



**Rockdale ISD Student Handbook  
2024–2025 School Year**



If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact the district at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net) or 512-430-6000.

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**DISTRICT VISION:**

- Empower, Challenge, Achieve

**DISTRICT MISSION:**

- **Empower** and **Challenge** all students to **Achieve** personal excellence for college and career success.

**DISTRICT GOALS**

1. Rockdale ISD will ensure that all students have a strong foundation for success.
2. Rockdale ISD will implement systems of continuous improvement in recruiting, supporting, and retaining qualified personnel.
3. Rockdale ISD will provide strong communication of district and student performance to all stakeholders.
4. Rockdale ISD will use its available resources to improve student outcomes.
5. Rockdale ISD will ensure the wellness, safety and security of students and staff.

SCHOOL COLORS: Old Gold and Royal Blue

MASCOT: Tiger

**ROCKDALE HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION**

Wendy Mahan – Principal 512-430-6140

Michael Young – Associate Principal      Anna Bayer – Counselor

Madison Monzingo – Assistant Principal      Julia Engelmann – Counselor

**ROCKDALE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION**

Cheyenne Babb – Principal 512-430-6100

Hudson Evans – Assistant Principal      Shellie Dunn – Assistant Principal

Rebecca Ingram Counselor

**ROCKDALE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION**

Monica Elizondo – Principal 512-430-6200

April Eschberger– Assistant Principal      Kimberly Ransom – Counselor

**ROCKDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION**

Shannon Pourmanafzadeh– Principal 512-430-6030

Ashley Willard– Assistant Principal      Julie Hutton – Counselor

## Preface Parents and Students:

Welcome to the new school year!

Education is a team effort. Students, parents, teachers, and other staff members working together will make this a successful year.

The Rockdale ISD Student Handbook is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

**Section One: Parental Rights** describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

**Section Two: Other Important Information for Parents and Students** is organized alphabetically by topic. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

**Note:** Unless otherwise noted, the term “parent” refers to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of a student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Student Handbook is designed to align with law, board-adopted policy, and the Student Code of Conduct, a board-adopted document intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. The Student Handbook is not meant to be a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules in any given circumstance.

In case of conflicts between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any Student Handbook provision, the district will follow board policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the Rockdale ISD Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district’s website at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net). State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

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

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

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at the campus offices or the Central Administration office at 520 W. Davilla, Rockdale.

**Note:** References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at <https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/892>.

The policy manual includes:

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

For questions about the material in this handbook, please contact:

Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

[tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net)

512-430-6000.

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

- Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook
- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information
- Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities)
- Consent/Opt-Out Form for participation in third-party surveys

[See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** and **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey** for more information.]

## **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact:

Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

[tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net)

512-430-6000.

## Section One: Parental Rights

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

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

#### Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation

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

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

#### Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

##### *Annual Notification*

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. 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.

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. 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.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the *Youth Equipped to Succeed* (YES) program was approved. YES is a relationship and sexual health education program for students. This program addresses the problems of teen pregnancies, the escalating STD epidemic and the traumatic, emotional pain often associated with teen sexual activity. The program demonstrates to the students that saving sex for marriage provides FREEDOM from these problems while giving them the FREEDOM to fulfill their dreams and goals.

This program is provided during the spring semester through the Rockdale Junior High Science classes. Parents will be notified in advance and given an opportunity to preview the materials through an in-person session by the presenters as well as online access. The program is reviewed by the SHAC each school year during regular meetings. For further information, see the district's human sexuality instruction website at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net).

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials.
- Remove their child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.



- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. See the campus principal for details.
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. [See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** and FNG(LOCAL).]

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

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice 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, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, 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

[See **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.**]

### ***Consent Before Human Sexuality Instruction***

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, the parent must give written consent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

### **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**

Before a student receives instruction on the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

### ***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.

This training is included in the Aim for Success program as described above.

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in this instruction will be posted on the district's website at the location indicated above.
- Remove his or her child from any part of this instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. (See the campus principal for details.)

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in this instruction will be posted on the district's website at the location indicated above.
- Remove their child from any part of this instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings. See the campus principal for details.
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. [See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** and policy FNG for information on the grievance and appeals process.]

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction, Dating Violence and Child Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)**]

### **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.

Rockdale ISD procedures can be found in the Regulations Resource Manual, [Regulation FFB](#).

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention. The district threat assessment team will notify the parent of a student before conducting a threat assessment of that student.

The school counselor can provide further information about these procedures as well as curriculum materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

[See **Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)**]

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

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

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

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

### **Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction If a Student is Under Age 14**

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's [Parenting and Paternity Awareness Program](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support/programs-and-initiatives/parenting-and-paternity-awareness-papa/papa-educators/papa-curriculum) (<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/child-support/programs-and-initiatives/parenting-and-paternity-awareness-papa/papa-educators/papa-curriculum>). This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

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

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when the recording is to be used for:

- School safety
- Classroom instruction or a co curricular or extracurricular activity
- Media coverage of the school
- Promotion of student safety, as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

Please note that parents and visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in person, may not record video or audio or take photographs or other still images without permission from the teacher or other school official.

### **Opting Out of Advanced Mathematics in Grades 6-8**

The district will automatically enroll a student in grade 6 in an advanced mathematics course if the student performed in the top 40 percent on the grade 5 mathematics STAAR or a local measure that demonstrates proficiency in the student's grade 5 mathematics course work.

Enrollment in an advanced mathematics course in grade 6 will enable students to enroll in Algebra I in grade 8 and advanced mathematics in grades 9-12.

The student's parent may opt the student out of automatic enrollment in an advanced mathematics course.

### **Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment — spanking or paddling a student — may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and district policy FO(LOCAL).

However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student's parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use.

A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to his or her child return the form included in the forms packet or submit a written statement to the campus principal stating this decision. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.

#### **Note:**

- District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.
- If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student's caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

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

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines.

For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for the class to relay information about class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to access such a page.

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

Rockdale ISD utilizes Parent Square and Student Square in lieu of text message to communicate.

## 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, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student’s photograph (for publication in the school yearbook)
- A student’s name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments)
- 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)
- 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 this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within 10 school days of the student’s first day of instruction for this school year. [See **Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information**, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists — one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information:

“Directory information” is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student’s photograph (for publication in the school yearbook)
- A student’s name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments)
- 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)
- 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 this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year. [See Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information, included in the forms packet.]

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: student name, address, telephone listing, e-mail address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, degrees, honors and awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school previously attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of an athletic team, and student identifiers that cannot be used alone to gain access to electronic education records. If a parent does not object to the use of his or her child's information for these school-sponsored purposes, the school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: student's name, grade level, degrees, honors and awards received, photo, and participation in officially recognized activities and sports. If a parent does not object to the use of the student's information for these purposes, the school must release this information when requested by an outside entity or individual.

**Note:** Also see **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**.

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

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release their student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests from military recruiters or institutions of higher education to provide the following information about students:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone listing

Military recruiters may also have access to a student's district-provided email address, unless a parent has advised the district not to release this information.

[See **Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**, included in the forms packet.]

## Participation in Third-Party Surveys

### ***Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey***

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) provides parents certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

A parent has the right to consent before a student is required to submit to a survey funded by the U.S. Department of Education that concerns any of the following protected areas:

- 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
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, 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 for a program

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

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

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

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

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

A parent may inspect:

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

The ED provides extensive information about the [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra-general-guidance) (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra-general-guidance>), including a [PPRA Complaint Form](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint) (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>).

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

See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction** and **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking** for information on a parent's right to remove a student from such instruction.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels)** and policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

## **Religious or Moral Beliefs**

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

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

## **Tutoring or Test Preparation**

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



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

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

In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than 10 percent of the days the class is offered.

If a district offers tutorial services to students, state law requires a student with a grade below 70 for a reporting period to attend.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, contact the student's teacher and see policies EC and EHBC. See **Standardized Testing** for information regarding required accelerated instruction after a student fails to perform satisfactorily on certain state-mandated tests.]

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

### **Parent Review of Instructional Materials**

A parent has the right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered, whether instruction is delivered in-person, virtually, or remotely.

The district will make instructional materials available for parent review no later than 30 days before the school year begins and for at least 30 days after the school year ends. However, tests that have not yet been administered will not be made available for parent examination.

The district will provide login credentials to each student's parent for any learning management system or online learning portal used in instruction to facilitate parent access and review.

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

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

[For information about parental access to any online library catalog and library materials, see **Library (All Grade Levels)**.]

### **District Review of Instructional Materials**

A parent may request that the district conduct an instructional material review in a math, English Language Arts, science, or social studies class in which the parent's student is enrolled to determine alignment with state standards and the level of rigor for the grade level.

The district is not required to conduct an instructional material review for a specific subject area or grade level at a specific campus more than once per school year.

For more information about requesting an instructional material review, contact the campus principal.

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

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

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

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

### **Student Records**

#### ***Accessing Student Records***

A parent may review their child's records, including:

- 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 the child, as the term "intervention strategy" is defined by law
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child's classroom

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

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

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

- Inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access
- Request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA
- Provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student’s records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent
- [File a complaint](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint) (<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>) with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements

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

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

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

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student’s parent unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student’s education records. A parent’s rights regarding access to student records are not affected by the parent’s marital status.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Reaches the age of 18
- Is emancipated by a court
- Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution

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

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student’s education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records.

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- Working with the student
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities

- Compiling statistical data
- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility
- Investigating or evaluating programs

School officials may include:

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

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

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** 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 campus principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The campus principal is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

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

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

A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of 10 cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.

You may contact the custodian of records for currently enrolled students at:

**Rockdale Elementary** – 625 West Belton, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Rockdale Intermediate** – 1338 W. US Hwy 79, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Rockdale Jr. High** – 814 Bushdale Road, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Rockdale High School** – 500 Childress, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Burleson-Milam Special Services** is 400 E. Park St., Milano, TX.

You may contact the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated at:

**Rockdale Elementary** – 625 West Belton, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Rockdale Intermediate** – 1338 W. US Hwy 79, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Rockdale Jr. High** – 814 Bushdale Road, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Rockdale High School** – 500 Childress, Rockdale, TX 76567

**Burleson-Milam Special Services** is 400 E. Park St., Milano, TX.

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

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

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)**, **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)**, and Finality of Grades at policy FNG(LEGAL).]

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

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

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

A parent may request information about the professional qualifications of their child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

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

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

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

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

[The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children](https://www.dodea.edu/education/partnership-and-resources/military-interstate-compact)

(<https://www.dodea.edu/education/partnership-and-resources/military-interstate-compact>)

entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

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

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

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

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

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/military-family-resources) (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/military-family-resources>).

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

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

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

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

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

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

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom.

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

[See **Bullying (All Grade Levels)**, and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

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

[See policy FDE for more information.]

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

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

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within 10 district business days.

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

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to 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).

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

The district will assess the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.

The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course. [For provisions on partial course credit for students who are not in the conservatorship of the state, see EI(LOCAL).]

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

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

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

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

If you have questions, please contact the district's foster care liaison:

Kristi Moreland, At-Risk Specialist

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

[kmoreland@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:kmoreland@rockdaleisd.net)



512-430-6000

**[See Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration — If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject and Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)]**

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

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if their child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

A student who is homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements
- Immunization requirements
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness)
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules
- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one half of a two-half course
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Graduation requirements

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

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

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

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison:

Kristi Moreland, At-Risk Specialist

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

[kmoreland@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:kmoreland@rockdaleisd.net)

512-430-6000

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration — If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject** and **Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only).**]

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

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

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, their 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](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications) ([https://fw.escapps.net/Display\\_Portal/publications](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications)). If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

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

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

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more

days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

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

Additional information about special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled [Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications) ([https://fw.escapps.net/Display\\_Portal/publications](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal/publications)).

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

The designated contact person regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

Rockdale Elementary: Julie Hutton [jhutton@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:jhutton@rockdaleisd.net) at 512-430-5200

Rockdale Intermediate: Kimberly Ransom [kransom@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:kransom@rockdaleisd.net) at 412-430-6200

Rockdale Junior High: Rebecca Ingram [ringram@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:ringram@rockdaleisd.net) at 512-430-6100

Rockdale High School: Julia Engelmann [jengelmann@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:jengelmann@rockdaleisd.net) or Anna Bayer [abayer@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:abayer@rockdaleisd.net) at 512-430-6140

For questions about post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment, for students receiving special education services, contact the district's transition and employment designee:

Lindsey Lillard, Director of College and Career Readiness, 512-430-6000, [llillard@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:llillard@rockdaleisd.net)

### ***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
- 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:

Rockdale Elementary: Julie Hutton [jhutton@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:jhutton@rockdaleisd.net) at 512-430-5200

Rockdale Intermediate: Kimberly Ransom [kransom@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:kransom@rockdaleisd.net) at 412-430-6200

Rockdale Junior High: Rebecca Ingram [ringram@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:ringram@rockdaleisd.net) at 512-430-6100

Rockdale High School: Julia Engelmann [jengelmann@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:jengelmann@rockdaleisd.net) or Anna Bayer [abayer@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:abayer@rockdaleisd.net) at 512-430-6140

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

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

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal?destination=/) ([https://fw.escapps.net/Display\\_Portal?destination=/](https://fw.escapps.net/Display_Portal?destination=/))
- [Partner Resource Network](http://prntexas.org/) (<http://prntexas.org/>)
- [SPEDTEX: Special Education Information Center](https://www.spedtex.org/) (<https://www.spedtex.org/>)
- [Texas First Project](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/) (<http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/>)
- [TEA Special Education Parent and Family Resources](https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-and-family-resources) (<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/special-student-populations/special-education/parent-and-family-resources>)

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

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

### **Texas Driving with Disability Program**

In accordance with state law, the district will provide notification of the Texas Driving with Disability Program to students who have a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication with a peace officer and receive special education or are covered by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This notification will be provided annually to an eligible student aged 16 years or older until the student's graduation or 21st birthday and to the student's parents.

The Texas Driving with Disability Program focuses on improving the interaction between law enforcement and drivers with disabilities that have unique communication needs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[See **Emergent Bilingual Students (All Grade Levels)** and **Special Programs (All Grade Levels)**.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact the campus principal.

### **Absences/Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's education. The student and parent should avoid unnecessary absences.

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

### **Compulsory Attendance**

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

#### ***Ages 6-18***

State law requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19th birthday, shall 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 a student in kindergarten-grade 2 to attend any assigned accelerated reading instruction program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program based on a diagnostic reading instrument.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program before or after school or during the summer if the student does not meet the passing standards on an applicable subject area state assessment.

#### ***Age 19 and Older***

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after their 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If the student incurs 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 for more information.]

## Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions

### *All Grade Levels*

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements, as long as the student makes up all work, for the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days
- Required court appearances
- Appearing at a governmental office to obtain U.S. citizenship
- Taking part in a US naturalization oath ceremony
- Serving as an election clerk
- Health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician
- For students in the conservatorship of the state:
  - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan
  - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours

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

Note that documented health-care appointments may include telehealth appointments. Students who are physically on campus will not be allowed to participate in telehealth or other online appointments without specific authorization from an appropriate administrator. Students should not use district-issued technology, including wifi or internet, for telehealth appointments because use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and may be monitored by the district. For more information, see **Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)**.

### *Secondary Grade Levels*

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver's license, provided that the board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL). The student will be required to provide documentation of the visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any work missed.

[See **Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**.]

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent for up to two days per year to visit a college or university if the following conditions are met:

- The board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL)
- The principal has approved the student's absence

- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit and makes up any work missed

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year for a career investigation day to visit a professional at that individual's workplace to determine the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

The district will allow a student to be absent for up to two days per school year to serve as:

- An early voting clerk, if the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies their teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences
- An election clerk, if the student makes up any work missed

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

### **Post-Secondary Visits**

Junior or Senior students wishing to visit a college, trade school, or profession may do so. The absence will be considered excused if prior parent arrangements are made with the administration. A student must return a letter or note from the visit. If these guidelines are not followed, the absence will be considered unexcused. One visit per school year will be allowed for test exemption purposes for juniors. One visit per semester will be allowed for test exemption purposes for seniors. Visits must be taken before April 30th. Contact the high school principal for individual approval after that date.

### **Compulsory Attendance — Failure to Comply**

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

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

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

#### ***Students with Disabilities***

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



### ***Ages 6-18***

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

The notice will:

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

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district are the assistant principals at each campus.

