transportation,
Distribution and Logistics.

Admission to these programs is based on interest, aptitude, grade, age appropriateness, class space, and satisfying prerequisites and co-requisites.

It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil

Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The district will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 86 for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator, who will address certain allegations of discrimination.]

Celebrations (All Grade Levels)

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child's or grandchild's classroom for his or her birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child's teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products.

[See **Food Allergies** on page 76.]

Child Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at <http://www.staffordmsd.org>. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. 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, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include 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. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that

disclosures of sexual abuse may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and neglect, and 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.

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding 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](#).]

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 (All Grade Levels)** on page 51.]

The following websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet](#)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](#)
- [Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Resources](#)
- [Texas Attorney General, What We Can Do About Child Abuse Part One](#)
- [Texas Attorney General, What We Can Do About Child Abuse Part Two](#)

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the DFPS (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)).

Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

- A weighted grade point system (GPA) shall be used to calculate class rank.
- Grades earned through correspondence courses, credit by examination (with or without prior instruction), summer school credit, distance learning courses, credit for courses not recognized by TEA, credit for which a pass/fail grade was given, and credit awarded in a nonaccredited instructional setting shall not be included when determining class rank. In addition, high school courses taken in grade 8, as well as any two- or three-credit career and technology work-based training courses; or local credit course, shall not be included in the computation.
- A high school student who transfers into the District with course credits shall receive similar credits.
- A student shall be permitted to check his or her grade point average in the presence of a counselor at the end of the fifth grading period.
- To be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian honors, a student must be initially and continuously enrolled in the District as a full-time student for four semesters preceding graduation. The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the eligible students with the

highest and second highest class ranking as determined by the District's ranking procedure described in this policy and who have completed the Recommended or the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program for graduation. Three-year graduates shall not be eligible for academic honors.

In the event of a tie in cumulative weighted averages, the top-ranking students shall be chosen as follows:

The student with the most advanced courses shall be named valedictorian.

If there is still a tie, the student with the highest average in all advanced courses shall be the valedictorian.

- The district will award the highest-ranking graduate scholarship provided by the state to the district-declared valedictorian;
- The weighted five-point scale shall be used for AP, Pre-AP, and Dual/Concurrent Credit courses. The four-point scale shall be used for the remaining courses; and

GRADE POINT CONVERSION SCALE

Cumulative Weighted Average	Grade Point Equivalent
100 or above	5.0
99	4.9
98	4.8
97	4.7
96	4.6
95	4.5
94	4.4
93	4.3
92	4.2
91	4.1
90	4.0
89	3.9
88	3.8
87	3.7
86	3.6
85	3.5
84	3.4

GRADE POINT CONVERSION SCALE

Cumulative Weighted Average	Grade Point Equivalent
83	3.3
82	3.2
81	3.1
80	3.0
79	2.9
78	2.8
77	2.7
76	2.6
75	2.5
74	2.4
73	2.3
72	2.2
71	2.1
70	2.0

- A student who completes the high school requirements in fewer than four years shall be ranked in the class with which he or she actually graduates and shall be eligible for honors positions. Calculation of ranking for December graduates shall be in the month of December when all graduation requirements have been met. [For further information, see policy EIC.]

Class Schedules (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

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. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9–12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day's schedule.

[See **Schedule Changes** on page 97 for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates in the top ten percent and, in some cases, the top 25 percent, of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); or

- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that he or she meets the admission requirements of the university or college to which the student submits an application.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University during the summer or fall 2019 term, the University will admit the top six percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

Should a college or university adopt an admissions policy that automatically accepts the top 25 percent of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25 percent of his or her class.

Upon enrolling in their first course that is eligible for high school credit, the district will provide written notice concerning automatic college admission, the curriculum requirements for financial aid, and the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid.

Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines.

[See **Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student** on page 42 for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation** on page 68 for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** on page 29 for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Students in grades 9–12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit or Advanced Placement (AP);
- Enrollment in an AP or dual credit course through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) or other board approved virtual platforms;
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with Houston Community College, which may be offered on or off campus; • Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities; and
- Certain CTE courses.

All of these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved prior to enrollment in the course. Please see the school counselor for more information. Depending on the student's grade level and the course, a state-mandated end-of-course assessment may be required for graduation.

It is important to keep in mind that not all colleges and universities accept credit earned in all dual credit or AP courses taken in high school for college credit. Students and parents should check with the prospective college or university to determine if a particular course will count toward the student's desired degree plan.

Communications—Automated

Emergency

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency purpose may include early dismissal or delayed opening because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

[See **Safety** on page 96 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

Nonemergency

Your child's school will request that you provide contact information, such as your phone number and e-mail address, for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child's school, or the district. If you consent to receive such information through a landline or wireless phone, please ensure that you notify the school's administration office immediately upon a change in your phone number. The district or school may generate automated or prerecorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or e-mail communications that are closely related the school's mission, so prompt notification of any change in contact information will be crucial to maintain timely communication with you. Standard messaging rates of your phone carrier may apply. If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, please contact your child's principal. [See **Safety** on page 96 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)

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 handled so easily, the board has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy and complaint forms may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or at the [SMSD district website](#).

Should a parent or student feel a need to file a formal complaint, the parent or student should file a district complaint form within the timelines established in policy FNG(LOCAL). In general, the student or parent should submit the written complaint form to the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the chief of schools. If the

concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

Conduct (All Grade Levels)

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 as well as on district vehicles—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.

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 coordinator at each district campus is listed below:

Early Childhood Center – Aisha Atkinson

Elementary School – Janelle Toussant

STEM Magnet Academy – Karen Grant

Middle School – Angel Jordan

High School –Silas Garcia

[For more information, see policy FO(LOCAL)]

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.

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.

Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events.

Counseling

Academic Counseling

Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels

The school counselor is available to students and parents to talk about the importance of postsecondary education and how best to plan for postsecondary education, including appropriate courses to consider and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 6, 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction related to how the student can best prepare for high school, college, and a career.

High School Grade Levels

High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each year, high school students will be provided information via the Stafford High School Course Selection Guide, that will outline anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities, as well as information on the importance of postsecondary education. This guide will also outline the specific graduation requirements.

The school counselor can also provide information about entrance examinations and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission, financial aid, housing, and scholarships as these relate to state colleges and universities. Additionally, the school counselor can provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical

and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels)

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should go to the counselor's office to schedule an appointment with his/her assigned counselor. 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.

[See **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 103, **Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support** on page 103, and **Child Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children and Dating Violence** on page 41.]

Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

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 from 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 Examination—If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (All Grade Levels)

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

If the student is granted approval to take an examination for this purpose, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination.

[For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).]

Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject

A student will be permitted to take an examination to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction, i.e., for advancement or to

accelerate to the next grade level. The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees, and state law requires the use of certain examinations, such as College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, when applicable. The dates on which examinations are scheduled during the 2018–19 school year will be published in appropriate district publications and on the district's website. The only exceptions to the published dates will be for any examinations administered by another entity besides the district or if a request is made outside of these time frames by a student experiencing homelessness or by a student involved in the foster care system. When another entity administers an examination, a student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. During each testing window provided by the district, a student may attempt a specific examination only once.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student (or parent) must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date.

[For further information, see policy EHDC.]

Kindergarten Acceleration

Student placement in first grade (in lieu of Kindergarten) will not be considered until after September 1. Student ability and social maturation will be considered. Placement will require parent, teacher, counselor, and principal conference and agreement.

Students in Grades 1–5

A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, a district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated, and the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

Students in Grades 6–12

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the examination, a scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable. A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)

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, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or online at the SMSD district [SMSD website](#) [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. 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. 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, 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, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, 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.

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, intimidating, or humiliating 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.

In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment

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

Examples of 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.

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, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

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 or the harasser'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, 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, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [See policy FFH(LOCAL) and (EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]

Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if

proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parent of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH.

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.

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.

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

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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

Discrimination

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 51.]

Distance Learning

All Grade Levels

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 distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to district students are Edmentum, Texas Connections, and K-12 Online.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), as described below, 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 may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) (Secondary Grade Levels)

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established by the state 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.

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** on page 64.] 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 school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

A copy of policy EHDE will be distributed to parents of middle and high school students at least once each year. If you do not receive a copy or have questions about this policy, please contact the school counselor.

Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels)

School Materials

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

The school yearbook, Laconia, is available for purchase to students, each year.

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

Non-school Materials

From Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than ten copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

The principal has designated an area in the main office as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes non-school material without prior approval will be subject to

disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

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 superintendent for prior review. The superintendent (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.]

The Superintendent has designated the district reception area as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

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 noncurricular-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.

STEM Magnet Academy- Student Contract

Students of Stafford STEM Magnet Academy must adhere to the following expectations:

- Maintain a minimum of 75% passing average or 2.75 GPA
- Display appropriate conduct that reflects positively on the mission and vision of the Stafford STEM Magnet Academy
- Maintain acceptable school attendance
- Comply with school uniform policy
- Failure to meet the above **academic standards and behavior expectations** will result in procedural steps for dismissal from the Stafford STEM Magnet Academy.

Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

- Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others.
- The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations.
- The District prohibits trench coats at all campuses as well as pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that:

Are lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene, or backwards.

Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCF (LEGAL).

If the principal 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 may 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.

Additional dress and grooming standards for each campus follows:

Standardized Dress Code for Stafford Early Childhood Center and Stafford Elementary Schools

Students are required to comply with the following mode of dress on the first day of school, each year:

Shirts

Two types of shirts will be allowed, solid color (red, white, or navy) collared polo-style or solid white, collared, button-front shirt or blouse. Insignias or logos, other than the SMSD Spartan logo, are not allowed.

Either short or long sleeves are acceptable. Sleeveless shirts or blouses are not allowed. Shirts and blouses may be opened only as far as the first or second button.

All shirts and blouses must be long enough to completely cover the midriff always.

Pants and Shorts

Pants, slacks, and shorts must be made of a cotton type material or official school uniform fabric and must be either navy or khaki in color. No denim, jean, or stretch material is allowed. No

cargo pants or pants with large pockets, wind suit pants, or low-rise pants are allowed. Sagging pants, shorts, and/or skirts are not permitted. Tight fitting slacks, pants, or shorts are not allowed. Frayed or cut hems are not allowed. Shorts may be no shorter than 3" above the top of the knee, and no shorter than 4" above the crease at the back of the knee. Belts must be worn with all garments that have belt loops. No studded belts will be permitted.

Skirts and Jumpers

Girls may wear navy or khaki colored skirts or jumpers. Shorts should be worn underneath skirts and jumpers. No leggings are allowed. The fabric should be cotton or official school uniform fabric. No denim or jean material is allowed. Skirts and jumpers may be no shorter than 3" above the top of the knee and no shorter than 4" above the crease at the back of the knee. If the skirt or jumper has belt loops, a belt must be worn. All skirts and jumpers must be worn with a red, white, or navy collared polo top or a white button-front collared blouse.

Shoes

All students shall wear shoes and socks for safety and health reasons. Thongs, flip-flops, all backless shoes, and sandals are not appropriate for school. No open-toed shoes will be allowed. Shoes must be properly tied. Roller-skate conversion shoes are not allowed.

Sweaters, Sweatshirts, Heavy Jackets, and Coats

With cool weather, students may wear cardigan sweaters, sweatshirts, heavy jackets, and coats. However, jackets and coats will remain in the classroom closet during regular school hours except during outside PE or recess time. Cardigans or sweatshirts may only be worn over a collared shirt, either the polo style in red, white, or navy, or the white button-front blouse or shirt. Collars must be visible. Cardigans or sweatshirts must be a solid color; only these may be worn in the classroom, however, they may not have hoods, be oversized or be pullovers. Insignias or logos other than the SMSD Spartan logo may be allowed but they must be appropriate. No windbreakers, heavy jackets, or coats may be worn in the classroom. No trench coats are allowed at any time.

Undershirts

Undershirts may be worn but must be solid white. No writing may appear on these undershirts either front or back.

Dress and Grooming Code

Any student whose dress or grooming creates a disruption in the classroom shall be subject to removal from that classroom. Excessive jewelry (multiple bracelets, beads, and necklaces) is inappropriate. Body piercings, ear gauges are prohibited. Due to safety hazard, dangling earrings (large hoop or chandelier), necklaces with large pendants or medallions are not allowed. All necklaces must be worn inside the dress code shirt. Accessories such as suspenders for decoration, fashion scarves around the neck, etc. are inappropriate and not allowed.

Appropriate underclothing must be worn and must not be visible.

Hats, caps, other head coverings and non-prescription glasses are not to be worn in the building. Bandanas are not to be worn or displayed on school property.

Make-up is unacceptable.

Hairstyles must be socially acceptable and not distracting. Hair must be neat, clean, well-groomed, and generally kept in moderation. Unnatural hair colors and styles such as razored hair designs are not allowed. (i.e., neon colors, hair mascara).

