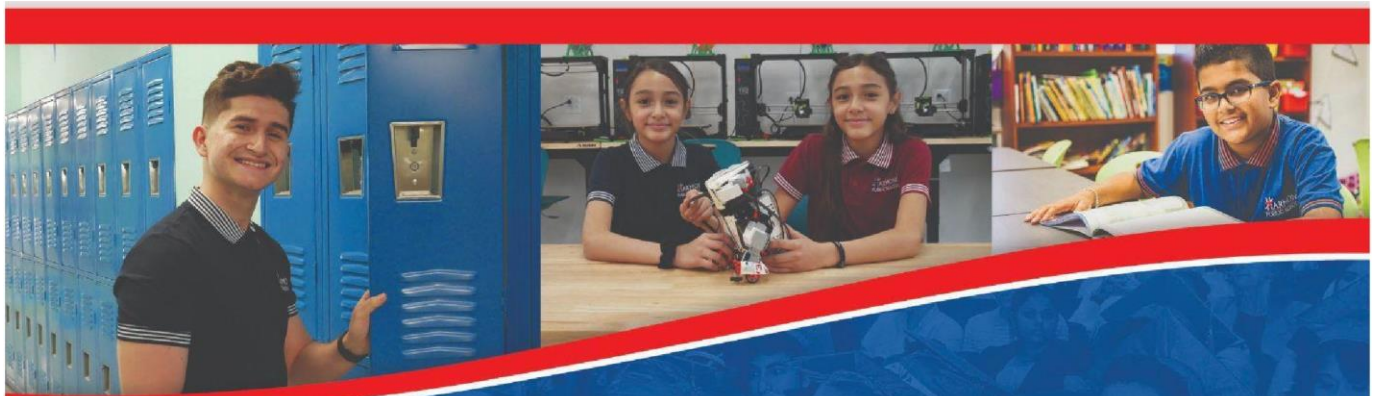




# Amendments to Student & Parent Handbook **2023-2024**



December, 2023

The following amendments to Harmony’s 2023-2024 Student & Parent Handbook (“Handbook”) are effective immediately:

**The following portions of the Handbook are amended and replaced as indicated below:**

**“Residency Verification,” page 16 of the Handbook**

*Residency for Servicemembers:* A person whose parent is an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, may establish residency by providing Harmony a copy of a military order requiring the parent’s transfer to a military installation in the school’s geographic boundaries. Proof of residence in Harmony’s geographic boundaries shall be provided not later than the 90th day after the arrival date specified in the order. “Residence” includes residence in a military temporary lodging facility.

**“Excused Absences,” page 18 of the Handbook**

- Career investigation days by junior or senior students for purposes of determining the student’s interest in pursuing a career. A student will not be excused for this purpose for more than two days during the student’s junior year and two days during the student’s senior year.

The school will also excuse a student from attending school for travel under the following circumstances:

- Observing religious holy days. For purposes of excusing a student from attending school to observe a religious holy day, Harmony may not require documentation from a clergy member or other religious leader, and shall accept a note from the student’s parent verifying the purpose of the student’s absence.

**“Tobacco-Free School Notice,” page 35 of the Handbook**

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, giving, or delivering any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) as defined by Section 161.081 of Health and Safety Code, or any form of smokeless tobacco or electronic vaporizing product while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

**“Seizure Management Plan,” Page 41 of the Handbook**

The parent of a student with a seizure disorder may seek care for the student’s seizures while the student is at school or participating in a school activity by submitting to Harmony a copy of a seizure management and treatment plan developed by the parent and the physician responsible for the student’s seizure treatment. The plan must be submitted to and reviewed by Harmony:

1. Before or at the beginning of the school year;
2. On enrollment of the student if the student enrolls after the start of the school year; or
3. As soon as practicable following a diagnosis of a seizure disorder for the student.

Requirements for Seizure Management Plans Submitted Before January 1, 2024, a seizure management and treatment plan must:

1. Identify the health care services the student may receive at school or while participating in a school activity;
2. Evaluate the student's ability to manage and level of understanding of the student's seizures; and
3. Be signed by the student's parent and the physician for the student's seizure treatment.