For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs 10 or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student age 12-18 incurs 10 or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

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

### ***Age 19 and Older***

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district is required by law to send the student a letter 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 a behavior improvement plan.

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

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

If a student attends fewer than 75 percent of the class days or does not complete the principal-approved plan, then the attendance review committee will determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade. [See policy FEC for more information.] Except for absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, excused or unexcused, may be held

against a student's attendance requirement. To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the attendance committee will consider:

- Whether the student has mastered the essential knowledge and skills and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- Whether the student has completed makeup work satisfactorily. If the student completes makeup work, absences listed under **Compulsory Attendance** and absences for extracurricular activities will be considered extenuating circumstances.
- Whether the student or the student's parent had any control over the absences.
- Any information presented by the student or parent to the committee about the absences.

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

### **Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)**

The district will take official attendance every day at:

**RHS and RJH:** 10:20 AM which is the beginning of the third instructional hour.

**RIS:** 10:10 AM

**RES:** 10:00 AM

A student absent for any portion of the day, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

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

A parent must provide an explanation for any absence upon the student's arrival or return to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent. The campus may accept a phone call from the parent but reserves the right to require a written note. Notes can be accepted electronically and through Parent Square. Notes from parents will be accepted during the five school days following the first day the student returns to school.

A student may be excused for a temporary absence resulting from health-care appointments if that student returns to school on the same days of the appointment. A note from a physician with the date and time of the appointment will be required within five days of the absence.

After five total absences, parents must provide a doctor's note or speak personally with the campus principal before the absences can be excused.

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

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

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

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

Within 5 days of returning to school, a student who is absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence. Otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

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

### ***Certification of Absence Due to Severe Illness or Treatment***

If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment.

### **Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A currently enrolled student seeking a driver's license shall submit the Texas Department of Public Safety Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Form (VOE), signed by the parent, to the campus central office at least 10 days before it is needed. The district will issue a VOE only if the student meets class credit or attendance requirements. The [VOE form](https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/driver/forms/VOE.pdf) (<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/driver/forms/VOE.pdf>) is available online.

More information is available on the [Texas Department of Public Safety website](https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license/how-apply-texas-driver-license-teen) (<https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license/how-apply-texas-driver-license-teen>).

[See **Compulsory Attendance — Exemptions for Secondary Grade Levels** for information on excused absences for obtaining a learner license or driver's license.]

### **Accountability under State and Federal Law (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

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

TEA maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division](https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting) (<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting>).

### **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (Grades 10-12)**

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.

A notice of date, time, and location of the test will be provided by the campus counselors.

Contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

### **Awards and Honors (All Grade Levels)**

Each year Rockdale High School awards scholastic excellence by recognizing students who make all A's during each of the six-weeks grading periods (the first 5 six weeks prior to the end of year award's ceremony in the following manner:

- Each student grade 9-12 achieving all A's for the entire year will receive a plaque at the end of the year.
- In addition to the plaque, junior and seniors will receive one of the following:
  - A letter jacket, if the student has not already earned one for participation in another activity; or
  - An academic patch for his/her jacket

A student must be enrolled in academic credit courses on or above grade level. No summer school courses will be considered. In order to be eligible for an award, the student must have attended Rockdale High School for the full current year. An academic award will be given regardless of the number of other awards the student may have received

### **Honor Roll**

The 90-100 honor roll will be determined each six weeks.

### **National Honor Society**

The W.T. Scurlock Chapter of the National Honor Society invites into membership 10-12 grade students who excel in scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Students who have a 3.5 cumulative GPA and submit an application are considered for membership by a council of five teachers appointed by the principal.

## **Rockdale Elementary School Awards**

The awards presented at the end of the year include Completion Certificates, Perfect attendance, and Top Reading and Top Math Awards for 1st and 2nd grade students

## **Rockdale Intermediate School Awards**

The awards presented include End of Year Awards, A and A/B Honor Roll Awards, Attendance Awards, Accelerated Reader Awards, and UIL Awards.

Rockdale Intermediate also participates in the 7 Mindsets Program. Students selected for these awards embody the character traits and mindsets promoted by the program. Award recipients are chosen by teachers and classmates. Mindset ceremonies are scheduled at various times throughout the school year.

## **Bullying (All Grade Levels)**

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a positive school culture; building healthy relationships between students and staff; encouraging reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

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

- Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined in state law as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including:

- A cellular or other type of telephone
- A computer
- A camera
- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application
- An internet website
- Any other internet-based communication tool

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:

- Hazing
- Threats
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Confinement
- Assault
- Demands for money
- Destruction of property
- Theft of valued possessions
- Name-calling
- Rumor-spreading
- Ostracism

The district will integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying that is appropriate for students' age groups.

Students in elementary grades will participate in:

- Instruction designed so that students can recognize bullying behaviors and how to report them
- Age-appropriate discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying occur
- Instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social or coping skills, not an unchangeable trait

Students in secondary grades will participate in:

- Instruction on the brain's ability to change and grow so the student recognizes bullying behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an unchangeable trait
- Discussions that portray bullying as undesirable behavior and a means for attaining or maintaining social status at school, and that discourage students from using bullying as a tool for social status
- Instruction designed so that students recognize the role that reporting bullying behaviors plays in promoting a safe school community

The district will use an age-appropriate survey about school culture that includes relevant questions on bullying to identify and address student concerns.

Each campus has a committee that addresses bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The committee will include parents and secondary students. For more information on this committee, including interest in serving on the committee, contact Tiffany Whitsel [tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net) (512) 430-6000.

If a student believes that they have experienced bullying or witnessed the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Any district employee aware of a report of a bullying incident will relay the report to an appropriate administrator. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying using the Quick Tip link located on the district website [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net)

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

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

The district will provide research-based interventions, which may include counseling options, for students who engage in bullying behaviors, students who are targeted by bullying behaviors, and any student who witnessed bullying behaviors.

Any action taken in response to bullying will comply with state and federal law regarding students with disabilities.

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

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

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

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

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

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments, Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels), Hazing (All Grade Levels)**, policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

## **Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Work-Based Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, Architecture & Construction, Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications, Business, Marketing & Finance, Education & Training, Health Science, Information Technology, and Manufacturing.

Admission to these programs is based on student interest, grade level requirements, and successful completion of prerequisite courses as specified by the Texas Education Agency.

The district offers other work-based programs (career preparation and practicum courses) in the following areas: Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, Architecture & Construction, Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications, Business, Marketing & Finance, Education & Training, Health Science, Information Technology, and Manufacturing.

Admission and enrollment to these programs is based on student interest, grade level requirements, and successful completion of prerequisite courses as specified by the Texas Education Agency.

District policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups 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.

District policy also prohibits discrimination 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 or participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX coordinator and the ADA/Section 504 coordinator.

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)** for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator.]

## **Celebrations (All Grade Levels)**

Although a parent or grandparent may provide food to share for a school-designated function or for a student's birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Discuss any classroom allergies with the teacher before bringing food to share.



Occasionally, the school or a class may host functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers to provide food.

[See **Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)**]

## **Child Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)**

The district has established a plan for addressing child abuse, neglect, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at districts [Regulation Resource Manual](#) FFH at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net). Abuse includes physical abuse, including sexual abuse, and psychological and emotional abuse. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

### **Duty to Report**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). See below for information about how to report and respond to allegations of child abuse or neglect.

## **Possible Warning Signs of Child Abuse, Neglect, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**

### ***Physical abuse***

Possible warning signs of physical abuse include:

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, cuts, black eyes, or burns without adequate explanations
- Frequent complaints of pain without apparent injury
- Burns or bruises in unusual patterns that may indicate the use of an instrument or human bite; cigarette burns on any part of the body
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Extreme fear of going home or seeing parents
- Injuries that appear after a child has not been seen for several days
- Unseasonable clothing that may hide injuries to arms or legs

### ***Sexual Abuse***

Possible warning signs of sexual abuse include:

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted diseases
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Pregnancy in a young girl
- Difficulty in sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with adults of a certain sex
- Sexual comments, behaviors, or play beyond what is considered age-appropriate behavior

- Knowledge of sexual relations beyond what is expected for a child's age
- Sexual victimization of other children

Children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [**Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)** and **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.**]

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Possible warning signs of emotional abuse include:

- Over-compliance or low self-esteem caused by scapegoating or verbal abuse by caregivers
- Severe depression, anxiety, or aggression
- Lag in physical, emotional, and intellectual development
- Indicators of a caregiver who belittles the child, withholds love, and seems unconcerned about the child's problems
- Significant changes to behavior, such as withdrawal or over-aggression
- Significant changes to weight, such as substantial weight gain or weight loss

### ***Neglect***

Possible warning signs of neglect include:

- Obvious malnourishment
- Consistent lack of personal hygiene that poses a health risk
- Stealing or begging for food
- Child unattended for long periods of time
- Unaddressed need for dental care or other medical attention

### **Description and Warning Signs of Trafficking**

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

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

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology)
- Tattoos or branding
- Refillable gift cards
- Frequent runaway episodes

- Multiple phones or social media accounts
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone
- Unexplained injuries
- Isolation from family, friends, and community
- Older romantic partners

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

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

[See **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking.**]

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

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

If your child is a victim of abuse, neglect, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. 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](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp) ([http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp)).

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

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

The following websites include resources to help increase awareness of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf)  
(<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/whatiscan.pdf>)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html)  
(<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html>)
- [Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team](https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking)  
(<https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking>)
- [Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/human-trafficking-of-school-aged-children)  
(<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/other-services/human-trafficking-of-school-aged-children>)
- [Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault](https://taasa.org/product/child-sexual-abuse-parental-guide/)  
(<https://taasa.org/product/child-sexual-abuse-parental-guide/>)
- [National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Human Trafficking in America's Schools](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools)  
(<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools>)

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

The semester average shall be used in each course for the purpose of determining class rank in grades 9-11. For the purpose of determining honors to be conferred during graduation activities, the District shall calculate class rank by using grades available at the time of calculation at the end of the third week of the sixth six-week grading period of the senior year. Grades received in May for dual credit courses shall also be included in the calculation.

The following courses shall not be included in ranking: Band (first semester), Physical Education, Athletics, and Drill Team, student aide courses, correspondence courses, credit-by-exam with prior instruction, credit-by-exam without prior instruction, and courses completed on the junior high campus for high school credit. **All other courses are regular with the following exceptions:**

(RAP) classes: English I, English II, Algebra II, Biology I, Geometry, Physics, Chemistry, World Geography, World History, Pre-Calculus, Spanish IV (AP), Spanish III, Calculus (AP), Biology (AP), Art IV (AP) and other AP classes as they are added to RHS curriculum.

For two school years following their graduation, district graduates who rank in the top ten percent of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas. Students and parents should contact the counselor or principal for further information about the application process and deadlines. [For further information, see policy EIC.]

The District shall apply the same class rank calculation method and rules for local graduation honors for all students in a graduating class, regardless of the school year in which a student first earned high school credit.

### **Grade Point System:**

A student's overall class rank shall be determined by applying the following weights (with 100 to be the highest number):

Numerical	Preparatory	Regular
100	5.0	4.0
99	4.9	3.9
98	4.8	3.8
97	4.7	3.7
96	4.6	3.6
95	4.5	3.5
94	4.4	3.4
93	4.3	3.3
92	4.2	3.2
91	4.1	3.1
90	4.0	3.0
89	3.9	2.9
88	3.8	2.8
87	3.7	2.7
86	3.6	2.6
85	3.5	2.5
84	3.4	2.4
83	3.3	2.3
82	3.2	2.2
81	3.1	2.1
80	3.0	2.0
79	2.9	1.9
78	2.8	1.8
77	2.7	1.7

76	2.6	1.6
75	2.5	1.5
74	2.4	1.4
73	2.3	1.3
72	2.2	1.2
71	2.1	1.1
70	2.0	1.0
Below 70	0	0

### **Weighted Grade System**

The District shall categorize and weight eligible courses as Preparatory and Regular in accordance with provisions of this policy and as designated in appropriate District publications.

Eligible Rockdale Accelerated Program (RAP), dual credit courses, and other locally designated courses shall be categorized and weighted as Preparatory courses.

Beginning with students graduating in the class of 2020, all core dual credit courses shall be weighted as Preparatory courses.

All other eligible courses shall be categorized and weighted as Regular courses.

### **Transferred Grades**

When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible under the Regular category and the District has accepted the credit, the District shall include the grades in the calculation of class rank. When a student transfers semester grades for courses that would be eligible to receive additional weight under the District's weighted grade system, the District shall assign additional weight to the grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the District only if a similar or an equivalent course is offered to the same class of students in the District.

When students transfer to Rockdale ISD from a school that gives letter grades, a uniform grading system for translating letter grades is used in all secondary schools. The chart below defines the alpha-to-numeric conversion used in RISD. When an alpha-to-numeric conversion scale is provided from the sending district, the sending district's grading scale is used in lieu of RISD's conversion chart.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Numeric Conversion</b>
A+ (Excellent)	99
A	96

A-	92
B+ (Good)	89
B	86
B-	82
C+ (Fair)	79
C	76
C-	72
D	70
F (Failing; below 60)	60

### **Valedictorian/Salutatorian**

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the eligible students with the highest and second highest ranking, respectively. In case of a tie in weighted GPAs, the District shall compute the GPA to as many decimal places as necessary until the tie is broken. To be eligible for this recognition, a student must:

1. Be graduating after exactly eight semesters of enrollment in high school; and
2. Have been continuously enrolled in the Rockdale High School for the full four semesters immediately preceding graduation; and
3. Have completed the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement.

The student meeting the local eligibility criteria for recognition as the valedictorian shall also be considered the highest-ranking graduate for purposes of receiving the scholarship certificate from the state of Texas.

### **Top Ten Percent**

All students whose grade point averages comprise the top ten percent of the graduating class and qualify for automatic admission under Education Code 51.803 shall be recognized. The GPA shall be reported on the student's transcript as required by TEA and made available in accordance with the application deadline when requested by the student.

### **Honor Graduates**

The District shall recognize as an honor graduate each student who has earned a weighted GPA of at least 90.

### **Early Graduates**

To be eligible to graduate in three years, the student must have an 80 overall average or above, pass all appropriate state assessments through the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and shall complete all required course work and exit-level testing.

A student wishing to graduate in fewer than four years shall make a written application to the counselor no later than the first six weeks of his/her final year in high school. Written parental

approval shall be submitted with the application, and requests must be approved by the principal and counselor. The student shall receive counseling.

Students who have declared their intent to graduate in three years shall be included in the senior ranking/GPA once they have completed the required number of credits to become a senior. For students graduating in school years 2012 and after, the required number of credits to be a senior is 21 credits. Three-year graduates shall not be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian. [See policy EIC for more information.]

### **Class Schedules (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a full class schedule. 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 schedule.

[See **Schedule Changes (Middle/Junior High and High School Grade Levels)**] for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

### **Class Arrival and Dismissal Times and Procedures**

	<b>START TIME</b>	<b>DISMISSAL TIME</b>
Rockdale Elementary School	7:30AM	3:15 PM
Rockdale Intermediate School	7:30AM	3:15 PM
Rockdale Junior High School	8:30 AM	4:16 PM
Rockdale High School	8:30 AM	4:16 PM

#### **ROCKDALE ELEMENTARY**

##### *Arrival Time Procedures*

- All students may enter the building at 7:00 AM. Please DO NOT drop students off at the school before 7:00. No one will be on duty to monitor them.
- PreK students wait in the Pre-K hallway. Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade students should go straight to the cafeteria for breakfast. Once they have completed breakfast, students should go to their grade level hallway. Staff members are on duty to supervise students in these areas.
- Students will enter classrooms at 7:30 AM.
- The tardy bell rings at 7:35 AM.
- Bus riders will enter through the bus loop door after 7:00 AM.
- Car riders and walkers will enter through the gym doors. Staff members will greet students at the car loop until 7:30 AM.

##### *Late Arrival Procedures*

- All students are expected to be seated in their classroom by 7:30 AM.



- Students who arrive after 7:30 AM. must come through the front office and be signed in by an accompanying adult.
- If a student is tardy 3 or more times in a six week period, he/she will not be eligible for a perfect attendance award. Repeated tardiness may result in truancy filings and/or meeting with an administrator to come up with a plan to get the student to school on time. It is very important for students to be on time and begin the day with initial school activities.