Exposed tattoos or intentional pen or pencil marks on arms, hands, legs, face, etc. are inappropriate for school and must be covered always.

Backpacks and book bags also will be kept in storage closets during school hours. Due to safety concerns, Elementary students may not bring rolling backpacks and book bags to school.

Identification Badges (REQUIRED for all STEM Academy, Middle, and High School students.)

Students are required to wear a school-furnished identification badge while on campus. This badge serves as a means of identification within the school setting, (i.e. library use, cafeteria use, athletic participation, and transportation.) When badges are damaged or lost, students will be required to purchase new badges at a cost of \$2.00. Replacement lanyards are \$1.00. Badge replacements may be purchased every day, before or after school. Students may be charged and required to wear a temporary badge until a replacement is purchased.

All badges must be worn around the neck.

The front of the badge must be visible always, clearly displaying the photograph.

Identification badges may not be defaced or altered in any way, i.e., stickers, erasures, additional art work, etc.

Lost badges must be replaced immediately.

Standardized Dress Code for Stafford Middle School

Students are required to comply with the following mode of dress on the first day of school, each year. Students are expected to follow the dress code at all school related functions, whether off or on campus.

Dress and Grooming Code

Students must wear clothing that is appropriate for school and school-related activities. Clothing must be neat, clean in appearance. Students whose dress or grooming creates a disruption in the classroom shall be subject to removal from that classroom. Items that may cause a disruption clothing, accessories and hair color. Only natural hair colors are acceptable.

Appropriate underclothing must be worn.

Pants, shorts and skirts must be worn at the waist level above the hips. Skin tight or baggy clothing is not acceptable for the classroom or at school activities. This includes baggy shorts, pants, skirts, sweatshirts, shirts, and sweaters. Students wearing sagging pants will be given a cinch tie for the pants.

Any garment worn below or at the knee is acceptable for school wear if it conforms to all other guidelines for other garments, and it does not cause a disruption. The width between the hem and the top of the knee allowable for garments worn to class shall not exceed the width of a dollar bill.

Dress code pants with holes and cuts are not allowed. Spirit day attire (jeans) with holes and cuts are not allowed without.

Hats, caps, other head coverings and non-prescription glasses are not to be worn in the building. Bandanas are not to be worn or displayed on school property.

No chains, including key straps of any length, will be worn on or outside of clothing. No collars or wristbands with spikes will be allowed.

Hairstyles must be socially acceptable and not distracting. Hair must be neat, clean, well-groomed, and generally kept in moderation. Rake type combs may not be worn in hair; metal rake type combs are prohibited on campus. Unnatural hair colors and styles are not allowed (i.e. neon colors, hair mascara).

Exposed tattoos or intentional pen or pencil marks on arms, hands, legs, face, etc. are inappropriate for school and must be covered.

Body piercing is limited the ears. No other visible body piercing is allowed, including tongue piercing. All earrings shall be appropriate for the school setting; large earrings that pose a safety hazard, earrings expressing indecency or gang affiliation are prohibited.

Backpacks are allowed in the classroom. Teachers may require students to store them in a designated area of the classroom. Athletic bags are not allowed in academic areas.

Shirts

Starting with all incoming sixth graders, students will wear the same assigned shirt color throughout middle school. Two types of shirts will be allowed: collared polo-style or collared, button-front shirt or blouse. Insignias or logos, other than the SMSD Spartan logo, are not allowed. Either short or long sleeves are acceptable. Sleeveless shirts or blouses are not allowed.

All shirts and blouses must be long enough to completely cover the midriff at all times. Uniform shirt must be worn Monday through Thursday.

Students may wear a Stafford spirit shirt with jeans on Fridays. A student can be denied this privilege due to discipline at the discretion of the administrator.

Undershirts

Undershirts may be worn but must be solid white. No writing may appear on either the front or back of these undershirts.

Pants and Shorts

Pants, slacks, and shorts must be made of twill and either navy or khaki in color. No denim or jean material or rivets style are allowed except on Friday. No cargo pants or pants with large

pockets, hip huggers, pants and shorts without waistbands, or wind suit pants are allowed. Pants, shorts, and slacks should fit at the waist, not baggy or sagging. Tight fitting slacks, tight-fitted jegging pants, pajama jeans and baggy shorts are not allowed. Frayed, cut, or split hems are not allowed. Shorts may be no shorter than the width of a dollar bill above the top of the knee. Uniform pants/shorts must be worn Monday through Thursday.

Students may wear a Stafford spirit shirt with jeans on Fridays. A student can be denied this privilege due to discipline at the discretion of the administrator.

Skirts and Jumpers

Girls may wear navy or khaki colored skirts or jumpers. The fabric should be twill. No denim or jean material is allowed. Skirts and jumpers may be no shorter than the width of a dollar bill above the top of the knee. Skirts may not be tight, frayed, ankle length nor have bows on hem or splits and slits on ankle length skirts. If the skirt or jumper has belt loops, a belt must be worn. All skirts and jumpers must be worn with the appropriate grade-level color collared polo top or a button-front collared blouse. Uniform skirts/pants must be worn Monday through Thursday.

Students may wear a Stafford spirit shirt with jeans on Fridays. A student can be denied this privilege due to discipline at the discretion of the administrator.

Shoes

All students shall wear shoes for safety and health reasons. Thongs, flip-flops, all backless shoes and sandals are not appropriate for school. House shoes (except for medical reasons) will not be allowed. Crocs are highly discouraged for safety reasons. Shoes must be properly laced and tied. Medical exceptions must be documented by the school nurse.

Sweaters, Sweatshirts, and Hoodies

With cool weather, students may wear jackets, cardigan sweaters, windbreakers, and sweatshirts. Hoodies are highly discouraged and may not be worn in the building due to safety reasons. Cardigans, sweatshirts, and windbreakers may only be worn over a collared shirt, either the polo style or button-front blouse or shirt in the appropriate grade-level color. Collars must be visible. Outerwear must be solid in color.

Dress Code for Stafford High School

Students are required to comply with the following mode of dress starting on the first day of school.

Dress and Grooming Code

Students must wear clothing that is appropriate for school and school-related activities. Clothing must be neat, clean in appearance, and socially appropriate for the student's gender. Students whose dress or grooming creates a disruption in the classroom shall be subject to

removal from that classroom. Items that may cause a disruption include jewelry, clothing accessories and hair color. Only natural hair colors are acceptable.