Requirements for Seizure Management Plans Submitted On or After January 1, 2024

A seizure management and treatment plan must be submitted on the form adopted by the Texas Education Agency and provide the following:

1. The student's name and date of birth;
2. The names and contact information of the student's parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment, and at least one other emergency contact;
3. Any medical history significant to the student's seizure disorder;
4. The type, length, and frequency of the student's seizures;
5. A description of each type of seizure the student has experienced;
6. The student's seizure triggers or warning signs;
7. The student's ability to manage seizures and the student's level of understanding of the seizures;
8. The student's response after a seizure;
9. The basic first aid to be provided to the student during a seizure, including whether the student needs to leave the classroom after a seizure and the process for the student's return to the classroom, if applicable;
10. A description of what constitutes a seizure emergency for the student;
11. A description of seizure emergency protocol for school personnel to follow in the event of a seizure emergency for the student;
12. A treatment protocol for any medications or other procedures to be administered by school personnel to the student during school hours, including:
  - a. Each daily or emergency medication, including (i) the name and dosage of the medication and the time at which the medication is to be given; (ii) common side effects for the medication; and (iii) any special instructions regarding the medication; and
  - b. Whether the student has a vagus nerve stimulator and, if so, appropriate magnet use for the stimulator;
13. Any special considerations or precautions applicable to the students; and
14. The signature of the student's parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment.

**“Vision and Hearing Screenings,” page 42 of the Handbook**

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.

A student may be screened using photoscreening or an electronic eye chart as a substitute for a printed eye chart to assess visual acuity.

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

***Exemption***

A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor's parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Superintendent or designee on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

**“Preparedness Training,” page 42 of the Handbook**

Harmony will offer instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“CPR”) and the use of an automated external defibrillator (“AED”) to students in grades 7–12. This instruction may be provided as part of any course. Students shall receive the instruction at least once before graduation.

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

**“Freedom from Bullying and Cyberbullying,” page 51 of the Handbook**

***Reporting Procedures***

Once a report of bullying, including cyberbullying, is received, Harmony will track the progress of the report and investigation of the reported incident(s) and shall monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents to assist Harmony with bullying prevention efforts and determination of the school’s response to the incident.

**“Accelerated Learning Committee (“ALC”), page 62 of the Handbook**

Harmony will provide accelerated instruction in applicable subject areas to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the STAAR exam in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade or an end-of-course (“EOC”) assessment. This accelerated instruction will be provided either during the subsequent summer or school year and consist of instruction meeting the requirements of Education Code § 28.0211(a-1) and 28.0211(a-4), as applicable.

**“Parental Option for Students to Repeat Grades or Courses,” page 62 of the Handbook**

In certain circumstances, a parent may elect for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course. Subject to certain restrictions, a parent may elect for a student to:

1. Repeat prekindergarten;
2. Enroll in prekindergarten if the child was eligible to enroll in free prekindergarten under Education Code § 29.153(b) and has not yet enrolled in kindergarten;
3. Repeat kindergarten;

4. Enroll in kindergarten if the child would have enrolled in kindergarten in the previous school year and has not yet enrolled in first grade;
5. For grades one through eight, repeat the grade the student was enrolled in the previous school year; and/or
6. For courses taken for high school credit, repeat any course in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year.

A parent may not elect for a student to repeat a course identified in item 6 above if Harmony determines the student has met all of the requirements for graduation.

An election for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course must be made in writing. If Harmony disagrees with a parent election for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course, the school must convene a retention committee and meet with the parent to discuss retention. The meeting must be conducted in person, unless the parent agrees to alternative means. A student may not be retained for a grade or repeat a course if the parent does not meet with the retention committee.

The retention committee (GPC) will be composed of the Principal or designee, the student's parent, the teacher who taught the grade or course for which the parent wants the student retained or repeated, and additional teachers at the discretion of the Principal if the student will potentially repeat multiple courses. During the retention meeting, Harmony and the parent will discuss the merits of and concerns with advancement and retention, and review and consider the student's grade in each subject or course, the results of any formative or summative assessments administered to the student, and any other available academic information to determine the student's academic readiness for the next grade or a given course. After the parent has participated in a retention committee meeting, the parent shall decide whether the student should be retained or retake a grade or course. Harmony must abide by the parent's decision.

#### **“Accelerated Learning and Accelerated Learning Committees,” page 63 of the Handbook**

##### **Accelerated Instruction**

Harmony will provide accelerated instruction in applicable subject areas to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the STAAR exam in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade or an end-of-course (“EOC”) assessment. This accelerated instruction will be provided either during the subsequent summer or school year and consists of instruction meeting the requirements of Education Code § 28.0211(a-1) and 28.0211(a-4), as applicable.