#### *Leaving School Early Procedures*

- Parents must come to the front office to sign out their students.
- Children WILL NOT be removed from the classroom for an early dismissal until the parent is on campus and signing out the student.
- Students may leave school with their parents, guardians, or designee.
- A picture ID (TX driver's license) is required when picking up students.
- No early pick-ups will be done after 2:30 PM.

#### *Dismissal Procedures*

- Car Riders are dismissed at 3:30 p.m. through the car loop entrance at Bell Street. Kindergarten students will be released at the loading zone on Bowser Street. Pre-Kindergarten and First Grade students will be released at the loading zone on College Street.
- If a student is not picked up from school by 3:30 PM. the student will be brought inside the front office, and the parent or guardian will be required to sign the student out. A log of late pick-ups will be maintained by the campus principal.
- Parents of car riders will be given cards to be placed in the dashboard of the car with the family name. This will allow us to have your child waiting when you pull up. Cards will be available at open house and will be sent home with car riders the first week of school.

### **ROCKDALE INTERMEDIATE Arrival**

#### *Arrival Time Procedures*

- 7:00 AM – All students may enter the building. Students will report to the gym. Please do not drop students off at the school before 7:00 AM. **No one will be on duty to monitor them.**
- Breakfast is served from 7:00 AM until 7:30 AM
- Bus riders will enter the gym doors.
- Car riders will be dropped off in front of the building and will enter through the doors nearest the cafeteria.
- 7:30 AM. – FIRST BELL RINGS: Students will be escorted by class to their classrooms.
- 7:35 a.m. – All students are expected to be seated in their classrooms. Students not in class at 7:35 AM are tardy and must enter through the office.

#### *Late Arrival Procedures.*

- Students who arrive after 7:30 AM must come through the front office to receive a tardy pass.

### *Dismissal Procedures*

- No early pickup or transportation changes after 2:30 PM
- Bus students will be dismissed from the gym at 3:15 PM or when the buses arrive.
- All other students will wait in the cafeteria. Parents will be asked to use the drive-through lane in the front of the campus to pick up students.
- Parents of car riders will be given cards to hang from the mirror with the family name. This will allow us to have your child waiting when you pull up. Cards will be available before school for pickup and will be sent home with car riders the first week of school.

### **Rockdale Junior High**

#### *Arrival Procedures*

- Any student arriving at school after the 8:30 AM tardy bell will be marked tardy. After 8:30 AM, the student will be marked absent for the first period. Students are marked absent if they arrive 15 minutes late to any class.

Students may enter the building at 8:00 AM. Please do not drop students off at the school before 7:30 AM. No one will be on duty to monitor them.

### **College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (All Grade Levels)**

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates as valedictorian or in the top 10 percent of their class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student meets one of the following requirements:

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program [see **Foundation Graduation Program**]
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT

The student is ultimately responsible for meeting the admission requirements of the university or college, including timely submission of a completed application.

If a college or university adopts 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 their class.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of automatically admitted students to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. From the summer 2024 term through the spring 2026 term, the University will admit the top six percent of a high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

As required by law, the district will provide written notice about the following:

- Automatic college admission
- Curriculum requirements for financial aid
- Benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid

- The Texas First Early High School Completion Program, which requires a student to provide an official copy of assessment results and transcripts, as applicable, to receive credit for the assessments and credits required for early graduation under the program
- The Texas First Scholarship Program
- The Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program

Parents and students will be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they received this information.

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 (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** 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 may earn college credit through the following opportunities:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), or college preparatory
- Enrollment in AP or dual credit courses through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN)
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with Temple College or Texas State Technical College, which may be offered on or off campus
- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities
- Enrollment in these programs is based on academic eligibility criteria identified during the school year. Please see the school counselor for more information regarding specific requirements.

Under the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program, a student may be eligible to enroll at no cost to the student in dual credit courses at a participating institution of higher education. The FAST program allows students who are or have been educationally disadvantaged at any time during the four years preceding the student's enrollment in a dual credit course to enroll at no cost to the student. The district will determine eligibility upon the student's enrollment in the dual credit course. See the high school counselor for more information.

A student may be eligible for subsidies based on financial need for AP or IB exam fees. [See **Fees (All Grade Levels)** for more information.]

A student may also earn college credit for certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. See **Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Work-Based Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** for information on CTE and other work-based programs.

For dual credit purposes, all these methods have eligibility requirements and must be approved before 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.

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 (All Grade Levels)**

### **Parent Contact Information**

A parent is legally required to provide in writing the parent's contact information, including address, phone number, and email address.

A parent must provide the contact information to the district upon enrollment and again within two weeks after the beginning of each following school year while the student is enrolled in the district.

If the parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must update the information in writing no more than two weeks after the date the information changes.

A parent may update contact information by making the change in the Skyward Parent Portal, completing the contact form on the district website at [https://www.rockdaleisd.net/contact\\_us](https://www.rockdaleisd.net/contact_us), or sending a signed note with a student to school with a phone number for verification.

### **Automated Emergency Communications**

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 situation may include early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to the campus due to severe weather, another emergency, or a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes.

[See **Safety (All Grade Levels)** for information about contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

### **Automated Non Emergency Communications**

Your child's school periodically sends information by automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are closely related to the school's mission and specific to your child, your child's school, or the district.

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's principal. [See **Safety (All Grade Levels)** for information about 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 resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy at FNG(LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at <https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/892>. The complaint forms can be accessed at the principal's or superintendent's office.

To file a formal complaint a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form. In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner.

If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may request a conference with the superintendent.

If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

## **Conduct (All Grade Levels)**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior — on and off campus, during remote and in-person instruction, and on district vehicles — and outlines 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 summer instruction, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the school year immediately before the summer period apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for summer instruction.

### **Campus Behavior Coordinator**

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 contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is available on the district's website at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net) and the coordinator for this campus is listed below:

Ashley Willard - Rockdale Elementary 512-430-6030

April Eschberger - Rockdale Intermediate 512-430-6200

Shellie Dunn or Hudson Evans - Rockdale Junior High 512-430-6100

Madison Monzingo or Michael Young - Rockdale High School 512-430-6040

## **Conduct at Athletic and Extracurricular Events**

Students attending any district athletic or extracurricular will follow all rules and procedures stated in the RISD Student Handbook. During the event students should make efforts to remain seated in the stands when seats are available. If a student displays disruptive behavior, they will be removed from the event. Suspension from future athletic and extracurricular events will be at the discretion of the campus administrators. If a student violates this directive it will result in disciplinary consequences and may result in ISS or DAEP.

## **Deliveries**

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

## **Disruption of School Operations**

Disruption of school operations is not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state 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 or within 500 feet of district property includes:

- Making loud noises
- Trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity
- 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 is also considered a disruption.

## **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 the guest.

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

A parent interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events should contact the campus principal.

### **Activities and Social Functions Regulations**

1. All school sponsored activities and social functions are under the direct supervision of teacher sponsors and the principal. They shall give final approval of all social activities relative to money to be spent, place of event, and time of event.
2. No school-sponsored activity may be planned without first receiving permission from the sponsor and principal and then placing the date for the event on the school calendar. One-month advance notice is required.
3. The following policies will be in effect at all school sponsored activities:
  - a. No alcoholic beverages will be allowed
  - b. No smoking or vaping will be allowed
  - c. No profane language
  - d. Possession of or use of drugs and/or dangerous narcotics will not be allowed
  - e. Students who leave the building/place where the activity is occurring may not return
  - f. No tobacco products in the gym, other buildings, or any other school property
  - g. No weapons of any kind will be allowed

### **Counseling**

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

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

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

## **Academic Counseling**

### ***Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels***

The school counselor will provide information to students and parents about college and university admissions and the importance of planning for postsecondary education, including appropriate coursework and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction on how best to 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 on anticipated course offerings for the next school year, how to make the most of academic and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities, and the importance of postsecondary education.

The school counselor will also provide information each year a student is enrolled in high school about:

- The importance of postsecondary education
- The advantages of earning an endorsement and completing the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement
- The disadvantages of pursuing a high school equivalency exam (GED) as opposed to earning a high school diploma
- Financial aid eligibility and how to apply for financial aid
- Automatic admission to state-funded Texas colleges and universities
- Eligibility requirements for the TEXAS Grant
- Availability of district programs that allow students to earn college credit
- Availability of tuition and fee assistance for postsecondary education for students in foster care
- Availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training

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.

[See **Scholarships and Grants** for more information.]

### **Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels)**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor at the elementary or intermediate campus



should speak with their teacher or principal. Students at the junior high or high school should sign up in the counselor's office or contact the school office. 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.

If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information.

[See **Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)**, **Child Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children (All Grade Levels)**, and **Dating Violence**.]

### **Course Credit (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A student at any grade level enrolled in a high school course will earn credit for the course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-part (two-semester, 1-credit course), the student's grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. If the student's combined average is less than 70, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

### **Credit by Examination — If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (Grades 6-12)**

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.

Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination. [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)**.]

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

[See the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

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

A student will be permitted to earn credit by examination for an academic course or subject area for which the student had no prior instruction 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. Testing windows for these examinations will be published in district publications and on the district's website. A student may take a specific examination only once per testing window.

The only exceptions to the published testing windows will be for examinations administered by another entity or to accommodate a student experiencing homelessness or a student involved in the foster care system.

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student or parent must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days before the scheduled testing date. [See policy EHDC for more information.]

### **Kindergarten Acceleration**

In accordance with State Board rules, the Board shall approve procedures developed by the Superintendent or designee to allow a child who is five years old at the beginning of the school year to be assigned initially to grade 1 rather than kindergarten. Criteria for acceleration may include: 1) Scores on readiness tests or achievement tests that may be administered by appropriate District personnel. 2) Recommendation of the kindergarten or preschool the student has attended. 3) Chronological age and observed social and emotional development of the student. 4) Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal and Superintendent.

### **Students in Grades 1-5**

A student in elementary school is eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- The student scores at least an 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
- The student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement

### **Students in Grades 6-12**

A student in grade 6 or above is eligible to earn course credit if the student meets one of the following requirements:

- A passing score of at least 80 on an examination approved by the board
- A scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
- 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)**

Students learn best, and their welfare is best served, in a school environment that is free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Students are expected to treat peers and district employees with courtesy and respect, avoid offensive behaviors, and stop those behaviors as directed. District employees are likewise expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, 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 on the district's website at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net) [See the FFH series of policies for more information.]

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence will not be tolerated at school. To report dating violence, see **Reporting Procedures**.

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 or any of the person's past or subsequent partners. This type of conduct is considered harassment if it is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a 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 past or current dating partner
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family
- Stalking
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors

In accordance with law, when the district receives a report of dating violence, a district official will immediately notify the parent of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.

The counselor's office has information about the dangers of dating violence and resources for seeking help.

For more information on dating violence, see:

- Texas Attorney General's office [recognizing and responding to dating violence flier](https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/papa/session%2010/recognizing-relationship-violence-en.pdf) (<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/papa/session%2010/recognizing-relationship-violence-en.pdf>)
- The CDC's [Preventing Teen Dating Violence](https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-teen-dating-violence.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/about-teen-dating-violence.html>)

[See **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**]

## **Discrimination**

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

## **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects a 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
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

## **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 are not limited to:

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature
- Sexual advances
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature
- 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 that a reasonable person would not construe as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and

other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on a student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.

Gender-based harassment can occur regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student may include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors
- Physical aggression or assault
- Threatening or intimidating conduct
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

### **Pregnancy or Related Conditions**

The district does not discriminate on the basis of pregnancy or a related condition.

Please contact the campus counselor for pregnancy-related accommodations.

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a report or participates in an investigation of discrimination, harassment, or dating violence is prohibited.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that they have 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 the FFH series of policies and FFH(EXHIBIT) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.]

Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by the FFH series of policies. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See **Bullying (All Grade Levels)**]

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 the FFH series of policies.

## **Investigation of Report**

Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

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 comply with law.

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 its investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During 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 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 (All Grade Levels)**]

## **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 Edgenuity and Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

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 before 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.

[See **Remote Instruction**]

## **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 (All Grade Levels)**] In addition, a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

A parent may ask questions or request that their child be enrolled in a TXVSN course by contacting 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 addressing distance learning 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 campus principal.

## **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, newspapers, yearbooks, brochures, flyers, and the like.

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 campus 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 nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Approval will be granted or denied within two school days.

The campus principal will designate the location for approved non school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA for more information.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes nonschool 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 policy FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

### ***From Others***

No person or group will sell, circulate, distribute, or post on any district premises written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that is not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization, except as permitted by policy GKDA.

To be considered for distribution, any nonschool material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the district administration office for prior review. The district administrator 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 DGBA or GF for more information.]

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with policy 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 nonschool materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from district property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

## **Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)**

The district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, and minimizes safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

### **Secondary School Dress Code:**

- Dresses, skirts, and shorts that are no more than five (5) inches from the middle of the knee (measured front and back) or at mid-thigh may be worn. Shorts with an inseam shorter than (5) inches will not be allowed. This rule applies even if leggings are worn. If leggings/jegging are worn they should be covered by a full-length shirt covering the front and back of the body.
- Tops must be tucked in or overlap the waistband so that no midriff is showing at any time.
- Spaghetti straps, tube tops, halter tops, strapless, backless, or revealing dresses or tops will not be allowed. Thin straps must be covered with a non-see-through over shirt. Tops with 2-inch wide straps will be allowed.



- Earrings may be worn in the ear.
- Studs and small looped earrings may be worn in the ear.
- Facial hair (including sideburns and eyebrows) must be professional in appearance. This includes being neat and properly trimmed. A student, who engages in elective extracurricular activities such as band, athletics, etc., shall comply with the dress and grooming requirements required by the directors of such activities.
- Overalls may be worn if they are buttoned appropriately and both straps are fastened.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, towels, jacket hoods, or any type of headwear will not be permitted in the school building.
- Clothing or accessories, including backpacks, with pictures, emblems, or writing that are lewd, vulgar, obscene, offensive, suggestive or that promote tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, gangs, weapons, drugs or any other substance, will not be permitted.
- Pants with see through holes above the mid-thigh may not be worn. Leggings may be worn under pants where holes are above mid-thigh. Pants, trousers, or slacks shall not be overly tight, loose or low riding. Pants should reach the natural waistline. Sagging pants are not allowed. Undergarments may not be exposed at any time.
- See-through clothing is not allowed.
- Students are allowed to wear a small nose stud or hoop. Septum rings are not permitted. A student, who engages in elective extracurricular activities such as band, athletics, etc., shall comply with the dress and grooming requirements required by the directors of such activities. No other piercings, other than ear piercings, may be worn. The administration has the right to determine if a piercing is distracting. No plugs may be worn in place of a piercing. Body gauges and body spikes are prohibited.
- Sunglasses are not permitted.
- Tattoos with pictures, emblems, or writing that are lewd, vulgar, and obscene or offensive must be covered.
- No trench coats shall be worn unless deemed appropriate due to weather conditions.
- Apparel or accessories that have visible safety pins or pointed parts/objects are prohibited. Chains, other than what would reasonably be considered jewelry, are prohibited. Chains that are attached to wallets or chains that are excessive in size or quantity will not be allowed.
- Bicycle, boxer, wind, and see-through shorts are not allowed.
- Pajama like attire, including but not limited to pajama pants and tops may not be worn.
- Shoes shall be worn at all times. Shoes should be appropriate for identified physical and instructional activities. Shoes with taps, wheels, lights, house shoes/house-slippers are not allowed on campus.

- No teeth grills shall be worn.
- Articles found to be a distraction in the classroom as determined by the teacher and/or principal will not be allowed.

#### **Elementary School Dress Code:**

- Footwear is required and must be safe and appropriate for indoor or outdoor physical activity. Shoes with taps or wheels, house shoes/house slippers will not be allowed on campus.
- Tennis shoes must be worn in physical education class.
- Skirts, shorts and dresses should be an appropriate length, leggings underneath skirts or dresses may act as a replacement for pants.
- Tops must be tucked in or overlap the waistband so that no midriff is showing at any time.
- Tube tops, halter tops, strapless, backless, or revealing dresses or tops will not be allowed. Sleeveless tops with at least 1-inch wide straps will be allowed.
- Inappropriate or revealing clothing will not be permitted and is subject to building administration discretion.
- No sagging pants or shorts will be permitted. Undergarments may not be exposed at any time.
- Clothing or accessories, including backpacks, with provocative, offensive, violent, drug related or gang related pictures or slogans will not be permitted.
- Items advertising alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will not be permitted.
- Earrings may be worn in the ear only. No piercings, other than ear piercings, may be worn. The administration has the right to determine if a piercing is distracting.
- No caps, hats, head rags, bandanas, or other headwear are permitted.