Thick jewelry should be removed; long jewelry should be tucked inside shirt. Appropriate underclothing must be worn and must not be visible.

Pants, shorts, and skirts must be worn and fitted at the waist level above the hips.

Any sleeveless shirt (including camisoles) must be covered by outer shirt or jacket

Any garment worn below or at the knee is acceptable for school-wear as long as it conforms to all other guidelines for other garments, and it does not cause a disruption. The width between the hem and the top of the knee allowable for garments worn to class shall not exceed the width of a dollar bill.

Pants with rips, distressed, holes, fake patch holes, and cuts are not allowed.

Skin tight or baggy clothing is not acceptable for the classroom or at school activities. This includes pajama jeans, tight-fitted jegging pants, tights, yoga pants, baggy cotton sweatpants or jogging pants, baggy shorts, baggy jeans or pants, and baggy sweaters. Students wearing sagging pants will be given a cinch tie for the pants. Pajamas, tops and bottoms, cannot be worn to school or school activities at any time.

Square cut, button-down shirts may be worn outside the trousers. Shirts that are too short to be properly tucked in or to stay tucked in when one is sitting, reaching, or bending are not acceptable.

Tank tops, sleeveless shirts and sleeveless jerseys with no undershirt are not allowed.

Blouses that are so short to expose the waist are inappropriate. Ladies blouses made to be worn outside the pants or shorts cannot be longer than thumb length when standing up straight. If a question arises as to whether the blouse is made to be worn outside or to be tucked in, it must be tucked in. See-through blouses/shirts and skirts must be worn with the appropriate undergarments.

When there is a discrepancy as to whether the garment is a shirt, blouse, or sweater it is a shirt and all guidelines pertaining to shirts are to be followed.

Fitted sweat tops, sweaters, and sweater vests made to be worn outside the pants or shorts may be worn if they are over a T-shirt.

Hats, caps and other head coverings and non-prescription glasses are not to be worn in the building. Bandannas are not to be worn or displayed on school property including as a headband.

Coats, jackets, and windbreakers may be worn to school or school-related activities provided they do not extend past the mid-thigh.

All students will wear shoes for safety and health reasons. All footwear will be properly tied, buckled, or appropriately secured. House shoes and slippers are strictly prohibited.

No chains including key straps of any length will be worn on or outside of clothing. No collars or wristbands with spikes will be allowed.

Hairstyles and makeup must be socially acceptable and not distracting to the educational environment. Hair must be neat, clean, well-groomed, and generally kept in moderation. Rake type combs may not be worn in hair; metal rake type combs are prohibited on campus. Outrageous hair colors and styles are not allowed (i.e., neon colors, hair mascara).

Exposed tattoos or intentional pen or pencil marks on arms, hands, legs, face, etc. are inappropriate for school and must be covered always (must be covered with Band-Aids, gloves, or other appropriate materials).

Body piercing is limited to two per ear lobe (no nose rings). No other visible body piercing is allowed, including tongue piercing. Students that have ear piercings less than four weeks old are permitted to wear safety sustainer to prevent closure. All earrings shall be appropriate for the school setting; large earrings that pose a safety hazard, earrings expressing indecency or gang affiliation are prohibited.

Backpacks are allowed in the classroom. Teachers may require students to store them in a designated area in the classroom. Athletic bags are not allowed in academic areas.

Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)

Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

The use of mobile telephones 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.

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent 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. [See **Searches** on page 99 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for damaged, lost, or stolen telecommunications devices.

Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 99 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

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 (separate from this handbook). 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

District-owned technology resources for instructional purposes may be issued to individual 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. Students must bring district issued devices daily.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also 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, possessing, 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, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain

circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child ['Before You Text' Sexting Prevention Course](#), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, 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, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

[See **Graduation** on page 68 and **Standardized Testing** on page 100.]

English Language Learners (All Grade Levels)

A student who is an English language learner is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for an English language learner. 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 then 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. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 100, may be administered to an English language learner for a student up to grade 5. 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 language learners who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an English language 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.

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)

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. [See **Transportation** on page 104.]

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. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at [UIL Parent Information Manual](#); a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request. To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or curriculum@tea.texas.gov.

[See [UIL Texas](#) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. The equipment used in football is no exception. As a parent, you are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

In addition, the following provisions apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who, at the end of a grading period, receives a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement (AP); or an honors (Pre-AP) or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student who receives special education services and 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 seven absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of five 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 such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams 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 board 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 include: Art Club; Drama Club; Distributive Education Club of America (DECA); Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA); Future Farmers of America (FFA); Geography Club; Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA); National Honor Society; National Junior Honor Society; Robotics Club; Science Club; Science National Honor Society; Spanish Club; Spanish Honor Society; and Student Council.

Fees (All Grade Levels)

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, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance.
- 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.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require 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 or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program 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. [For further information, see policy FP.]

Fundraising (All Grade Levels)

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. [For further information, see policies FJ and GE.]

Gang-Free Zones (All Grade Levels)

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.

Gender-Based Harassment

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9–12 Only)

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Credits Earned	Classification
6	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
12	Grade 11 (Junior)
18	Grade 12 (Senior)

Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

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 addressed.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 92 for additional information on grading guidelines.]

Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Requirements for a Diploma Beginning with the 2014–15 School Year

Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2014–15 school year, a student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state;
- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law; and
- Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education (SBOE).

Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment, should a student choose this option. [See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.]

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 100 for more information.]

Foundation Graduation Program

Every student in a Texas public school who entered grade 9 in the 2014–15 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “foundation graduation program.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. Earning the “distinguished level of achievement” designation allow one to compete for top ten percent automatic admissions eligibility at a Texas public university. For more information as to what is required for this designation, see the Stafford High School Course Selection Guide, available in the counseling center. A **Personal Graduation Plan** will be completed for each high school student, as described on page 70.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn “performance acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student’s transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB examination, on certain national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance examinations, or for earning a state recognized or nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules, and the school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

Credits Required

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

Course Area	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4

Social studies, including Economics	3	3
Physical education	1	1
Language other than English	2	2
Fine arts	1	1
Electives	5	7
Total	22 credits	26 credits

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

- **Mathematics.** To obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, which will be included on a student's transcript and is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the 4 mathematics credits.
- **Physical education.** A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or another locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.
- **Language other than English.** Students are required to earn 2 credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits. In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

Available Endorsements

A student must specify upon entering grade 9 the endorsement he or she wishes to pursue.

- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- Business and industry
- Public services
- Arts and humanities
- Multidisciplinary studies

Personal Graduation Plans

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at

least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class. The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student's personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

Please also review [TEA's Graduation Toolkit](#).

A student may, with parental permission, amend his or her personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation.

Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area will be distributed to students each spring to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

Note: The district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

Stafford Scholars Recognition Program

The District shall offer the Stafford Scholars Recognition Program, which shall require a total of 28 credits as set out in the student handbook. In addition to the required number of credits, the program requires that the student be a graduating senior who has earned:

1. 15 hours of approved college credit through dual credit courses; or credit for 3 AP courses with a passing AP test score of 3 or higher; or a combination of the two that would equate to 12 hours of college credit;
2. A minimum of 100 community service-learning hours beginning with the freshman year; and 3. An exceptional attendance record of at least 98 percent and a behavioral record with no placement in a DAEP or JJAEP.

Certificates of Coursework Completion

A certificate of coursework completion will not be issued to a student who has successfully completed state and local credit requirements for graduation but has not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on the state-mandated tests required for graduation.

Students with Disabilities

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with a disability who receives special education services may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP) and in accordance with state rules.

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See policy FMH(LEGAL).]

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. To earn an endorsement under the foundation program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the end of course (EOC) assessments and receive no modified curriculum in the student's chosen endorsement area. A student may still be awarded an endorsement when the student fails to perform satisfactorily on no more than two EOC assessments but meets the other requirements for graduation under state law.

Graduation Activities

The district has the right to limit a student's participation in graduation activities (also known as senior activities) for violating the district's Code. Senior activities include things such as: prom, senior trip, and graduation. The principal will make the final determination for student/parent participation in all activities.

Participation in graduation 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.

Graduation Speakers

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies.

A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer.

[See FNA(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct. For student speakers at other school events, see **Student Speakers** on page 103.]

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Fees** on page 66.]

Scholarships and Grants

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the foundation graduation program, may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions.

Contact the school counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

Harassment

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

Hazing (All Grade Levels)

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. Examples include:

- Any type of physical brutality;
- Any type of physical activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of physical or mental harm, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, or calisthenics;
- Any activity involving consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances that subjects the student to unreasonable risk of physical or mental harm;
- Any activity that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student, such as ostracism, shame, or humiliation; and

- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to violate the Penal Code.

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.

[See **Bullying** on page 38 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

Health-Related Matters

Student Illness (All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not 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.

COVID-19

The CDC describes COVID-19 as a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Symptoms include fever, cough and difficulty breathing.

The prevention measures are as follows:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Wear a face mask and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a covered trashcan.
- If you do not have a tissue, use your sleeve (not your hands).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

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 common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

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 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. 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. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

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?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. The vaccines are safe and effective (85–90 percent). They 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 websites for the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), particularly the CDC's information on [bacterial meningitis](#), and the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

Note: DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after the student's 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization** on page 80 for more information.]

Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)

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. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at www.staffordmsd.org. Please contact the Director of Child Nutrition for additional information.

[See policy FFAF and **Celebrations** on page 41.]

Head Lice (All Grade Levels)

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with

the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

Notice will also be provided to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice](#).

[See policy FFAA.]

Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)

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

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student.

In accordance with policy FFAC, authorized employees may administer:

- Prescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, 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 provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **Note:** Insect repellent is considered a nonprescription medication.
- 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.

An elementary or secondary student may possess and self-apply sunscreen to avoid overexposure to the sun. An elementary student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to the student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and asks for help applying it. If a secondary student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need 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.

Physical Activity Requirements

Elementary School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten–grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

For additional information on the district’s requirements and programs regarding elementary school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

Junior High/Middle School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters.

For additional information on the district’s requirements and programs regarding junior high and middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels)

During the preceding school year, the district’s School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held a minimum of two meetings per school year. Additional information regarding the district’s SHAC is available from the Chief of Schools.

The duties of the SHAC range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns, and employee wellness.

[See policies at BDF and EHAA. See **Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 19 for additional information.]

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)

SMSD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You are encouraged to contact Director of Child Nutrition with questions about the content or implementation of the district’s wellness policy and plan.

Other Health-Related Matters

Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3–12)

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12 who are enrolled in a physical education course or a course for which physical education credit is awarded. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to campus physical education teacher to obtain the results of his or her child’s physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines (All Grade Levels)

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies and guidelines for food service, including the guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see the Director of Child Nutrition. [See policies at CO and FFA.]

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 cigarettes (e-cigarettes), or any other electronic vaporizing device, while on school property at any time 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 at FNCD and GKA.]

Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact Director of Operations, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at 281-208-6148.

Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)

The district is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the district strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Director of Operations, the district's IPM coordinator, at 281-208-6148.

A Student Who is Homeless (All Grade Levels)

You are encouraged to inform the district if you or your child are experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources with you that may be able to assist you and your family.

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's homeless education liaison, Director of Federal and State Programs, at 281-261-9251. [See **Students Who Are Homeless** on page 29]

Homework (All Grade Levels)

SMUSD endorses homework as a valued extension of learning beyond the classroom and an integral part of the instructional program. Depending on the course content, homework may be addressed in short-term or long-term assignments. When students are absent two or more days, parents should call the office to request assignments and plan for the assignments to be picked up.

Reasons for Homework

Complete work started in class.

Expand and enrich regular class work.

Build interest in reading and learning.

Make up work missed due to absence.

Encourage parents' awareness of student learning.

Provide an opportunity to pursue special interest or ability areas.

Increase learning time.

Establish independent study skills.

Teach students to be responsible. Practice application of skills.

Academic Dishonesty

A student found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.

Restrictions on Homework

Homework which requires students to purchase supplies and materials (other than pencil, paper, etc.,) which by law must be provided by the school, is prohibited. However, students may voluntarily provide project materials and supplies as long as no student is penalized for not providing or for not participating in such homework projects, and that students who do provide such are not given an advantage in extra grades or other reward. This restriction does not apply to homework assignments in which students are asked to bring or supply readily and commonly available free materials or items (leaves, rocks, old newsprint, etc.).

Enforcement of Assigned Homework

Failure by a student to complete and turn in homework in a timely manner as required by a teacher is to be treated in the same manner as failure to perform work required by a teacher in the classroom setting. Unless mitigating circumstances acceptable to the principal are established, student failure to turn in homework is considered to be disobedient and insubordinate behavior. Various forms of disciplinary action may be exercised by the teacher or principal through established District disciplinary procedures.