Accelerated instruction provided during the following school year may require the participation of the student before or after normal school hours. Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

In providing this accelerated instruction, Harmony may not remove a student, except under circumstances for which a student enrolled in the same grade level who is not receiving accelerated instruction would be removed, from: (1) instruction in the foundation and enrichment curriculum for the grade level in which the student is enrolled, or (2) recess or other physical activity that is available to other students enrolled in the same grade level.

### **Accelerated Education Plan**

Harmony will develop an accelerated education plan when a student fails to achieve approaches or higher on STAAR for two or more consecutive school years in the same subject area to provide the necessary accelerated instruction to enable the student to perform at the appropriate grade or course level by the conclusion of the school year. The AEP will be documented in writing, and a copy will be provided to the student's parents.

Harmony will make a good-faith attempt to inform the related parents about the accelerated education plan. The communication will provide the parent with:

1. Notice that the student is not performing on grade level in the applicable subject area; and
2. An explanation of the accelerated instruction to which the student is entitled information on the AEP that is developed for the student and the manner in which the parent may participate in implementing the plan.

A parent of a student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment may submit a written request to the Principal for Harmony to consider the student's assignment to a particular classroom teacher in the applicable subject area for the subsequent school year if more than one classroom teacher is available. Harmony retains the discretion to make classroom assignments based on campus needs and classroom capacity.

During the school year, the student's progress will be monitored to ensure that the student is progressing in accordance with the AEP.

### **AEP Grievance Procedure**

A student's parent may contest the content or implementation of an AEP developed by Harmony by submitting a written complaint to the Principal within (1) seven calendar days of the parent's receipt of AEP or (2) within seven calendar days of the parent's concern that the AEP is not being properly implemented. The designated administrator will conduct a conference with the parent within five school days of the Principal's receipt of the written complaint and issue a written decision within five school days of the conference. A parent who is dissatisfied with the designated administrator's decision may appeal through Harmony's student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Three.

Special Education Students: The ARD Committee of a student who participates in the school's special education program and who does not perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment shall, at the student's next annual ARD review meeting, review the student's participation and progress in, as applicable, accelerated instruction, supplemental, or an AEP. The student's parent may request, or Harmony, may schedule an additional ARD meeting if a committee member believes that the student's individualized education program (IEP) needs to be modified. If Harmony refuses to convene an ARD meeting requested by the student's parent, Harmony shall provide the parent with written notice explaining the reason the school refuses to convene the meeting.

### **Opioid Antagonist Medication**

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.222, Harmony has adopted a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists for students in grades 6-12 or for students in grades 12 and below. Under this policy, school personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained may administer an opioid antagonist to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

Harmony will ensure that each campus has one or more personnel authorized and trained to administer an opioid antagonist present during regular school hours.

### **Middle School Advanced Mathematics Program**

Harmony has adopted an advanced mathematics program for middle school students that is designed to enable students to enroll in Algebra I in 8th grade. Under this program, Harmony will automatically enroll in an advanced mathematics course for each 6th grade student who performed in the top 40% on (1) the 5th grade STAAR assessment in math, or (2) a local measure that includes the student's 5th grade class ranking or a demonstrated proficiency in the student's 5th grade mathematics coursework.

Parents may opt a student out of automatic in the school's honors mathematics principal by providing written notice to the principal or designee.

### **Texas First Early High School Completion Program**

Upon each student's initial enrollment in high school, Harmony shall provide parents and students notice of eligibility criteria for the Texas First Early High School Completion Program and Texas First Scholarship Program.

### **Students Qualifying for Dyslexia Services**

A student may be eligible to receive dyslexia or related services as defined by the Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders as updated and approved by the State Board of Education in 2021.

If Harmony suspects or has reason to suspect that a student may have dyslexia, including after evaluation or use of reading diagnosis, Harmony will comply with the requirements of Texas Education Code §§ 29.0031 and 29.0032, as well as all federal and state requirements regarding any evaluation of the student.

### **Notice of Threat Assessment**

Before Harmony's safe and supportive school team conducts a threat assessment of a student, the team must notify the parent of the student regarding the assessment. In conducting the assessment, the team shall provide an opportunity for the parent to:

1. Participate in the assessment, either in person or remotely; and
2. Submit to the team information regarding the student.

After completing a threat assessment of a student, the team shall provide to the parent of the student the team's findings and conclusions regarding the student.