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 and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

Repeated or severe offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)**

### **Safe Use of Technology**

The district is committed to ensuring that students use technology safely and will follow all federal and state requirements to protect students from excessive data collection or materials that are considered harmful to minors. The district considers parents as partners in cybersecurity and online safety.

In accordance with state and federal law, the district will:

- Install a filter that blocks and prohibits pornographic or obscene materials or applications, including from unsolicited pop-ups, installations, and downloads, before transferring an electronic device to a student to be used for an educational purpose
- Block or filter students' internet access to pictures that are obscene, contain child pornography, or have been determined to be harmful to minors in accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)
- Require direct and informed parental consent for a student's use of software, other than software excluded from the consent requirement by law [See **Required State Assessments and Standardized Testing.**]
- Require direct and informed parental consent for a student's use of software that conducts mental health assessments or other assessments unrelated to education curricula that are intended to collect information about students [See **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation.**]

If you want to know more about partnering with the district regarding cybersecurity and online safety, or if you have complaints or concerns about student use of electronic devices, please contact the campus principal.

[See **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels).**]

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

The district permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. [See **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)** for graphing calculator applications on computing devices.]

A student must have approval to possess other personal telecommunications devices (this includes earbuds) on campus such as laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

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.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated.

At the secondary campuses, a student may possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, e-readers, or other portable computers for instructional purposes with teacher permission. Students are expected to follow the district acceptable use policies when using these devices. Students are able to utilize these devices at lunch and before and after the school day. Students are responsible for the security of their own devices. The school is not responsible for damage or theft of any electronic devices. Incidents involving electronic devices should be reported to the office immediately.

At all campuses, if a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated (this includes earbuds). Checking the time and parents trying to contact the student are not valid excuses. If a parent needs to contact their student they should contact the office. On the first offense, the phone will be confiscated and may be picked up by the student after school in the office. On the second offense, the phone will be confiscated and the parent must pick up the phone. On the third offense and each subsequent offense, the parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15. After each offense, student will contact parent and after school detention may be assigned.

Adjustments to the above policy is at the discretion of the administration based on compliance with campus expectations.

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 for more information.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches and Investigations** and policy FNF for more information.]

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.

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

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook).

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. 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 may be issued to individual students for instructional purposes. Use of the district's network systems and equipment is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

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

Students are prohibited from 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 on district-owned or personally owned equipment, 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 in accordance with 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.

This type of behavior may constitute bullying or harassment, as well as impede future endeavors of a student. We encourage parents to review with their child the ["Before You Text" Bullying and Sexting Course](https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/courses/before-you-text/) (<https://txssc.txstate.edu/tools/courses/before-you-text/>), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of sexting.

In accordance with state law, the district prohibits the installation or use of TikTok (or any successor application or service) on a district device, along with any other social media application or service determined by the governor.

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

## **End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments**

[See **Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** and **Standardized Testing**.]

## **Emergent Bilingual Students (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing**, may be administered to an emergent bilingual 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 emergent bilingual students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an emergent bilingual student 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.

Some extracurricular activities may include off-campus events. Students are required to use transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [See **Transportation (All Grade Levels)**.]

Eligibility for 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 and parents can access the [UIL Parent Information Manual](https://www.uil texas.org/athletics/manuals) (<https://www.uil texas.org/athletics/manuals>) online. A hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

To report 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](mailto:curriculum@tea.texas.gov).

[See [UIL Texas](https://www.uil texas.org/) (<https://www.uil texas.org/>) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. Parents 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.

Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB), honors, or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved course that requires demonstration of the mastery of an essential knowledge and skills in public performance and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of the grading period, the student may participate in a performance so long as the general public is invited.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved music course that participates in UIL Concert and Sight-reading Evaluation, and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of a grading period, the student may perform with the ensemble during the UIL evaluation performance but is ineligible for other extracurricular activities for at least three weeks.

In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:

- 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 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of 2 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 be considered 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. All school elections will be conducted under established guidelines and with the direction of the principal. All homecoming queen nominees and Mr. & Mrs. RHS must be seniors. Election results are protected by law from unauthorized inspection or use.

All club officers and class favorites will be determined by the procedures set forth in specific club handbooks or constitutions.

## Tryouts

A student who is ineligible because of grades can participate in organized school-sponsored practice sessions and will be eligible to tryout, provided the student meets all other eligibility guidelines. All tryouts are closed to the public.

## Club Officer Positions

Students are limited to no more than two officer positions during the school year. Officer positions include both elected officer positions and officer positions earned through tryouts. These include (but are not limited to) club officers, class officers, cheerleader captain, and positions of leadership earned through tryouts such as drill team officers and drum major.

This policy encourages our student officers to be more active in their leadership roles. Sponsors will expect more from you and you will be able to spend more time on your responsibilities. If for some reason someone is elected/selected for more than two positions, that person will be asked to withdraw from any position that exceeds this rule.

## Fees (All Grade Levels)

Basic educational program materials are provided at no charge to a student. However, a student is expected to provide their own supplies, such as pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks. A student may also be required to pay certain other costs, fees, or deposits, including:

- Materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations.
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, and the like.
- 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 lost or damaged Smart Tags.
- Fees for driver training courses.
- 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 reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles.**]
- A maximum fee of \$50 for 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 requirements. 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 campus principal. [See policy FP for more information.]

### **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. [See policies FJ and GE for more information.]

### **Gang-Free Zones (All Grade Levels)**

Certain criminal offenses, including gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next-highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. Gang-free zones include a school bus and any location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

### **Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9-12 Only)**

After grade 9, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation.

Credits Earned	Classification
7	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
14	Grade 11 (Junior)
21	Grade 12 (Senior)

### **Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)**

Approved grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines establish:

- The minimum number of assignments, projects, and examinations required for each grading period
- How the student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (for example, letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, and the like)
- Circumstances under which a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination the student originally failed
- Procedures for a student to follow after an absence

- Grading consequences for academic dishonesty, including cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism (including the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT), and unauthorized communication between students during an examination.

## **Secondary Grading and Reporting Procedures**

### ***Grading Roles and Responsibilities***

#### **Student**

I realize that my education is important. I am the one responsible for my own success. Therefore, I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- be on time for class every day
- complete and return my homework on time
- discuss my school work and progress with my parents
- be responsible for my own behavior and learning
- work cooperatively with other students
- ask for help when needed
- get proper rest
- maintain academic integrity and honesty
- students participating in extracurricular activities have grade eligibility requirements for participation

#### **Parent/Guardian**

I understand that my participation in my student's education will positively impact his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I will continue to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- encourage my student to complete his/her homework
- review all school communications and return promptly when requested to do so
- attend parent programs, parent teacher conferences, Open House, and other school events
- encourage my student to engage in reading activities
- provide a quiet place/time for my student to do homework
- discuss my student's school work and progress with him/her
- make sure student gets adequate sleep and has a healthy diet
- support the school's/district's homework, discipline and attendance policies

#### **Teacher**

I understand the importance of the school experience to every student and my role as an educator and role model. Therefore, I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability:

- teach grade level skills and concepts
- strive to address the individual needs of my students
- communicate with parents regarding your student's progress
- provide a safe, positive and healthy learning environment for your student
- evaluate and return appropriate work in a timely manner
- effectively communicate homework and class work expectations

### ***Teacher Records/Gradebook***

Grade records are an important record-keeping tool and should be accurately maintained. Teachers should be aware that many times grades will need to be verified; therefore, accurate record keeping is essential. All teachers will maintain the District-provided electronic gradebook.

1. Grades recorded in a gradebook are documentation of a student's progress and of mastery of the TEKS and curriculum objectives.
2. Grades recorded in a gradebook represent a confidential record for assessment of student performance.
3. Teachers will update electronic Gradebooks on a weekly basis.

### ***Return of Graded Work***

Feedback on assignments and assessments is a best practice and an important teaching tool that should be utilized in every classroom.

Students shall have the opportunity to review all graded work. Student work should be reviewed and returned on a timely basis (within one week if feasible). This will allow the student to identify any areas of weakness and arrange for tutorials or extra study sessions.

### ***Required Tutorials***

The purpose of a tutorial session is to provide additional instruction to assist students who have not mastered the TEKS currently being taught. Tutorials also serve as an instructional reinforcement for students needing assistance. All RISD students are welcomed and encouraged to attend tutorial sessions; however, students who have not mastered the TEKS, state assessments, and/or campus or district benchmarks are required to attend tutorial sessions as scheduled by the campus and/or teacher.

1. Day and time of scheduled tutorials will be set by each campus. Some campuses may have mandatory tutorials within the school day.
2. Attendance at tutorials is mandatory for students who have not mastered the TEKS, state assessments, and/or campus or district benchmarks.
3. Tutorials are not limited to those students having academic difficulty. Students may attend these sessions on a voluntary basis.
4. Teachers must be available to students during scheduled tutorial times or appointments.
5. It is required that the teacher keep a log of students attending tutorials.

### ***Parent/Guardian – Teacher Conferences/Parent Contacts***

A teacher will schedule one or more conferences with the parent/guardian of a student if the student is not maintaining passing grades at progress reports, is not achieving the expected level of performance, is presenting some problem to the teacher, or in any other case that the teacher considers necessary. Such conferences may be handled by telephone or in person.

### **Course Outline and Expectations**

All secondary teachers are required to prepare and distribute a course outline for students during the first two weeks of the course and/or semester. The purpose of the course outline is to provide information, guidelines, and an overview of a teacher's requirements for successful completion of a course. The course outline may be defined as the scope and sequence of a course's major projects and themes. It may be prepared by semester or full-year requirements. The outline is designed to give students and parents/guardians an overview of the course's major themes and class expectations. Each teacher may develop his/her own format of a course outline, but the following elements must be included:

- Teacher name
- Course title
- Conference time
- School/Teacher phone
- Outline or scope and sequence of major course units, themes, or projects
- Procedures

### **Types of Assessment**

#### **General**

Student mastery of course objectives may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary, therefore, for all grades to have as their source written paper work. Nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every paper produced. Although the teacher should always monitor and provide feedback to students for any activity that he/she assigns, the feedback does not always need to be in the form of a grade. Assessment should always follow a period of guided practice and/or independent practice.

In grading a group project, members of a group should not be penalized for an individual's non-participation. Conversely, a student who does not fully participate, but participates to a limited degree, will receive a grade reflective of his/her participation.

Performance assessments are measures of a student's progress toward mastery of course objectives or content. There are many forms of assessment that may or may not be utilized by individual teachers. Types of performance assessments include but are not limited to:

- classroom participation
- classroom discussions
- oral responses
- written responses
- homework assignments
- experiments

- teacher observation
- research project
- checklist of skills
- portfolios
- enrichment
- group work/projects
- independent or group reading

**Types of formal assessments may include:**

- Chapter tests
- Quizzes
- Unit test
- District or campus benchmarks
- Daily Work

**Weight of Grades**

Daily grades and major tests/assignments.

Six weeks grades are determined by: daily grades which will comprise 40% of a student's six weeks grade and major grades which will comprise 60% of a student's six weeks grade.

Semester averages are derived by averaging six weeks grades. All academic grades will be numerically reported and are based on a scale of 0-100 with below 70 indicating a failing grade.

Teachers will have a minimum of two daily grades per week, recorded weekly into the electronic gradebook. There will be a minimum of three major grades per six weeks.

**Daily Grades**

Daily grades may consist of the following:

- Daily work
- Homework assignments
- Quizzes
- Participation
- Performance assessments

**Major Grades**

Major grades may consist of the following:

- Formal assessments
- Projects
- Term papers
- Extended assignments
- Performance assessments

***Incomplete Grades***

A student receiving an incomplete for a grading period has two (2) weeks to convert the incomplete grade to an earned grade.

In unusual cases, where the student has missed a large quantity of work, the time may be extended and classwork may be adjusted.

In all cases, the teacher must communicate to the student the nature of the outstanding work and the time limitation for completing the work (UIL required). For UIL eligibility purposes this timeline is 1 week to remain eligible for participation.

### ***Retesting Guidelines for Secondary Campuses***

A student, who earns below a 70 on a test, shall be given the opportunity to be reassessed after participating in the re-teach process within a reasonable amount of time. A student who walks into a class and refuses to attempt the reassessment is not eligible for reassessment.

Reassessment is meant for students who academically do not understand the material.

- The test given as a retest shall be as close as possible to the same difficulty level, and cover the same concepts as the first test, but the structure of the test and question format may vary at the teacher's discretion.
- Teachers may prescribe a reasonable amount of work that must be completed prior to the student being able to take the retest: attend a tutoring session, complete a review sheet, etc. The teacher determines the type of re-teaching and re-assessment available to the students.
- Retesting shall be limited to one retest for each test failed.
- Retests will be available to all students if initiated by the student.
- No retests will be given for six-week tests or for semester examinations.
- Retesting shall be conducted at a time designated by the teacher, either in the regular class period, before or after school, or at any other reasonable time prescribed by the teacher
- Unless otherwise approved by the teacher, retesting shall be completed within 7 calendar days.
- If a majority of the students tested (50% or higher) do not make a 70 or higher on a major test, the teacher will conclude that either the test construction was faulty or an error in judgment concerning students' readiness was made. In such cases, the teacher will reteach and retest.
- When students receive major grades for products that result from a full process (i.e., writing, research papers, lab practical, and projects), it is not necessary to reteach and retest.
- High School AP and Dual Credit Courses: Students enrolled in AP and/or dual credit courses are not eligible for the retest option
- The new grade will be recorded as the higher of the two test grades up to a maximum of a 70.

### ***Late Work***

Late work is accepted for all daily work with appropriate grade deductions based on the timeliness of the assignment.

### **Semester Examination Exemptions for High School Students**

All students with 4 or less excused absences (unexcused absences count as two) receive all exemptions in classes with 80 or above semester average.

1. Students with more than four absences are ineligible.
2. Three tardies = 1 absence
3. Students must have been enrolled at RHS the entire third or sixth six weeks to be eligible for exemption.
4. U's for conduct in any course in any six-week grading period will disqualify the student from semester examination exemptions for that course.
5. RHS will provide the opportunity for a student to take a final examination even though he/she qualifies for exemption. The student's course grades will not be lowered by the grade on the final examination; choosing to take an optional examination will only be used to raise a grade.
6. To determine exemption grade status, all three six weeks' grades are averaged together. The cut-off date for determining grade exemption for the third or sixth six weeks is five days prior to the first day of semester examinations. This does not mean the teacher will stop taking grades on this date. It simply means that if a student's grade meets the requirements as of that date, the student can be exempt from taking examination(s).
7. Students eligible for semester exemption(s) must declare the courses that will apply prior to testing. This declaration date is to be determined by RHS and will not be later than 2 days prior to the beginning of semester examinations.
8. Saturday School will not be used to make up absences in order to qualify for exemptions.
9. Students assigned to DAEP for more than 1 day ISS will lose all exemptions.

In the spring semester, as an extra incentive will be provided for the EOC examination, a student may elect to exempt a class in which he/she passes the corresponding EOC examination. Seniors will also be able to use the EOC incentive the spring of their senior year.

### **Elementary/Intermediate Grading and Reporting Procedures**

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.

## **Rockdale Elementary**

Mastery of English Language Arts (Reading, Language, Spelling), Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Elective TEKS are evaluated with the use of a Standards Based Report Card. Mastery will be communicated with a standards-based scale of 1- 4 with a 1 indicating the student has little understanding of a concept and cannot demonstrate any mastery of it.

As students learn and progress, they can demonstrate partial mastery and score a 2. Once they meet a target, they score a 3. The 4s are reserved for students who exceed the learning target.

## **Rockdale Intermediate**

English Language Arts (Reading, Language, Spelling), Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science will be assigned numerical grades on a scale of 0-100 with below 70 indicating a failing grade. Students will receive two grades per week in each subject Citizenship, Music, Art, and Physical Education will be assigned letter grades “E”, “S”, “N”, “U”, as defined below.