Amount and Scheduling

The length and difficulty of an assignment shall be directed by the teacher and should depend on grade level, student needs, content, purpose, and type of assignment. Homework should be assigned when appropriate in any class. Assignments should be appropriate to the developmental and ability levels of the student. Homework should be reasonable in terms of student time and available resources. Assignments should be made with consideration given to a student's total schedule.

Illness

[See **Student Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 74.]

Immunization (All Grade Levels)

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 (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#). 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, tetanus, and pertussis; rubeola (measles), mumps, and rubella; polio; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; varicella (chicken pox); and meningococcus. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician validated history of illness required by TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubberstamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or 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 lifelong condition.

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis**, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior

to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement.

[For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the DSHS website: [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements](#).]

Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)

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 officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or 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 (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), 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 from a juvenile court 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 taken into custody, 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 thought to have committed certain offenses 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 as a sex offender.

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

Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)

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 student 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 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.

- For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student

returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel 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 student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.
- Perfect attendance information:

Official Elementary attendance is taken daily at 9:30 am

Secondary attendance is taken each class period but reported to TEA based on attendance at 9:25 am

When perfect attendance reports are run, all school activities (UIL, field trips, etc.) and medical absences (with doctor's note) are excluded but excused and unexcused absences are included and count against the perfect attendance award.

During Lunch

No student shall be permitted to leave campus during lunch except as approved by the principal, on a case-by-case basis in response to a parent's written request. Students who leave campus during lunch or at any other time without administrative approval shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

At Any Other Time during the School Day

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.

Lost and Found (All Grade Levels)

A “lost and found” collection box is located in the main campus office. If your child has lost an item, please encourage him or her to check the lost and found box. The district discourages students from bringing to school personal items of high monetary value, 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 (All Grade Levels)

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student will have a minimum of two days to turn in make-up work. 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 regarding the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 35.]

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 timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP Makeup Work

Elementary and Middle School Grade Levels

An elementary or middle school student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to obtain mastery on the appropriate grade level TEKS before the beginning of the next school year.

Grades 9–12

A high school 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 course 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 (All Grade Levels)

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).]

Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)

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.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. 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 policy FFAC, may administer:

- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, 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.

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 elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student is capable of doing so.

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.

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 or principal.

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 or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

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 policy FFAC.]

Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, SMSD 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 CTE programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following district representatives have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: Dr. Dawn DuBose, Chief of Schools, contact email address: ddubose@staffordmsd.org or via phone at 281-261-9342.

- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination based on disability: Director of State and Federal Programs, contact email address: or via phone at 281-261-9269.

All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Dr. Robert Bostic, contact email address: Supt@staffordmsd.org or via phone at 281-261-9200.

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD.]

Nontraditional Academic Programs (All Grade Levels)

The Stafford High School QUEST Academy is a student-centered, Optional Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP) established for Stafford residents that considers the individual needs of diverse learners through a self-paced, computer-generated curriculum while incorporating a variety of instructional methods.

The program is designed primarily for at-risk high school students, who are 16 years of age or older or who have been repeatedly unsuccessful in the curriculum in the traditional high school setting. The ultimate goal of the program is the graduation from high school of at-risk students. These students will benefit from the flexible schedule, individual prescriptive instruction and a career counselor who will act as a conduit to explore multiple college and career readiness opportunities.

The QUEST Academy is an alternative self-based academic program, not an alternative disciplinary program.

The QUEST Academy utilizes the web-based Edmentum program. The Edmentum software provides computer-based instructional content, assessment and instructional management. This software meets all state TEKS guidelines and is individualized for the needs of each student.

In addition, SMSD offers the Stafford Virtual School as an option for students to take courses for credit that might not otherwise be offered in the traditional school setting (i.e. World Language course not currently offered). This option is also available for students who would prefer home school but want to retain the benefits of being enrolled in public school (i.e. graduating from Stafford High School) by spending a minimum of four hours a day, on-site in the Quest Lab.

See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 68.

Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)

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 and engagement 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 your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 48.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call within 24 hours or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 92.
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers** on page 107.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Some parent organizations include: Volunteers; PTO's; Pro-Grad; Booster Clubs.
- 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 Chief Academic Officer.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)** on page 77.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

Physical Examinations/Health Screenings

Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student who wishes to participate in, or continue participation in, the district's athletics program governed by the UIL must submit certification from a health-care provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program. This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

Spinal Screening Program

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature and refer them for appropriate follow-up by their physician. Screening can detect scoliosis at an early stage when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities.

All students will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, see policy FFAA(LEGAL) or contact the superintendent.

Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening. **Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels)**

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.]

Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels)

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. 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. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 21.]

State law requires that one minute of silence 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 for more information.]

Prayer (All Grade Levels)

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, and silently or to 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.

Promotion and Retention

A student will be promoted only based on 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.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR.

Elementary and Middle/Junior High Grade Levels

In grades Kindergarten through 12, promotion and course credit are based on mastery of the curriculum. Expectations and standards for promotion shall be established for each grade level, content area, and course and shall be coordinated with compensatory, intensive, and/or accelerated services. [See policy EHBC]. The District shall comply with applicable state and federal requirements when determining methods for students with disabilities [see policy FB] or students who are English language learners [see policies EHBE and EKBA] to demonstrate mastery of the curriculum.

Any modified promotion standards for a student receiving special education services shall be determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee and documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP). [See policies EHBA and EKB].

In addition to the factors in law that must be considered for promotion, mastery shall be determined as follows:

1. Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be used to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.
2. Mastery of the skills necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments that may either be incorporated into unit or final examinations or may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required.

A student in kindergarten shall be promoted to grade 1 if the student:

1. Earns a preponderance of S's or E's in reading, language arts, and mathematics for the second semester; and
2. Meets the standard of 2 on the state reading diagnostic instrument Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and the developmental reading assessment (DRA).

In grades 1–8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in reading and mathematics. A failing grade in reading, science, social studies, or mathematics may be offset by meeting minimum passing standards on the appropriate grade-level state-mandated assessment.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See Grade Level Classification on page 67.]

To be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.

To be promoted to grade 9, students 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. The student will instead take the corresponding EOC 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

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 100.]

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. 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 classified as English language learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting will be convened if a student receiving special education services in grade 5 or 8 fails to meet satisfactory performance after the first STAAR administrations in reading or math. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

Parents of a student at or above grade level 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated examinations, will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

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.

[For information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students, see **Personal Graduation Plans** on page 70.]