E – Excellent

S – Satisfactory

N – Needs Improvement

U – Unsatisfactory (Failing)

Numerical grades are the only form of grades that can be entered on a student’s permanent report card. The following state requirements determine a student passing from one grade level to the next higher-grade level:

## **Grading Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Student**

1. To complete assigned work on time and return it to the teacher
2. To plan to carefully schedule work on long-term assignments so that assignments will be completed on time
3. To communicate with the teacher when he/she does not understand the assignment or is experiencing difficulty prior to due date

### **Parent/Guardian**

1. To establish a specific time, place, and manner for homework to be completed
2. To provide the supplies and materials necessary to complete homework
3. To monitor as needed, but not do homework for the student
4. To assist the student in planning a time schedule for long-term assignments
5. To initiate communication with the teacher when concerns arise

### **Teacher**



1. To provide meaningful tasks that enrich and supplement work introduced in class
2. To communicate homework assignments, both regular and long-range, in an appropriate framework
3. To provide effective instruction prior to assignment homework that adequately prepares the child to do the task independently and successfully
4. To provide requirements and expectations at the beginning of each grading period to students and parents.
5. To consider available resources, materials, and home situations when assigning a task
6. To review and return homework to students within a timeframe which enhances instruction and provides a benefit to the student

### ***Teacher Records/Gradebook***

The grading record should be a teacher's record and/or file of evidence to support grades reported on the report card. Grades should be logical, justifiable, and sufficient in number to assure that the report card grade is an accurate measure of the student's progress and achievement.

Grades should reflect a balance of objectives covered. The teacher's grade record is a part of the official documentation portraying mastery of TEKS and District objectives. If possible, a description of the learning task should be included in this documentation. These records should be accurately maintained and teachers should be aware that many times grades will need to be justified.

### ***Return of Assignments***

Teachers should review and return all graded work to students within a time frame that will benefit the student. Graded daily work should be returned on a timely basis (within one week if feasible). This will allow the student and teacher to identify any areas of weakness and arrange for tutorials or extra study sessions prior to assessment.

### ***Required Tutorials***

The purpose of a mandated tutorial session is to provide instruction to assist students who have not mastered the TEKS currently being taught. Tutorials also serve to provide instructional reinforcement for students needing assistance. All District students may attend tutorial sessions; however, students who have not mastered the TEKS (or are currently failing) will be given priority during scheduled tutorial times.

1. Tutorials will be offered for students who are not mastering the state-mandated TEKS.
2. Parents will be notified and records maintained by teachers for student required tutorial instruction.
3. Attendance of students will be maintained by teachers.

### **Types of Assessments**

#### **General**

Student mastery of subject matter may be assessed in a variety of ways. It is not necessary, therefore, for all grades to have as their source written paper work. Nor is it always necessary to receive a grade for every assignment produced. Although the teacher will monitor and provide feedback to students for any activity which they assign, the feedback does not always need to be in the form of a grade. Assessment should always follow a period of guided practice and/or independent practice. Students' work may be evaluated for more than one subject area as appropriate.

### **Performance-Based Courses**

Performance-based courses may have assignments that differ significantly from other academic courses. Performance-based courses include courses within the Fine Arts and Physical Education departments.

In many performance-based courses, the grading and assignments must reflect the TEKS and a measure of the student's performance. In performance-based courses, a higher percentage of the grade may come from successful participation.

### **Formative Assessments**

Formative assessment refers to assessment that takes place during the process of learning and teaching. It involves gathering and interpreting evidence of student learning from at least one point prior to the end of the unit of study. Formative assessment is the monitoring that occurs throughout the process of learning, providing students with feedback on how they are doing and what their next learning steps are.

### **Summative Assessments**

Summative assessment refers to a culminating assessment, which gives information on students' mastery of content, knowledge, or skills. It is the gathering of information at the conclusion of a grading period, semester, or course.

### **Major Assessments**

#### ***Test and Examinations***

Major tests and examinations are a culminating assessment, which give information on students' mastery of content, knowledge, or skills. Examinations serve to evaluate mastery of TEKS, concepts, understandings and District objectives. They provide opportunities to demonstrate certain knowledge or skills.

#### ***Performance Assessments***

Performance assessments are measures of a student's progress toward mastery of the TEKS and District curriculum objectives. There are many forms of assessment that may or may not be utilized by individual teachers. Types of performance assessments include:

- classroom participation
- oral responses
- experiments

- checklists of skills
- enrichment
- teacher observation
- classroom discussions
- written responses
- research project
- portfolios
- group work/projects
- chapter/unit tests

### ***Compositions***

In writing, compositions are formal writing assignments. Compositions often take a longer time to complete and are graded for many components. The evaluation of the writing process is the major determinant of the average.

### ***Daily Work***

Class work is any instructional activity defined/planned by the teacher to be completed during a class period to facilitate the learning process.

### ***Homework***

Homework is work that is assigned to be completed at home and is an extension of the assignment or concepts that were covered through guided practice in class. Homework is an effective tool in developing responsibility, study habits, and skills. It is an extension of the learning process and involves the home in the child's curriculum. It should be purposeful, related to classroom experiences, and be age and grade appropriate. The purpose and directions for the assignment need to be clearly communicated and should be preceded by instruction that adequately prepares the child to do the task independently and successfully.

### ***Grading Homework***

Homework may be graded in a variety of ways. At times, checking for completion is appropriate. At other times, a complete analysis of procedure, content, and/or correct answers is appropriate. Graded assignments should be returned to the student in a timely manner.

### **Calculating Six Weeks Averages (Intermediate Only)**

#### ***Weight of Grades (Grade 3-4)***

All numeric averages reported on Progress Reports and Report Cards will be determined using a percentage grading system.

### ***Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies***

The following percentages and assignment types will be used:

- Daily Grades X1
- Major/Assessments X2

### ***Weight of Grades (Grade 5)***

All numeric averages reported on Progress Reports and Report Cards will be determined using a percentage grading system.

### ***Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies***

The following percentages and assignment types will be used:

- Daily Grades 60%
- Major/Assessments 40%

### ***Maximum Weight of a Grade***

When calculating a six-week average, no single assignment/assessment grade may count more than 20% of the total average regardless of the grade category. It should be noted, however, that some major projects may comprise more than one assignment. Calculated averages reported on Progress Reports or Report Cards may not exceed 100%.

### ***Minimum Number of Grades***

A minimum of **two grades per week** should be given in each core academic area (Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) during each six-week grading period.

### ***Transfer Grades***

Students new to the District or who enroll in a school after the start of a grading period shall be treated fairly in awarding grades. Grades shall be computed using a combination of grades from the former school and grades earned for the time the student has been enrolled in the new school.

### ***Reteach and Reassess for Mastery***

Rockdale Independent School District has provided a well-balanced curriculum on state prescribed Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students who participate in this curriculum will have the opportunity to master the knowledge, skills and competencies established by the district curriculum and the state standards. RISD will utilize ongoing mastery assessment to determine which students need remediation (re-teaching and acceleration). The use of benchmark tests, teacher-made tests, performance assessments, and teacher observations will help determine which students are not mastering instructional objectives.

### ***Re-Teach***

Re-teach is defined as a different presentation of content, usually to provide an additional opportunity for a student to learn. Re-teach may vary from subject to subject from class to class, even from student to student. If the student still does not understand the concept, the

teacher might use different materials or modalities to present the concept again. If the initial instruction was primarily visual, the reteach activity might be manipulative.

Re-teach is an integral part of the lesson cycle and may occur in many different situations. Some opportunities include:

- During direct teach as a teacher checks for understanding
- During guided practice as a teacher monitors
- During independent practice as students work individually or in cooperative learning groups
- As a teacher works with small groups during class time while other students work independently
- In a tutorial
- In an acceleration class
- As a reassessment

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)** for additional information on grading guidelines.]

## **Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

### **Requirements for a Diploma**

A student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law
- 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
- Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education (SBOE)
- Complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA)

### **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
- U.S. History

A student who does not achieve a sufficient score will have opportunities to retake an assessment.

State law allows a student to meet EOC requirements by substituting satisfactory performance on approved national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities. [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 in the applicable content area. This may require the student's participation outside normal school operating times.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on up to two 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**.]

### ***Foundation Graduation Program***

Every Texas public school student will graduate under the foundation graduation program. The foundation graduation program features endorsements, which are paths of interest that include:

- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)
- Business and Industry
- Public Service
- Arts and Humanities
- Multidisciplinary Studies

Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student's transcript.

A student can complete the foundation graduation program with a "distinguished level of achievement," which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

**Personal Graduation Plans** will be completed for each high school student.

State law generally prohibits a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement. However, after the student's sophomore year, the student and student's parent may request that the student graduate without an endorsement. The district will advise the student and the student's parent of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement. The student and the student's parent must then submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement.

A student who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether graduation under the foundation program without an endorsement will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

A student graduating under the foundation graduation program can also earn performance acknowledgments on their 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 license or certificate recognized at the state, national, or international level. The school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and the district will annually notify a student's parent of this fact. However, not taking Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.

A school district will permit a student to satisfy the curriculum requirements for graduation under the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement, including an endorsement, by successfully completing courses in the core curriculum of a public Texas institution of higher education. Please see your counselor for more information.

### ***Credits Required***

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

<b>Course Area</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement</b>
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social Studies	3	3
Physical Education	1	1
Languages other than English	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Speech	0.5	0.5
Technology	1	1
Electives	4.5	6.5
Total	24 credits	28 credits

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

- **Mathematics:** To obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the 4 mathematics credits. A student's completion of the distinguished level of achievement is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university and will be included on a student's transcript.
- **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.
- **Languages other than English:** Students are required to earn 2 credits in the same language other than English to graduate.
  - A student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits.
  - A student may satisfy one of the 2 required credits by successfully completing in elementary school a dual language immersion program or a course in American Sign Language.
  - 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 which endorsement to pursue upon entering grade 9.

### ***Financial Aid Application Requirement***

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit an application for financial aid for post-secondary education. Students must complete and submit either a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA).

Rockdale High School provides individual counseling support, handouts, parent nights, and online support to help students complete this requirement. Counselors use the Apply Texas Counselor Suite to verify documents have been completed.

A student is not required to complete and submit a FAFSA or TASFA if:

- The student's parent submits a form provided by the district indicating that the parent authorizes the student to opt out
- A student who is 18 years of age or older or a legally independent minor submits a form provided by the district indicating that the student opts out
- A school counselor authorizes the student to opt out for good cause

Please contact the school counselor for more information.



To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA or TASFA, the student must submit one of the following:

- A screenshot that includes the processed date field of the FAFSA ApplyTexas Counselor Suite
- Notification, such as a copy of an email, from the United States Department of Education verifying completion of the FAFSA
- A copy or screenshot of the FAFSA acknowledgment page
- A screenshot of the TASFA submission acknowledgment page (from those institutions that offer an electronic form)
- An acknowledgment receipt from an institution of higher education (IHE)
- A copy of a financial aid award letter from an IHE

### ***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 is a requirement for a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on their rank in class.

The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and the student's parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and their parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that promotes college and workforce readiness, promotes career placement and advancement, and facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The student's personal graduation plan will outline an appropriate course sequence based on the student's choice of endorsement.

Please review [TEA's Graduation Toolkit](https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/tea-brochures) (<https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/tea-brochures>).

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

### **Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs**

Each spring, the district will update students on the courses required or offered in each curriculum area so students can enroll 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.

Not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at their 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 a

course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the district will offer the course the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

### **Certificates of Coursework Completion**

A certificate of coursework completion will 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**

Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees will make instructional and assessment decisions for students with disabilities who receive special education services in accordance with state law.

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

A student who receives special education services may earn an endorsement under the foundation program. If the student's curriculum requirements for the endorsement were modified, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the modified curriculum is sufficiently rigorous to earn the endorsement. The ARD committee must also determine whether the student must perform satisfactorily on any end-of-course assessment to earn an endorsement.

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school but has not met the requirements of their IEP may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. The student may then remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn a high school diploma but will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

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

### **Graduation Activities**

Graduation activities will include:

- Graduation Ceremony
- Graduation Walks at RISD Campuses
- Graduation Recognition in Printed Materials

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on end-of-course assessments or been declared eligible to graduate by an individual graduation committee, if applicable, will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. Keep in mind that participating in the ceremonies is not the same as graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

Students who are eligible to graduate but are assigned to a disciplinary alternative education program at the end of the school year will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities.

Students must also pay for lost textbooks, library fines, lunch room charges, or any other fee incurred while in school to be eligible for graduation exercises. Seniors receive graduation guidelines each year and must adhere to the policies within.

The following students and student groups shall be recognized at graduation ceremonies:

### **Graduation Speakers**

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to speak 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. Only those students who are graduating and who hold one of the following positions of honor based on neutral criteria shall be eligible to use the limited public forum: student council officers, officers of the graduating class, or the two highest academically ranked graduates; however, if the student was assigned to disciplinary placement at any time during the spring semester, he or she will not be eligible to speak at graduation.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. In the event there are more eligible students volunteering than there are speaking roles at the graduation ceremony, the names of all eligible students who volunteered will be randomly drawn. The student whose name is drawn first will give the opening remarks and the student whose name is drawn second will give the closing remarks. In addition to the opening and closing remarks, the student council officers, officers of the graduating class, or the two highest academically ranked graduates may also have speaking roles at the graduation ceremony.

[See the Student Code of Conduct and policy FNA(LOCAL) for more information.]

[See **Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)** for student speakers at other school events.]

### **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 **Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)**.]

### **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, Teach for Texas Grant Program, and Future Texas Teachers Scholarship Program for scholarships and grants

toward tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. Certain students who graduate early may also be eligible for the Texas First Scholarship Program.

[See **College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (All Grade Levels)** for more information.]

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

## **Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)**.]

## **Hazing (All Grade Levels)**

Hazing is defined as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

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

The district will not tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be 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, superintendent, or law enforcement official.

[See **Bullying (All Grade Levels)** and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

## **Health — Physical and Mental**

### **Illness (All Grade Levels)**

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know they will not be attending that day.

State rules require schools to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, a child with a fever over 100 degrees must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. Students with diarrheal

illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without use of diarrhea-suppressing medications for 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 and the school nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

The district is required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from DSHS on these notifiable conditions.

The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether or not their child should stay home.

### **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. You may access the [DSHS exemption form \(https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization/texas-immunization-exemptions\)](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunization-unit/texas-school-child-care-facility-immunization/texas-immunization-exemptions) online or by writing to this address:

Texas Department of State Health Services

Immunization Section, Mail Code 1946

P.O. Box 149347

Austin, Texas 78714-9347

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
- Polio
- Measles, mumps, and rubella
- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Meningococcal
- Hepatitis A

The school nurse can provide information on immunization requirements. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. 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.

For information on immunization against bacterial meningitis and college enrollment and attendance, see **Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)**.

[See the DSHS's [School and Childcare Vaccine Requirements](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school) (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school>) and policy FFAB(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Lice (All Grade Levels)**

Head lice is very common among children. Although not an illness or a disease, head lice spread through head-to-head contact during play, sports, nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones.

The district does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a treatment plan using an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student undergoes one treatment, the parent should contact the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments, how best to get rid of lice, and how to prevent lice from returning.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in an affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

More information on head lice is available on the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school) (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/skilled-procedures-texas-school-health/managing-head-lice-school>) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website [About Head Lice](https://www.cdc.gov/lice/about/head-lice.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/lice/about/head-lice.html>).

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

### **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 their 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 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.

### **Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions**

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if they have written authorization from a parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to their health-care provider and 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.

[See also **Food Allergies (All Grade Levels).**]

### **Unassigned Epinephrine Auto-injectors**

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized school personnel and/or school volunteers who have been adequately trained to administer an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).

An “unassigned epinephrine auto-injector” is an epinephrine auto-injector prescribed by an authorized health-care provider in the name of the school issued with a non-patient-specific standing delegation order for the administration of an epinephrine auto-injector.

Epinephrine auto-injectors include brand-name devices such as EpiPens®.

Authorized and trained individuals may administer an epinephrine auto-injector at any time to a person experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus.

The district will ensure that at each campus a sufficient number of school personnel and/or school volunteers] are trained to administer epinephrine so that at least one trained individual is present on campus during regular on-campus school hours and when school personnel are physically on site for school-sponsored activities.

Authorized and trained individuals may administer an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector to a person experiencing anaphylaxis at an off-campus school event or while in transit to or from a school event when an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector is available.

For additional information, see FFAC(LOCAL).

### **Unassigned Opioid Antagonists All Grades**

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized and trained: school personnel and/or school volunteers] at each campus to administer an opioid antagonist, such as Narcan or Naloxone, to an individual who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

One or more authorized and trained individuals will be present on each campus subject to this policy during regular school hours.

### **Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for physician-prescribed medical use only.

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

### **Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)**

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

- Mental health promotion and early intervention
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community)



- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Positive youth development
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates

Rockdale ISD uses a variety of resources to provide training and support for our students, staff, and families in these areas including:

- Alcohol and Drug Abuse Awareness sessions for staff, students, and parents through the Texas A&M Agri-Life Extension.
- Inappropriate Use of Social Media sessions for staff, students, and parents through the Texas Attorney General's Office
- Staff training in Suicide Awareness, Mental Health, and Child Abuse through the EduHero program from ESC 6.
- Staff training in Trauma Informed Care through the Department of Family Services.
- Implementation of Positive Behavior Intervention Systems district-wide.

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

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

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

For related information, see:

- **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation and Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service** for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information
- **Counseling** for the district's comprehensive school counseling program
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels)** for campus and community mental and physical health resources
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels)** for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health

## **Physical Activity Requirements**

### ***Elementary School***

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, in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

### ***Junior High/Middle School***

The district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters, in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

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

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

### **Physical 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 obtain the results of their child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year by contacting the campus principal.

### **Physical Health Screenings/Examinations**

#### ***Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

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

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

This examination is required in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third years of high school competition. During the alternate years, the student must complete a medical appraisal form, and the results of this appraisal may prompt the district to require a physical examination.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder. A student may request an

electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to the required physical examination.

See the UIL's explanation of [sudden cardiac arrest](https://www.uilTEXAS.org/health/info/sudden-cardiac-death) (<https://www.uilTEXAS.org/health/info/sudden-cardiac-death>) for more information.

### ***Spinal Screening Program***

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature at an early stage when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted in accordance with the most recent nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.

For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, contact the superintendent or see policy FFAA(LEGAL).

## **Special Health Concerns (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)***

Please see the district's website at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net) for information regarding meningitis.

**Note:** 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 (All Grade Levels)**.]

### ***Diabetes***

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) for more information.]

### ***Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)***

Parents should notify the district when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by breathing, eating, or touching 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, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies at Risk for Anaphylaxis found on the DSHS [Allergies and Anaphylaxis](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/allergies-anaphylaxis) website (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/texas-school-health/allergies-anaphylaxis>).

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, an individual care plan will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at [Regulations Resource Manual](#) policy FAF.

[See **Celebrations (All Grade Levels)** and policy FFAF for more information.]

### ***Seizures (All Grade Levels)***

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder. A parent who submits a plan must use the [Seizure Management and Treatment Plan Form](https://tea.texas.gov/academics/tea-seizure-management-form.pdf) (<https://tea.texas.gov/academics/tea-seizure-management-form.pdf>) developed by the Texas Education Agency.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** and contact the school nurse for more information.]

### **Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, and Nicotine Products Prohibited (All Grade Levels)**

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. With limited exceptions for medication, [see **Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)**] students are also prohibited from possessing or using any type of nicotine product, including nicotine pouches, regardless of whether the product contains tobacco, while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

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

## **Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures**

### **Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels)**

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

- The full-time nurses:

- District RN and Rockdale Intermediate School Nurse, Keari Spence, at 512-430-6200
- Rockdale High School Nurse Cheri Garner at 512-430-6140
- Rockdale Junior High Nurse Bailey Reynolds at 512-430-6100
- Rockdale Elementary School Nurse Erin Magee at 512-430-6030
- The full-time school counselor:
  - Rockdale High School Julia Engelmann and Anna Bayer 512-430-6140
  - Rockdale Junior High Rebecca Ingram 512-430-6100
  - Rockdale Intermediate School Kimberly Ransom 512-430-6200
  - Rockdale Elementary School Julie Hutton 512-430-6030
- The local public health authority, Milam County Health Department, which may be contacted at 254-697-7039.
- The local mental health authority, Central Counties Services in Cameron, which may be contacted at 254-298-7000 or at <https://centralcountiesservices.org/>.

### **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels)**

The district has adopted board policies that promote student physical and mental health. Local policies on the topics below can be found in the district's policy manual, available at the district administration office and online at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net)

- Food and nutrition management: CO, COA, COB
- Wellness and Health Services: FFA
- Physical Examinations: FFAA
- Immunizations: FFAB
- Medical Treatment: FFAC
- Communicable Diseases: FFAD
- School-Based Health Centers: FFAE
- Care Plans: FFAF
- Crisis Intervention: FFB
- Trauma-informed Care: FFBA
- Student Support Services: FFC
- Student Safety: FFF
- Child Abuse and Neglect: FFG
- Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation: the FFH series of policies
- Freedom from Bullying: FFI

In addition, the District Improvement Plan details the district's strategies to improve student performance through evidence-based practices that address physical and mental health.

- Alcohol and drug abuse awareness sessions for staff, students, and parents
- Inappropriate Use of Social Media sessions for staff, students, and parents through the Texas Attorney General's Office

- Staff training in Suicide Awareness, Mental Health, and Child Abuse through the EduHero program from ESC 6.
- Staff training in Trauma Informed Care through the Department of Family Services.
- Implementation of Capturing Kids Hearts district-wide;
- Positive Behavior Supports strategies at all campuses;
- District and Campus Threat Assessment Teams
- School Health Advisory Committee

The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

For more information about these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan, please contact:

Kathy Pelzel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla Rockdale, TX 76567

[kpelzel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:kpelzel@rockdaleisd.net)

512-430-6000

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

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 4 meetings. Additional information about the district's SHAC is available from Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent [tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net) or 512-430-6000

Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings will be posted at each campus administrative office at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings and meeting minutes will be posted on the district website at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net)

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction, Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**, and policies BDF and EHAA. For more information.]

### **Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)**

To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it. For questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan, please contact:

Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

[tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net)

## **Homework (All Grade Levels)**

Teachers assign homework to extend and enrich learning opportunities for students. District guidelines have been established for the effective use of homework to enhance the instructional objectives. In addition, each grade level has developed a homework policy specific to the needs and abilities of the students they are teaching. These homework guidelines and policies will be sent home with the student at the beginning of the school year and will outline grading and due date procedures.

Parents of students who are absent from school may desire to pick up assignments for their children when the child is absent for three or more days. Requests for assignments received by noon on the third day will be prepared for pick up by the end of the school day.

## **Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)**

### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including without parental consent, if necessary, if it 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 the student at school
- Ordinarily make reasonable efforts to notify the parents, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection
- Ordinarily be present for the questioning or interview, 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 legally authorized person, the principal will verify the person's identity and, to the best of their ability, will verify the person's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will attempt to notify the parent, unless the legally 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 legally authorized person, 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 has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

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

### **Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)**

Student attendance is crucial. Appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible. Except for extenuating circumstances, students will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

Parental consent is required before any student leaves campus for any part of the school day.

For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or authorized adult must come to the office and show identification to sign the student out. A campus representative will ask the student to report to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow any unescorted adult to go to the classroom or other area 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.



The same process applies to students in high school if a parent picks the student up from campus. If the student's parent authorizes the student to leave campus unaccompanied, the parent must submit a note to the main office at least two hours before the student needs to leave campus. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note for documentation purposes. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon return if the student returns the same day.

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 the parent directs district personnel to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures listed above. If a student is permitted by their parent to leave campus unaccompanied, 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.

If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may sign out of school. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

### **During Lunch**

All Rockdale ISD campuses are closed campuses during lunch. Students will not be allowed to be taken out of class early to go to lunch. Parents wishing to sign their student out for lunch must do so in person. Phone calls for this purpose will not be accepted. Students must be checked out through the front office.

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

### **Makeup Work**

#### **Makeup Work Because of Absence (All Grade Levels)**

A teacher may assign makeup work to a student who misses class based on instructional objectives and the needs of the student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or meeting subject or course requirements.

The student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work within the time specified by the teacher. 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.

The student is encouraged to speak with the teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school. With limited exceptions, all absences count for the 90 percent threshold set in state law regarding attendance for credit or final grade. [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels).**]

A student Involved In an extracurricular activity must notify teachers ahead of time about any absences.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and 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/Junior High School Grade Levels***

Elementary students placed in DAEP will receive assignments from the campus and all work will be monitored by campus staff. A monitor will be sent with the student throughout the assignment.

Junior High students placed in DAEP will work through core curriculum through Edgenuity. Work for any classes that are not provided through Edgenuity will be provided by the campus teacher.

### ***Grades 9-12***

If a high school student is enrolled in a foundation curriculum course at the time of removal to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), the student will have an opportunity to complete the course before the beginning of the next school year. 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) for more information.]

## **In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Alternative Means to Receive Coursework***

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

### ***Opportunity to Complete Courses***

A student removed from the regular classroom to ISS 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) for more information.]

### **Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

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

The district's nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures are in the FFH series of policies in the district's policy manual, available at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net)

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment:

Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

[tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net)

(512) 430-6000

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described in the FFH series of policies.

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

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator:

Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net

512-430-6000

- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see:

Denise Monzingo, Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

dmonzingo@rockdaleisd.net

512-430-6000

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

## **Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)**

### **Working Together**

Experience and research tell us that a child succeeds in education with good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. A parent's involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day 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.**]
- 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 RES (512) 430-6030, RIS (512) 430-6200, RJH (512) 430-6100, RHS (512) 430-6140 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during their conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels).**]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [See **Volunteers (All Grade Levels)** and policy GKG for more information.]

- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) and various Booster Clubs.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees that develop educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For more information, see policies BQA and BQB and contact:

Kathy Pelzel, Assistant Superintendent

520 W. Davilla, Rockdale, TX 76567

kpelzel@rockdaleisd.net

512-430-6000

- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and assisting the district in aligning local community values with health education instruction, human sexuality instruction, instruction on prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, and other wellness issues. [**See School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels)** and policies BDF, EHAA, FFA for more information.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contact school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular board meetings are held on the third Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at the Rockdale ISD Conference Center. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting at 1205 Murray Avenue in Rockdale and online at [RISD Board Meetings](#). [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

### **Parking and Parking Permits (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A student must present a valid driver's license and proof of insurance, and in compliance with the district drug-testing procedures to be eligible for a parking permit.

Students must request a parking permit and pay \$10.00 to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits may be issued throughout the year. Seniors have the opportunity to purchase a parking spot to paint for \$50.00 following the established criteria provided by the campus principal.

Students without a permit are not allowed to park within 300 feet of RISD property.

Students will not be permitted to:

- Speed
- Double-park
- Park across a white or yellow line

- Park in a fire lane
- Sit in parked cars during school hours

Park in your assigned space. Keep your car within the parking area outline. Do not overlap and take up two parking spaces.

Rockdale ISD and local law enforcement can ticket students for illegal parking on campus.

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these rules. The district may tow cars that are parked in violation of these rules.

### **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.**]

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 in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, at the beginning of the first class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day.

[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 school activities. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

### **Promotion and Retention**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or proficiency. In making promotion decisions, the district will consider the following:

- Teacher recommendation
- Grades
- Scores on criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments
- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district

## **Elementary and Middle/Junior High Grade Levels**

Mastery of English Language Arts (Reading, Language, Spelling), Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science TEKS are evaluated with the use of a Standards Based Report Card.

Mastery will be communicated with a standards-based scale of 1- 4 with a 1 indicating the student has little understanding of a concept and cannot demonstrate any mastery of it.

As students learn and progress, they can demonstrate partial mastery and score a 2. Once they meet a target, they score a 3. The 4s are reserved for students who exceed the learning target.

In grades 2-8, 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 three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. A student must also attend 90% of the days school is in session.

### **Repeating Pre Kindergarten Or Kindergarten-Grade 8 at Parent Request**

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any grade in grade 1-8. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

## **High School Grade Levels**

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-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 (Grades 9-12 Only)**.]

### **Repeating a High-School Credit Course**

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat a high-school credit course in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year unless the district determines that the student has met all requirements for graduation.

Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Only the student's first passing grade will be included in the calculation of class ranking.

## **Release of Students from School**

[See **Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)**.]

## **Remote Instruction**

The district may offer remote instruction in accordance with TEA guidelines.

All district policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and other expectations of student behavior will be enforced as applicable in a remote or virtual learning environment.

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

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every 6 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in any course/subject area is near or below 70 or is below the expected level of performance. If a student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be asked to schedule a conference with the teacher. [See **Working Together** for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy. Grading guidelines are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment. 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 **Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)** and policy EIA(LOCAL) for more information.]

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.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 7 days. The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature will be accepted by the district, but parents are entitled to request a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

## **Retaliation**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)**.]

## **Required State Assessments**

### **STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) for 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
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8



### **Standardized Testing for a Student Enrolled Above Grade Level**

If a student in grades 3-8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above the 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 they are enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grades 3-8 shall be assessed at least once in high school with the ACT or the SAT if the student completes the high school end-of-course assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, or science before high school.

### **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 is required for graduation, unless 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. The windows occur in the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have opportunities to retake the assessment.

### **Requesting Administration of STAAR/EOC in Paper Format (All Grade Levels)**

STAAR and EOC assessments are administered electronically.

A parent or teacher may request that a STAAR or EOC be administered to a student in paper format. The district may grant this request for any single administration for up to three percent of the number of students enrolled in the district. Requests will be granted in the order in which they are received.

Requests for paper format for a fall administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than September 15 each school year.

Requests for paper format for a spring administration of a STAAR or EOC must be submitted no later than December 1 each school year.

### **Standardized Testing for a Student in Special Programs**

Certain students — some with disabilities and some classified as emergent bilingual students — may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing.

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.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student in grades 9-12 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 (PGP). [See **Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**.] STAAR Spanish is available for eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

### **Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC Assessment**

If a student does not perform satisfactorily on a required state assessment in any subject, the district will provide accelerated instruction for the student in the next school year through one of the following:

- Assigning the student to a teacher who is certified as a master, exemplary, or recognized teacher if one is available in the grade and subject matter of the state assessment on which the student did not perform satisfactorily
- Providing supplemental instruction

A student may be required to attend any assigned supplemental instruction program before or after school or during the summer.

When a student fails to perform satisfactorily on a required state assessment in the same subject area for two or more years, the district shall develop an accelerated education plan. Parents are encouraged to participate in developing this plan.

### **Personal Graduation Plan —Junior High School Students**

For a junior high-school student who does not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated examination, a school official will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP).

School officials will also develop a PGP for a junior high-school student who is determined by the district to be unlikely to earn a high school diploma within five years of high school enrollment.

The plan will, among other items:

- Identify the student's educational goals
- Address the parent's educational expectations for the student
- Outline an intensive instruction program for the student

[See the school counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL) for more information.]

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.

[See **Personal Graduation Plans** for information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students.]

## **Safety (All Grade Levels)**

Student safety on campus, at school-related events, and in district vehicles is a high priority of the district. 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 all behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by district employees.
- Help secure the campus by keeping all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless the door is actively monitored by a district employee.
- Follow instructions from teachers and other district employees regarding classroom doors.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member, and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by submitting a QuickTip at [www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net)
- 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.

## **Accident Insurance**

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

## **Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs**

The district may purchase accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students and businesses involved in the district's CTE programs.

## **Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

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

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

The district will offer instruction in CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED) at least once to students enrolled in grades 7-12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR or AED certification.

The district will annually offer students in grades 7-12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Stop the Bleed Texas](https://stopthebleedtexas.org/) (<https://stopthebleedtexas.org/>).

## **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

All parents are asked each year to complete a medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs. Parents should contact the school nurse to update emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, and the like).

The district may consent to medical treatment, including dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if all of the following requirements are met:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent
- That person cannot be contacted
- That person has not given the district actual notice to the contrary

The emergency care authorization form will be used by the district when a student's parent or authorized designee cannot be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.

Regardless of parental authorization for the district to consent to medical treatment, district employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation.

## **Emergency School Closing Information**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information if the district needs to notify parents of early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to a campus because of severe weather, a security threat, or another emergency cause.

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. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes.

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:

- Post on the district social media accounts and website
- Use ParentSquare notifications
- Radio – KRXT-Rockdale; KMIL-Cameron; KVET/KASE-Austin
- Television – KCEN-Temple; KWTX-Waco; KVUE-Austin; KTBC-Austin; KXXV- Waco

[See **Parent Contact Information** and **Automated Emergency Communications**.]