High School Grade Levels

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade Level Classification** on page 67.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page and **Standardized Testing** on page 100 for more information about EOC assessments.]

Release of Students from School

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 82.]

Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)

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

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference (face-to-face or via phone) with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 87 for how to schedule a conference.]

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. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 67.]

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.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within three days. The district may use an electronic program to communicate academic information about your child, including for report card and progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature of the parent will be accepted by the district, but you are

entitled to request the option to provide a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead. [see policy EIA(LEGAL)].

A student shall be suspended from participation in any extracurricular activity/organization sponsored or sanctioned by the District or the UIL after a grade evaluation period in which the student received a grade lower than the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100 in any academic class other than a District-approved exempt course*. A suspension will continue for at least three school weeks and is not removed during the school year until the conditions for removing the suspension, as described below, are met. [See Board Policy FM (LEGAL)]

Until the suspension is removed or the school year ends, the District shall review the grades of a student suspended under these provisions at the end of each three-week period following the date on which the suspension began. At the time of a review, the suspension is removed if the student's grade in each class, other than a District-approved exempt course*, is equal to or greater than the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100. The principal and each of the student's teachers shall make the determination concerning the student's grades.

*A list of District approved exempt courses can be found in the Stafford High School Course Selection Guide. In general, these courses are AP and Dual Credit courses.

2023-2024 PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARD SCHEDULE

2023-2024 PROGRESS REPORTS AND REPORT CARD SCHEDULE

Semester 1: 85 days/36,860 minutes	
August 9 - September 15	
First Day for Students	August 9, 2023
Progress Reports Go Home/Grades Available in Parent Portal	September 6, 2023
End of 1 st Grading Period	September 15, 2023
1st Six Weeks Report Cards Mailed	September 22, 2023
September 18 - October 27	
Progress Reports Go Home/Grades Available in Parent Portal	October 10, 2023
End of 2 nd Grading Period	October 27, 2023
2nd Six Weeks Report Cards Mailed	November 2, 2023
October 30 - December 15	
Progress Reports Go Home/Grades Available in Parent Portal	November 30, 2023
End of 3 rd Grading Period	December 15, 2023
3rd Six Weeks Report Cards Mailed	January 5, 2024
Semester 2: 97 days/43,760 minutes	
January 3 - February 16	
Progress Reports Go Home/Grades Available in Parent Portal	January 31, 2024
End of 4 th Grading Period	February 16, 2024
4th Six Weeks Report Cards Mailed	February 23, 2024
February 20 - April 12	
Progress Reports Go Home/Grades Available in Parent Portal	March 28, 2024
End of 5 th Grading Period	April 12, 2024
5th Six Weeks Report Cards Mailed	April 18, 2024
April 15 – May 31	
Progress Reports Go Home/Grades Available in Parent Portal	May 16, 2024
End of 6 th Grading Period	May 31, 2024
Report Cards Mailed	June 7, 2024
Total Membership Days 180	
Total Instructional Minutes 80,600	

Parents of SMSD students have 24/7 access to set up a parent portal account in the home Base Parent Portal powered by Ascender. Schools can provide parent portal access code letters to parent/guardians. Parents have access to assignment information, grades, attendance. This valuable tool provides parents a 'real-time' view of their student progress. If you have specific questions about Parent Portal, please contact your child's school directly.

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Retaliation

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

Safety (All Grade Levels)

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and on district vehicles 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 is expected to:

- 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. A student may submit an anonymous report about safety concerns by navigating to the SMSD website

(<http://www.staffordmsd.org>) homepage and clicking on the yellow round “shareit” button in order to complete a report.

- 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.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.
- All staff members are required to wear ID badges.
- Students at Middle and High Schools are required to wear ID badges. Replacement badges are \$2.00 and lanyards are \$1.00.

Accident Insurance

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance for students participating in athletics, that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs

If the board purchases accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students or businesses involved in the district’s CTE programs, the district will notify the affected students and parents.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

Each month, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in preparedness drills of various 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.

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 previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, all 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 an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early, or opening is delayed because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways:

- School Messenger telephone and e-mail notification system;
- Announcements by local television and radio stations; and
- Information posted on our website at <http://www.stafford.msd.esc4.net/default.aspx?name=About.emergency>

[See **Communications-Automated, Emergency** on page 46 for more information.]

SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 100.]

Schedule Changes (Middle/Junior High and High School Grade Levels)

Schedule changes will be handled by the counselling department who will set and publish information and deadlines regarding any schedule or level changes.

School Facilities

Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

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.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an 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, unless a student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult, or unless students are granted permission to remain on campus in accordance with policy FNAB, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)

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.

Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Cafeteria Services (All Grade Levels)

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Stafford MSD Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) – Year 2 and Successive Years The Stafford Municipal School District, Stafford Early Childhood Center, Stafford Elementary School, Stafford STEM Magnet Academy, Stafford Middle School, and Stafford High School announced today it will continue its policy to operate the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program for the 2022 - 2023 school year. Schools qualifying to operate CEP serve breakfast and lunch to all children at no charge and eliminate the collection of meal applications for free, reduced-price, and paid student meals. This new approach reduces burdens for both families and school administrators and helps ensure that students receive nutritious meals. All students must key in their ID number or scan their ID badges to receive a meal. Food Services must identify each student with a meal. All students will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge except for a la carte items. Menus are online at www.schoolcafe.com

For additional information please contact the following person: Stafford Municipal School District Attention: Danny McDonald, Director of Child Nutrition or Myrna Garcia, Child Nutrition Coordinator 1633 Staffordshire Road Stafford, Texas 77477 281-261-9289
mgarcia@staffordmsd.org

Library (All Grade Levels)

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit:

The Margaret Havens Library and Media Center will be open extended hours during the school year for the community: Monday-Thursday from 4:00 pm – 6:30 pm on regular school days. For library policies and procedures please visit: [Stafford Library](#)

Meetings of Noncurricular-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Student-organized, student-led noncurricular-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.

Searches

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may occasionally conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law. **Students' Desks and Lockers (All Grade Levels)**

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

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 suspicion 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.

Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)

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 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) and **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources** on page 62 for more information.]

Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle parked on district property and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See the Student Code of Conduct.]

Vehicles parked on district property are under the jurisdiction of the district. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable suspicion to do so, with or without the permission of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the student's parent will be contacted. If a search is also refused by the student's parent, the district will turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may, in certain circumstances, contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)

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.

Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL).]

Drug Testing (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see **Steroids** on page 102.]

Sexual Harassment

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 50.]