## **SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests**

[See **Standardized Testing**.]

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

High School students and parents are given the opportunity to request classes during the spring semester of the prior year. Schedules are then available before school starts. Schedule changes can be requested during the first week of the fall and spring semesters. Schedule changes may not be granted as enrollment in classes is determined by staffing and class availability. Priority for scheduling is given to juniors and seniors. All schedule changes are subject to the approval of the campus principal. Schedule change forms are available in the campus office.

Junior High School students and parents are given the opportunity to request classes during the spring semester of the prior year. Schedules are then available before school starts. Schedule changes can be requested during the first week of the fall semester.

## **School Facilities**

### **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 central administrative office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact the district's designated asbestos coordinator:

Cody Dudley, Maintenance Director

PO Box 632, Rockdale, TX 76567

[cdudley@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:cdudley@rockdaleisd.net)

(512) 430-6020

### **Food and Nutrition 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.

[See policy CO for more information.]

### **Menus**

A printed menu is posted on the campus websites at the beginning of the month that includes all meals served throughout the month. The menu is posted on the District's web site:

[www.rockdaleisd.net](http://www.rockdaleisd.net), published in the Rockdale Reporter each week, and announced on the radio each morning. Campuses announce menus and any changes so that students can readily know what is being offered each day. Nutritional information about the food offerings are available to parents upon request.

### **Community Eligibility Program**

All Rockdale ISD students are eligible for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Schools qualifying to operate the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provide breakfast and lunch to all children at no charge.

Although all students receive free meals, this does not eliminate the need for families to complete the paperwork necessary to justify participation in these meal programs. These applications are a part of our funding system and are used to determine the amount of state and federal funds our campuses receive. Your support in getting this information back to your child's campus immediately is appreciated. Please make sure paperwork is turned in no later than September 27, 2024.

For additional information, contact:

Julie Cortez

Food Service Administrative Assistant

512-430-6200

[jcortez@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:jcortez@rockdaleisd.net)

Parents should continually monitor their child's meal account balance. When a student's meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student may continue to purchase meals according to the grace period set by the school board. The district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance and an application for free or reduced meals.

If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

The following information is published as required by the USDA for participation in the National School Lunch Program:

"In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

"Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

“To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant’s name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

**1. mail:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

**2. fax:**

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

**3. email:**

[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”

The responsible state agency that administers the program is the [Texas Department of Agriculture](https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us) (<https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Home/Contact-Us>), which can be reached at (800) TELL-TDA (835-5832) or (800) 735-2989 (TTY).

The local agency that administers the program is the district. [See **Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)** for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator, ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and superintendent for other concerns about discrimination.]

***Vending Machines (All Grade Levels)***

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies for food service, including guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information about these policies and guidelines, see Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent [tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:tiffany.whitsel@rockdaleisd.net) 512-430-6000. [See policy FFA for more information.]

**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, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to 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 questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the district's IPM coordinator:

Cody Dudley, Maintenance Director

PO Box 632, Rockdale, TX 76567

[cdudley@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:cdudley@rockdaleisd.net)

(512) 430-6000

### **Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities. Whether a school activity is on or off district premises, students must follow the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day. Misbehavior 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.

### **Library (All Grade Levels)**

The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit:

The library at each campus is open for students each school day:

RES: 7:45 am – 3:00 pm

RIS: 7:45 am – 3:15 pm

RJH/RHS: 8:15 am – 4:30 pm

The library is open during afterschool programs based on the program schedule. Each class at the elementary and intermediate campus has a scheduled weekly library time.

The district provides a wide range of library materials for students and faculty that support student achievement and present varying levels of difficulty, diversity of appeal, and a variety of points of view. The district follows the Texas State Library and Archive Commission's standards for school library collection development.

Parents are the primary decision makers regarding their student's access to library material. The district encourages parental involvement in library acquisition, maintenance, and campus activities. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the campus principal and their child's teacher about special considerations regarding library materials self-selected by their student.



A parent who wants access to the school's library or any available online catalog should submit a request to the principal.

The district welcomes student and parent feedback on library materials and services. Parents may contact the campus principal. A district employee or parent may request the reconsideration of a library material by contacting the campus principal or superintendent or by submitting a reconsideration of library material request on a form available in the District's administrative office.

For more information, see EFB(LOCAL).

### **Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)**

During class times, loitering or standing in the halls is not permitted, and 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.

### **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.

Students must leave campus immediately after dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless the student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult.

### **Meetings of Non Curriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

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

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

### **School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)**

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

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip. The school district must require a parent to affirm in writing whether a child younger than 12 years of age is able to swim or is at risk of injury or death before the child may participate in any organized water activity in a body of water.

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

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip that is not required as part of a basic educational program or course to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. [See **Fees (All Grade Levels)** for more information.]

The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

## **Searches and Investigations**

### **Searches in General (All Grade Levels)**

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches and investigations.

District officials may conduct investigations in accordance with law and district policy and may question students regarding a student's own conduct or the conduct of others. [For questioning of students by law enforcement officials, see **Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)**.]

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

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

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

### **District Property (All Grade Levels)**

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in district property.

Students are responsible for any item found in district property provided to the student that is prohibited by law, district policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)**

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

### **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 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 **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)** and policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)**

The district may use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

### **Drug Testing (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

Rockdale Independent School District believes that any student who represents Rockdale ISD Schools, the community of Rockdale, their classmates, and their families has an obligation to perform at the highest level of their ability and to behave in a manner that casts a positive light on everyone and everything they represent. Implementing this program is intended to send a message to the students that we do care about them as individuals and what they do to their bodies.

The drug testing program requires that any student in grades 9-12 desiring to participate in any District extracurricular program, co-curricular programs, and/or park on district property or within 300 feet of district property consent to mandatory random drug testing as described in this

document. It is the consensus of the District that these students should be free of drugs or mood-altering chemicals as well.

This program also allows any student in the school district to participate in the drug testing program if parental consent is provided.

#### ***Process***

All students in grades 9-12 who participate in the extracurricular program will be subjected to mandatory random drug testing throughout the school year and will be required to provide the District with written consent signed by both the student and parent/guardian. The vendor used by the District operates a non-regulated laboratory and works in conjunction with three Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) certified laboratories to administer drug testing. The vendor will determine the students to be tested for each testing occurrence by use of a computerized method that ensures randomization. Under no

circumstances will human interference be allowed to alter the randomized nature of student selection. The percentage of students tested during each random sampling can represent up to 15% of the student testing population. Results from the testing laboratory will be available no later than 4:00 p.m. on the third day after samples are collected.

### ***List of Extracurricular Activities Requiring Drug Testing***

Students who participate in extracurricular activities/organizations, co-curricular activities/organizations, or desire to park on RISD property or within 300 feet of district property in grades 9-12 will be required to participate in Rockdale ISD's mandatory drug testing program. These activities include but are not limited to:

- All UIL extracurricular activities, including Academic, Music, and Athletics
- Band-Marching, Concert
- Cheerleading
- Golden Girls
- Future Farmers of America
- Health Occupations Student Association
- Spanish National Honor Society
- Spanish Club
- Art National Honor Society
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Peer Assisted Leadership Students
- Prom / Homecoming/Dances
- National Honor Society / National Junior Honor Society
- Parking on district property or within 300 feet of district property
- Rotary Interact
- Student Council
- Skills USA
- Texas High School Welding Series

### ***Urinalysis Drug Testing Procedures***

Random Selection:

The District shall provide the approved vendor with a list of all identified testing pool participants. Students shall be chosen for testing by a federally approved computer-based random number generator that is matched with students' student ID numbers, first and last names, or designations as per District Policy.

- a) The vendor will collaborate with Rockdale ISD on choosing screening dates approved by the district. Randomly selected dates will not conflict with holidays, Federal, State or local student assessment dates.
- b) It is understood that all students listed on the testing pool are eligible for unannounced drug testing throughout the year in an objective, random selection process. To assure that this process is random, all eligible students, whether or not they have been chosen

for testing in the past, will remain in the pool of students for each subsequent selection period unless otherwise specified by the District.

- c) Rockdale ISD will provide the approved vendor with updated student information as follows: When new students come into the District or leave the District, the approved vendor will be notified via email, phone call or U.S. Postal Service. This practice will assure that students on the monthly list are accurate and always up to date.

#### Collection of Samples:

- a) Each student shall provide a urine sample in a restroom or other private facility. Facilities shall be secure, with only one student testing at a time, to assure security and confidentiality for each student.
- b) The urine sample shall be collected in a sealed split specimen collection container provided by the vendor. The student shall provide the collected sample to the testing laboratory representative and the assigned District official shall confirm that the student's identification information on the sample is correct. The split specimen container shall be sealed by the vendor's representative and witnessed by the student. The vendor's representative shall transport all collected specimens directly to the laboratory for analysis.
- c) The vendor will use the laboratory split sample method in accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- d) The vendor will provide only same sex observation collections if necessitated per District Policy.
- e) A copy of the specimen collection and chain-of-custody procedures used by the District and Compliance Consortium Corporation shall be made available to any parent or student upon request

#### Documentation and Reporting:

The approved vendor will process all documentation and submit completed reports within 72 hours. All reporting will be submitted to the appropriate campus administrator of the Rockdale ISD. Date of the receipt of the completed reports of positive testing will determine the onset of the appropriate period of suspension.

#### ***Consequences for Positive Test***

No action shall be taken by the school against a student with a positive test result other than suspension from participating in extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and/or ability to park vehicles on school property. No school-related privileges will be withdrawn from students who are not participating in extracurricular activities, but choose to participate in the District's drug testing program by parental consent.

The results of any drug or alcohol test shall not be given to law enforcement authorities, and shall not be used for any disciplinary purposes other than as specified within this policy.

If a positive test results in a suspension in excess of the number of days remaining in the school year, the suspension period will run until the later of the last instructional day or the last

extracurricular activity. Any remaining suspension time shall continue, beginning with the earlier of the first instructional day or the first extracurricular activity of the following school year.

An initial positive test shall be confirmed by a second test of the same specimen before being reported as positive.

## **Consequences**

### **First Offense**

The first confirmed positive test will result in the following consequences:

- Notice to the student's parent or other person having lawful control of the student;
- A conference between the campus principal, parent or other person having lawful control of the student, and the student, with the coach or sponsor of the student's extracurricular activity and the school counselor in attendance, if appropriate, and as determined by the campus principal; and
- The student or parent shall have 15 school days following the meeting to provide a medical explanation for a positive result. Medical explanations / documentation must be provided by a duly licensed physician, dentist, or other medical practitioner licensed to issue prescriptions. Upon acceptance of the medical explanation, the offense is negated. In the event of a positive subsequent test, the offense is again considered to be the First Offense and the student or parent shall again have 15 school days following the meeting to provide a medical explanation.
- The student must agree to mandatory testing during the all following random periods.
- The student shall be suspended from competition and/or public appearances in any
- extracurricular activity and school-sponsored organization, and shall not be eligible to park on District property or within 300 feet of district property for 15 (fifteen) school days from the date that the school district is first informed of the confirmed positive test results. During the period of suspension, the student will also not be permitted to participate in any practices.
- The student must participate in an approved substance abuse program and receive a certificate of completion. Failure to attend will result in ineligibility until the program has been completed. A list of approved programs will be provided by the school district. Any programs not on the approved list will be subject to review.

### **Second Offense**

- Upon a second offense, the student shall be suspended from competition and/or public appearances in any extracurricular activity and school-sponsored organization, and shall not be eligible to park on District property or within 300 feet of district property for 60 (sixty) school days from the date that the school district is first informed of the confirmed positive

- test results. During the period of suspension, the student will also not be permitted to participate in any practices.
- The student must again participate in an approved substance abuse program and receive a certificate of completion. Failure to attend will result in ineligibility until the program has been completed. A list of approved programs will be provided by the school district. Any programs not on the approved list will be subject to review.

### **Third Offense**

- Upon a third offense, the student shall be suspended from competition and/or public appearances in any extracurricular activity and school-sponsored organization, and shall not be eligible to park on District property or within 300 feet of district property for a period of 1 (one) calendar year from the date that the school district is first informed of the confirmed positive test results. During the period of suspension, the student will also not be permitted to participate in any practices. Students will not be allowed to complete or tryout for future offices, positions, or team/squad memberships during the 12-month suspension.
- The student must again participate in an approved substance abuse program and receive a certificate of completion. Failure to attend will result in ineligibility until the program has been completed. A list of approved programs will be provided by the school district. Any programs not on the approved list will be subject to review.

### **Fourth Offense**

- Upon a fourth offense, the student shall be banned from participation in any extracurricular activities, school-sponsored organizations, and shall not be eligible to park on District property or within 300 feet of district property for the remainder of their enrollment at Rockdale ISD.

### **Appeal**

- The parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal for a third retest of the original sample. The laboratory conducting the retest must be certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The cost of the retest shall be at the expense of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal the consequences of a positive test as outlined in board policy FNG (legal) and FNG (local). Any consequences imposed will remain in effect during the appeal.
- Nothing in this policy limits or prohibits the application of other District policy, including the District Student Code of Conduct, regarding student possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol on school property or at school activities or events.

### **Confidentiality**

Testing results shall be kept confidential and disclosed only to the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), and school officials designated by the Superintendent. Confidentiality shall be maintained at all levels. Results shall not be placed in the student's permanent record.

### ***Refusal to Submit to Drug Testing***

Students who are selected for drug-testing and refuse to participate will be treated as if they received a positive result and their parent/legal guardian shall be notified. The refusal shall result in immediate suspension from extracurricular activities/organizations, co-curricular activities/organizations, and parking privileges on or within 300 feet of the school. Students must comply with the appropriate consequences, depending on previous positive results and corresponding offense level, prior to regaining eligibility for these activities. The student will be subject to all subsequent drug tests for the remainder of their enrollment at Rockdale ISD.

### ***Request for removal from program***

After a refusal, a parent/legal guardian can request that their student be removed from the drug- testing program with the understanding that their child will lose all privileges associated with it for the remainder of their enrollment in Rockdale ISD including; participation in extracurricular activities/organizations, co-curricular activities/organizations, and parking privileges on or within 300 feet of the school. The student will no longer participate in any subsequent drug tests.

A student seeking reinstatement at any time during the remainder of their enrollment at Rockdale ISD must have completed the suspension term for a positive test result, depending on previous positive test results and corresponding offense level. Once this term is completed and another permission slip has been submitted to the principal, the student will be reinstated immediately and allowed to participate in extracurricular activities/organizations, co-curricular activities/organizations, and parking privileges on or within 300 feet of the school. The student will be subject to all subsequent drug tests for the remainder of their enrollment at Rockdale ISD. A second refusal by a student will result in permanent removal from the drug-testing program.

The district's policy FNF(LOCAL) addresses board authorization for drug testing of students as described in the policy, but specifics of the drug-testing program should be addressed in administrative regulations, such as this handbook or your extracurricular conduct guide.

[See **Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**.]

### **Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

### **Sexual Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)**.]



## Special Programs (All Grade Levels)

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, emergent bilingual students, 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:

- Dyslexia: Rachael Barker at [rbarker@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:rbarker@rockdaleisd.net), 512-430-6140
- Emergent Bilingual: Dell Giles at [dgiles@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:dgiles@rockdaleisd.net), 512-430-6000
- Special Education: Burleson Milam Special Services at 512-455-7801
- Migrant, homeless, or foster care: Kristi Moreland at [kmoreland@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:kmoreland@rockdaleisd.net), 512-430-6000

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's [Talking Book Program](https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html) (<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/tbp/index.html>) provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

## Standardized Testing

### 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. These assessments are usually taken at the end of the junior year. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to learn about these assessments and determine the appropriate examination to take. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT.

**Note:** These assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance acknowledgment on the student's 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 TSI assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that first-year students need to perform effectively as undergraduates in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may also be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

### **Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)**

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: student assemblies at which students are allowed to publicly speak and co-curricular and extracurricular student assemblies and banquets. At the high school and junior high, students are eligible to introduce these events if they are in the highest two grades, volunteer, 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 their name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

[See **Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies and policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities.]

### **Summer School (All Grade Levels)**

Summer school will be offered to students who do not meet the promotion requirements of the grade they completed. A letter is sent to the parents in the spring informing them that their child should attend summer school and that promotion may be contingent upon successfully completing the summer school session.