Special Programs (All Grade Levels)

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, English language learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, 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 Director of Federal and State Programs.

Standardized Testing

Secondary Grade Levels

SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. SMSD pays for all students in grades 8-11 to participate in the SAT suite of assessments each year so that 100% of our students can take the SAT without cost being a barrier.

The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the school counselor.

Note: Participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on his or her transcript under the foundation graduation program and may qualify as a substitute for an end-of-course testing requirement in certain circumstances. A student's performance at a certain level on the SAT or ACT also makes the student eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public institution of higher education.

TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

Grades 3–8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law for the student to be promoted to the next grade level unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level. Exceptions may apply for students enrolled in a special education program if the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee concludes the student has made sufficient progress in the student's

individualized education plan (IEP). [See **Promotion and Retention** on page 89 for additional information.]

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain state-established criteria as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

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. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PNP).

[See **Graduation** on page 68 for additional information.]

Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength using an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students in Foster Care (All Grade Levels)

To provide educational stability, the district will assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred

to as substitute care) with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

Please contact Director of Federal and State Programs, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, with any questions.

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State** on page 29 for more information.]

Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: morning announcements, open house, club or organization-sponsored programs, awards ceremonies, family night programs, National and Junior National Honor Society induction ceremonies, pep rallies, back-to-school orientations, and any other school event at which a student may be asked to publicly speak.

The forum shall be limited in the manner provided by this section on non-graduation events.

Students are eligible to use the limited public forum if they: •

Are in the highest two grade levels of the school;

- Volunteer;
- Are affiliated with the organization or class sponsoring the activity or event; and
- Are not in a disciplinary placement at the time of the speaking event.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

[See policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities and **Graduation** on page 66 for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies.] **Substance Abuse**

Prevention and Intervention (All Grade Levels)

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 Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website: [Services for Children and Adolescents](#).

Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

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 [Texas Suicide Prevention](#) or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

You may also contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Summer School (All Grade Levels)

Parents of students who are not successful in meeting requirements for promotion shall be informed of any requirement or other available options, such as summer school. [See policy EHBC (LOCAL).]

Tardies (All Grade Levels)

A student who is tardy to class by more than ten minutes will be counted absent. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more disciplinary action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and 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 the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

Transfers (All Grade Levels)

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

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 28, **Bullying** on page 38, and **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 30 for other transfer options.]

Children of nonresident Stafford MSD and City of Stafford employees shall be eligible to attend District schools tuition-free; if approved.

A nonresident student wishing to transfer into the District shall file an application for transfer each school year with the Chief Academic Officer. Transfers may be revoked at any time throughout the school year due to poor attendance or discipline.

In approving transfers, the Chief of Schools shall consider availability of space and instructional staff, the student's disciplinary history, and attendance records.

A transfer student shall be notified in the written transfer agreement that he or she must follow all rules and regulations of the District, including those for student conduct and attendance.

Transportation shall not be provided for students not leaving in the Stafford MSD attendance zone.

[See policy FDA (LOCAL).]

Transportation (All Grade Levels)

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students with the exception of students who receive out-of-districts transfers. . This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually, and any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

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 the Transportation Supervisor at 281.261.6158; or visit the district website at http://staffordmsd.org/departments/transportation/general_routes/.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

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

- Follow the driver's directions always.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

Vandalism (All Grade Levels)

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 (All Grade Levels)

For safety purposes, video and audio recording equipment is 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 and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Upon written request of a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board, state law requires the district to place video and audio recording equipment in a classroom in which the student spends at least 50 percent of his or her instructional day, referred to in the law as a self-contained classroom. The majority of students in this type of classroom must also be students who receive special education services. Before the district places a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which your child receives special education services, the district will provide notice to you. Please speak directly with the principal or to the Director of State and Federal Programs, who has been designated by the district to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law, for further information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment.

[See EHBAF(LOCAL).]

Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)

General Visitors

Parents and others 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 main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification. The ID that is presented will be held until such time that the visitor returns to the main office to check out.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with prior 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. To best coordinate visits, we require that requests for visits be made twenty-four hours in advance in order to obtain approval. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must

always check in and present their identification at the main office. Identification of all visitors will be scanned through the district security database system before they can proceed in to the building. The ID that is presented will be retained until the visitor returns to the main office to check out at the end of his/her visit.

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 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 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 FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See also 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

On College or Career Awareness Days, the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students. Please contact the counseling department for more information.

Volunteers (All Grade Levels)

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the campus secretary for more information and to complete an application.

Voter Registration (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

Withdrawing from School (All Grade Levels)

A student under age 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.

A student who is age 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

Glossary

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

ACT, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ACT-Aspire refers to an assessment that took the place of ACT-Plan and is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

ARD stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes 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 responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 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 or a final grade 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.

DFPS is the Texas Department of Family Protective Services.

DPS stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

EOC (end-of-course) assessments are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

ESSA is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act passed in December 2015.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which 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. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be

measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

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 required for high school students and for any student in middle school 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.

PSAT is the preparatory and readiness assessment for the SAT. It also serves as the basis for the awarding of National Merit Scholarships.

SAT refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required 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, along with providing assistance with other student 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 2 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.

STAAR Spanish is an alternative state-mandated assessment administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

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 STAAR EOC assessments is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

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 a classroom, campus, or district vehicle. 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. SMSD Code of Conduct URL- <https://www.staffordmsd.org/fs/resource-manager/view/79e8498d-edec-4d1b-8923-6acf35b7c173>

TAC stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

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 stands for 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.

Appendix: Freedom from Bullying Policy

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit [Board Policy Online](#) and search for policy FFI. Click here: [FFI\(LOCAL\)](#) to access a printable version of SMSD's local bullying policy as of the date that this handbook was finalized for this school year.

Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying

Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on 11/16/2017 is provided below:

Note: *This policy addresses bullying of District students. For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyber-bullying.*

For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

Bullying Prohibited

The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Examples: Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

Retaliation

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

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

False Claim

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Timely Reporting

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Reporting Procedures

Student Report: To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.

Employee Report: Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

Report Format: A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

Notice of Report

When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported

Prohibited Conduct

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

Investigation of Report

The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during an investigation, if appropriate.

Concluding the Investigation

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

Notice to Parents

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

District Action

Bullying: If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

Discipline: A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.

The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

Corrective Action: Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate,

increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

Transfers: The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

Counseling: The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

Improper Conduct: If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may act in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

Confidentiality

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation.

Appeal

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

Records Retention

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

Access to Policy and Procedures

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

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