A student in grades 3–8 will be required to attend an assigned accelerated instruction program, which may be offered during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and applicable subject area.

Students in high school will be required to attend an assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state EOC assessment.

Students in high school will have the opportunity to recover credit in summer school. Instruction will include computer assisted instruction and direct teaching.

Students must adhere to student code of conduct and attendance policies.

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

Instructional materials are any resources used in classroom instruction as part of the required curriculum, such as textbooks, workbooks, computer software, or online services.

The district selects instructional materials in accordance with state law and policy EFA.

The district provides approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat instructional materials with care, as directed by the teacher.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is 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.

[For information on library books and other resources students may access voluntarily, see **Library (All Grade Levels)**.]

### **Transfers (All Grade Levels)**

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

The superintendent is authorized to investigate and approve transfers between schools.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments, Bullying (All Grade Levels)**, and **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**, for other transfer options.]

### **Transportation (All Grade Levels)**

#### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for their child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. [See **School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)**.]

#### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school and to any students who are experiencing homelessness. This service is provided at no cost to students.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually. Any changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the driver and all passengers, students must board district vehicles only at authorized stops and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

The district has identified some of the areas below where hazardous traffic conditions exist for students who live within two miles of the campus. Because students in these areas might encounter hazardous traffic conditions when walking to and from school, the district will provide transportation to these students.

#### **Eligibility for Regular Student Transportation**

Bus transportation will be offered to the following students: For all grade levels:

- Students living more than two miles from their school.
- Students coming from Cordova Drive and further north, having to walk down Wilcox;

- Students living on either side of FM 908, from Cordova to San Andres, having to walk along FM 908;
- Students living on the east side of FM 908, having to cross FM 908; and,
- Students living south of Highway 79, having to cross Highway 79.

For students attending Rockdale Intermediate School:

- Students having to cross or travel along Highway 79.

For students attending Rockdale Elementary School:

- Students living in the neighborhoods to the west of the Junior High School and/or the High School will receive transportation at predetermined neighborhood stops

For additional information, please contact Robert Hunter, Transportation Director at [rhunter@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:rhunter@rockdaleisd.net) or 512-430-6020 ext.1212.

## **Bus Routes and Stops**

### **Route Design**

Bus routes are created to enhance student safety while maximizing vehicle efficiency. Bus stops are created to allow students to wait off the main roadway for the bus if at all possible. Stops are also created to minimize students walking in highly traveled roadways for long distances without sidewalks. Stops are not placed on dead end streets whenever possible to minimize bus accidents while reversing (Reversing is a very dangerous maneuver for a school bus). Stops are spread apart to decrease the number of stops each bus will make on its route and to minimize the riding time for the students.

Students may be required to walk up to 1/4th of a mile to a bus stop. Bus routes are designed to limit student ride time to no more than one and one-half hour one-way if possible. Students will be assigned to bus stops closest to their location. Parents or guardians are responsible for providing safe delivery to and from the bus stop.

### **Daily Service Criteria**

Bus stops in rural and city areas that do not have riders for 3 consecutive days may be discontinued for lack of ridership. Infrequent riders should contact the Transportation Department if their bus stop has not been utilized for 3 or more days and if they are concerned that the bus stop has been suspended. Their stop may be continued or the students may be asked to board at another established stop.

Bus riders will only be dropped off at their assigned stop. Families will be able to designate a consistent alternate assigned stop for Wednesday early release. Bus passes will not be available and parents may not call campuses to change the drop off location. Changes can cause confusion for students and drivers, resulting in students being left unattended. Families will need to plan for children to be picked up from school or for someone to be at their assigned

location to receive them. Students returned to campus will receive a bus referral, which could result in loss of riding privileges.

A parent may designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated location must be an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, contact Transportation at 512-430-6020.

Buses on rural routes sometimes have to drive a considerable distance to a remote location. If your student does not need morning transportation on occasion and you are in a remote area, it is greatly appreciated if the parent or guardian would call the Transportation Department (512-430-6020) or email [risdbus@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:risdbus@rockdaleisd.net) and let them know about days when transportation is not needed.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- 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, including loss of the privilege to ride in a district vehicle.

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

### **Boarding School Buses after School**

Students should board school buses at their campus loading zone. Any student leaving their campus to board at another campus without approval by an administrator will be in violation of bus rules, and will be written up on a bus referral form.

If a student misses the bus at their campus, the student should notify an administrator immediately. Students who miss the bus without a legitimate reason will be subject to disciplinary action.

### ***Bus Conduct***

#### **Pick Up and Departure**

Bus drivers attempt to arrive at every bus stop on time. However, many factors affect this, including weather, traffic, and the number of students riding on the bus on a particular day. Students are expected to arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes prior to the scheduled arrival time. Buses will load students and depart the stop as quickly as possible. Regular buses do not wait for late students under most circumstances.

Students need to be standing at the bus stop when the bus arrives, both for in-town routes and rural routes. Otherwise, the driver may assume there are no riders and continue on the route.

Buses depart from school promptly in the afternoon. Students are expected to proceed immediately to the buses after school. Bus drivers are instructed not to stop or open the door for late students due to the safety concern of having students too close to moving bus wheels.

See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

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

#### **Conduct at Bus Stops**

1. Be on the correct side of the road when the bus arrives.
2. Stand back from the edge of the road 6' because, when possible, the bus will pull off the side of the roadway.
3. Wait until the bus has stopped, and the door is open completely with the red loading lights activated, before proceeding to board the bus.

#### **Conduct on the Bus**

1. Be seated as soon as possible and remain in assigned seated until your stop.
2. Food, drinks, candy or gum may not be consumed on the bus.
3. Water is permissible on the bus if the container is not open and subject to spillage.
4. Remain quiet on the bus; talk should be limited to normal conversation
5. Do not put your head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
6. Observe all usual classroom rules.

7. Never use the rear door to enter or exit the bus except in an emergency.
8. Keep books, packages, coats and all other objects out of the aisles.
9. Students may use technology devices on school buses during the bus ride as long as use does not cause a disruption to the driver. Due to privacy concerns, students may not take pictures of other students or employees without written consent.

### **Conduct Loading and Unloading**

1. Step on and off quickly, quietly, without crowding, pushing or shoving.
2. When crossing the roadway, cross at least ten feet in front of the bus.
3. When you are not crossing the road, move at least 15 feet away from the bus before stopping.
4. Watch the traffic at all times, wait for the driver to motion you across the roadway

### **Prohibited Items**

Students may not transport:

1. Projects, band instruments and other objects too large for the student to hold safely or store under the seat;
2. Live animals, insect or dangerous objects of any nature; and,
3. Glass containers.

### **Cell phones on Buses**

Students are allowed to use cell phones on the school bus as long as it does not become a distraction or disturbance. Headphones must be used unless the volume is muted. Cell phones should not be passed around the bus and should stay with the owner at all times.

Students who allow their cell phones to become a distraction or disruption on the school bus will be asked to put the phone away. Failure to do so may result in the cell phone being confiscated. Parents will then be required to pick up the cell phone at the Transportation Department during normal hours of operation (7am-5pm).

### **Consequences**

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.

The following general guidelines will be followed. However, the principal will change the consequences depending on the seriousness of the disciplinary problem

- 1st offense Warning (depending on behavior)
- 2nd offense 5 days removal
- 3rd offense 10 days removal

- 4th offense 30 days removal
- 5th offense removal for remainder of school year

NOTE: RISD Buses are equipped with video and audio monitoring systems, which will be used when students are transported. Recorded video and audio recordings will be used to enforce discipline.

### **Re-Admittance to Bus**

- The decision to suspend or terminate bus privileges for a student will be made by the principal or assistant principal.
- The principal or assistant principal will notify the parents or guardians and Transportation as to the length of suspension and the date the student will again be eligible for transportation.
- Bus drivers will not allow students suspended from transportation to board a bus until the date set by the principal or assistant principal, and, depending on circumstances, will notify the principal of any suspended student attempting to board a bus.
- The student will be readmitted to the bus once the suspension has ended.

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

### **Smart tag Procedures**

Rockdale ISD utilizes the SMART tag. SMART tag is designed to ensure authorized ridership and improve the safety and security of students who utilize school bus transportation. SMART tag provides live monitoring of where and when students load onto and unload off of their school bus to keep transportation, administrators and parents informed.

- All students are given a SmartTag and must have the SmartTag when entering and exiting the bus.
- If a student attempts to enter the bus without a SmartTag - a warning is given; A Parent Square notice is sent to let parents and campus administrators know this is the first incident and the student needs to have the SmartTag when riding in the future.
- Second day in a row the student does not have their SmartTag; Parent Square notice sent to parent and campus administration to let them know the student will not be allowed to ride home the next day without a tag, and the parent will need to pick them up from school or bring the SmartTag to school.
- The student will not be allowed to ride the bus until they have a SmartTag.
- Once a student comes with a badge, they are "reset" and start over on warnings. However, if this becomes a habit, they will skip the first warning and move straight to loss of riding privileges.

### **Smart Tag Replacement**

- The student or parent should notify the campus office that a replacement Smart Tag is needed.



- The school office will contact Transportation to request a replacement tag
- The first replacement tag is free, subsequent tags will cost \$5.00 each - only 1 free tag per school year. The badge will not be printed until the \$5.00 is paid either online at <https://www.rockdaleisd.net/departments/transportation> or through the campus office.

## ***Rockdale ISD Student Travel and Discipline Policy***

### **Purpose Statement**

The following policy has been developed and approved so that any student traveling with on a Rockdale ISD sponsored trip has the proper medical release forms and consent from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s). This policy upholds the standards set by Rockdale ISD.

### **Supervision**

- A Rockdale ISD employee or parent will supervise and accompany the participants during all activities on the trip
- Teachers and sponsors may utilize cell phone calls and/or text messages to communicate with students regarding school-related business at any time during the length of the sponsored trip. The preferred method of communication remains ParentSquare during the sponsored trip and should be used when possible.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency medical situation the parent will be contacted as soon as possible.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including loss of the privilege to ride in a district vehicle.

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

### **Discipline Policy**

#### ***Curfew***

- A curfew of 11:00 PM is standard for all overnight trips. Exceptions will be made through the sponsor in the event that the contest, show, or convention goes past 11:00 PM.
- Chaperones will enforce the curfew with room checks at 11:00 PM.

#### ***Room Checks***

- Room checks will be conducted at curfew and as needed between the hours of 11:00 PM and 6:00 AM.

- Checks will consist of listening for noise coming from within the room and checking the halls within the vicinity for noise or attendees of the activity. In the event that noise is heard inside the room, the chaperone will knock on the door and inquire.

#### *Damages/Incurred Expenses*

- The student and his/her parents will be expected to pay for any and all damage related to student behaviors that result in loss or damage to property.
- Students and his/her parents will be responsible for any long-distance calls, charges to the room, etc. although every effort will be made by the sponsor to decline these services at check-in.
- Expenses will not be reimbursed if a student is sent home.

### **Major Infractions**

The students will conduct themselves in a manner that reflects and follows the Rockdale ISD student handbook. In the event that any student breaks Rockdale ISD policy, that student will be dealt with immediately and the appropriate discipline will be initiated and documented.

If a student violates the following stated sections of the policy, his or her parents will be contacted, a Rockdale ISD administrator will be contacted and the student may be sent home via plane or bus at the expense of the parents or guardian. If it is a day trip the parents/guardians will be required to come pick the student up. Rockdale ISD administration will conduct discipline procedures appropriate with the infractions. Any misbehavior may affect the student's future participation in the Rockdale activities for that school year. In the event that a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the alternative emergency contact person, given by the parent, will be contacted.

The items below are considered major infractions.

- The student is found outside of his/her room after curfew (without notifying the chaperone).
- The student is found with any amount of drug, alcohol or tobacco products.
- The student is found to have partaken of any drug, alcohol or tobacco product.
- A student not assigned to the room is found in another student's room without permission from the chaperone and a chaperone is not present.
- Any student is physically fighting with another person.
- Any other violation deemed as a major infraction by the chaperone or advisor.
- In the event that you as a student find yourself around somebody violating any of the previous policy, if at all possible you are to separate yourself from that scene.
- In the event that the student is able to separate from that situation but does not, then the previously stated policy will be initiated and the student will be sent home as well.
- The student is highly encouraged to contact a chaperone and inform them of the situation once they have separated from it.
- Driving a vehicle while on a school trip.
- Public displays of affection.

Any illegal behavior outside the jurisdiction of the Rockdale ISD student handbook may be subject to legal action. The Student Code of Conduct is in effect during all school sponsored events.

### **Minor Infractions**

In the event that a student violates any other Rockdale ISD policy that is not deemed a major infraction, the infraction will be documented and that student's punishment will be carried forth once the group returns to Rockdale. The student's actions and discipline will then be turned over to the appropriate Rockdale ISD administrator.

### **Bicycle Regulations**

Bicycles are not to be ridden on the school grounds. Students must walk all bicycles on and off the school grounds and must park them in the bicycle racks. All bike riders should wear helmets while riding to and from school. Scooters, skateboards, rollerblades, or motorized vehicles are not to be operated on school grounds.

### **Vandalism (All Grade Levels)**

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, the district uses video and audio recording equipment 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 as needed and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In accordance with state law, 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 may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain self-contained special education classrooms. The district will provide notice before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which a child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, contact Tiffany Whitsel, Assistant Superintendent that the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.

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

[See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

## 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:

- Request entry to the school at the primary entrance unless otherwise directed by a district employee
- Report to the main office
- Be prepared to show identification
- Exit the school at the primary entrance and leave all exterior doors closed, latched, and locked unless actively monitored by a district employee
- Comply with all applicable district policies and procedures

If requested by a district employee, a visitor must provide identification such as a driver's license, other picture identification issued by a government entity, or employee or student identification issued by the district. A person who refuses to provide identification and who reasonably appears to have no legitimate reason to be on district property may be ejected from district property.

Individuals may visit classrooms or observe virtual instruction during instructional time only with approval of the principal and teacher. Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted.

[See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

### Unauthorized Persons

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

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

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

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

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

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

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

### ***Career Day***

During College & Career Readiness Events, the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

## **Volunteers (All Grade Levels)**

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

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact:

Christy Betchan

520 W. Davilla

[CBetchan@rockdaleisd.net](mailto:CBetchan@rockdaleisd.net)

512-430-6000

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

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

## **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)**

To withdraw a student under age 18 from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available 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.

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

## Glossary

**Accelerated instruction, including supplemental instruction**, is an intensive educational program designed to help an individual student acquire the knowledge and skills required at their grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment. Accelerated instruction may be provided by assigning a student to a classroom teacher who is certified as a master, exemplary, or recognized teacher or by providing supplemental instruction in addition to regular instruction.

**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** 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 their 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** stands for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

**DPS** stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**DSHS** stands for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

**ED** stands for the U.S. Department of Education.

**Emergent bilingual student** refers to a student of limited English proficiency. Other related terms include English learner, English language learner, and limited English proficient student.

**EOC (end-of-course) assessments** are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments is 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.

**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 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

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

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

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

**PGP** stands for personal graduation plan, which is 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 beginning 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.

**Safe and Supportive School Team** is a team established at each campus that is responsible for conducting a threat assessment regarding individuals who make threats of violence or exhibit harmful, threatening, or violent behavior and determining appropriate intervention, and providing guidance to students and school employees on recognizing harmful, threatening, or violent behavior that may pose a threat to the community, school, or individual.

**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 help ensure that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, as well as assist 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. Except under limited circumstances, students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for 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; sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP; and outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

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

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

**TELPAS** stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that emergent bilingual students 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 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 to Student Handbook developer:** State law requires that the district's policy on bullying be distributed in its Student Handbook(s).

On April 6, 2023, TEA publicized minimum standards for bullying prevention policies and procedures in accordance with state law. TASB Policy Service included recommended revisions to FFI(LOCAL) in Update 121 in June 2023. TASB recommends that districts adopt revisions to this policy prior to the beginning of the 2023-24 school year. Districts should update the appendix to the student handbook containing FFI(LOCAL) as soon as the board adopts revisions to the policy.

The following has been formatted for the district to more easily insert its FFI(LOCAL) policy here rather than in the body of the handbook.

**Note:** School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit [FFI\(LOCAL\)](#). Below is the text of Rockdale ISD's policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized for this school year.

### Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying

Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on October 27, 2017

#### 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

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.

#### 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 on the basis of 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 the course of 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 take action 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 in order 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.