Student Handbook

2025-2026

SHERMAN

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Meghan Cone, Chief Communications Officer

School Contact Information

Sherman High School

Grades 9-12
School Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

2907 W Travis St.
Sherman, TX 75092
Phone: 903-891-6440
Fax: 903-891-6468

Principal: **Dr. Kristen Perry**
Associate Principal: Cissy Blaisure
Assistant Principal: Angeleyna Epperly
Assistant Principal: Dr. Rina Hamilton
Assistant Principal: Jason Matherly
Assistant Principal: Kimberly Fritchman
Assistant Principal: Jason Kennedy

Jefferson Learning Center

Grades 9-12
Morning Session Begins: 8 a.m.
Morning Session Ends: 12:38 p.m.
Afternoon Session Begins: 11:32 a.m.
Afternoon Session Ends: 4 p.m.

608 N Lee St.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6610
Fax: 903-891-6615

Principal: **Jim May**
Assistant Principal: Chandra Allivand

Piner Middle School

Grades 6-8
School Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

402 W Pecan St.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6470
Fax: 903-891-6475

Principal: **Jeff Chancellor**
Assistant Principal: Tatiana Davis
Assistant Principal: Debbie Fine
Assistant Principal: Cheyenne Kidman

Sherman Middle School

Grades 6-8
School Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

2201 E. Lamar
Sherman, TX 75092
Phone: 903- 891-8940
Fax: 903-891-6446

Principal: **Dr. Max Smith**
Assistant Principal: Samantha Deaton
Assistant Principal: Suzanne Richardson
Assistant Principal: Jansen Trotter

Crutchfield Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

521 S Dewey Ave.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6565
Fax: 903-891-6570

Principal: **Rebecca McCright**
Assistant Principal: Kathryn Flippin
Assistant Principal: Brenda Brinkman

Dillingham Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

1701 E Gallagher Dr.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6495
Fax: 903-891-6499

Principal: **Steven Traw**
Assistant Principal: Xandria Johnson

Fairview Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

501 W Taylor St.
Sherman, TX 75092
Cell: 903-891-6580
Fax: 903-891-6585

Principal: **Julee West**
Assistant Principal: Tenecia Langston
Assistant Principal: Brenda Brinkman

Neblett Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

1505 E Gallagher Dr.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6670
Fax: 903-893-0263

Principal: **Santos Flores**
Assistant Principal: Keesha Stacy

Parker Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

1501 Heritage Ranch Trl
Sherman, TX 75092
Phone: 903-891-6720

Principal: **Ashley Woods**
Assistant Principal: Claire Cole

Sory Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

120 S Binkley Park Dr.
Sherman, TX 75092
Phone: 903-891-6650
Fax: 903-892-6307

Principal: **Lori Hartman**
Assistant Principal: Kathy Indelicato

Washington Elementary School

Grades K-5
School Hours: 7:40 a.m. – 3:15 p.m.

815 S Travis St.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6700
Fax: 903-893-0141

Principal: **Ali Holderby**
Assistant Principal: Darla Mullins

Fred Douglass Early Childhood Center

Grades Pre-K/Headstart
School Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

505 E College St.
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6545
Fax: 903-891-6549

Principal: **Dr. Torie Washington**
Assistant Principal: Shann Schubert

Perrin Early Childhood Center

Grades Pre-K/Headstart
School Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.

81 Vandenburg Dr.
Denison, TX 75020
Phone: 903-891-6680
Fax: 903-786-4766

Principal: **Nancy Jung**
Assistant Principal: Shann Schubert

DAEP

School Hours: 9:15 a.m. – 4:15 p.m.

2701 Loy Lake Road
Sherman, TX 75090
Phone: 903-891-6631

Principal: **Jim May**
Assistant Principal: Abby Homer

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 ***Sherman Independent School District*** 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. The Student Handbook was developed and created by [example: the 2023 Policy Review Committee].

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 ***Sherman Independent School District*** Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district's website at *www.shermanisd.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 newsletter and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify the Student Handbook at any time. Notice of revisions will be provided as is reasonably practical.

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

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at your child's campus.

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 at www.shermanisd.net. The policy manual includes:

- Legally referenced (LEGAL) policies that contain provisions from federal and state laws and regulations, case law, and other legal authorities that provide the legal framework for school districts.Welcome to the new school year!

- 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:
Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

During online student registration, the following forms are included in the registration process:

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

[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:

Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

Parental Rights

The district includes this and other sections in the handbook to affirm lawfully protected parents' rights to direct their child's moral and religious upbringing, make educational decisions, and consent to medical, psychiatric, and psychological treatment. To support informed decision-making, the district will not withhold information about a child from their parent or interfere with parental rights.

Parental Rights and Options

Upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year, the district will provide parents with the TEA provided form that includes information about parental rights and options. The form will provide information about the parent's right to withhold consent or exempt their child from certain activities and instruction, outlining the parent's rights and available options concerning the child's course of study and supplemental services; instructional materials and library materials; health education instruction; instruction regarding sexual orientation and gender identity; school options, including virtual and remote schooling options; immunizations; gifted and talented programs; promotion, retention, and graduation policies; grade, class rank, and attendance information; state standards and requirements; data collection practices; health care services, including notice and consent; the grievance procedure; and special education and bilingual education and special language programs.

Consent, Opt-Out, and Refusal Rights

Consent to Conduct a Psychological or Psychiatric Evaluation

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological or psychiatric examination, questionnaire, 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.

In accordance with state law, a parent must provide consent before their child can be provided with human sexuality instruction.

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 his or her 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.) See **Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)**.
- 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; and
- 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 Before Instruction of Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**.]

Consent Before 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 in K-12 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.

Sherman ISD utilizes the Aim for Success/Youth Equipped to Succeed program to connect students to positive messages and healthy relationships that will help them navigate

cultural pressures. Students of all ages, backgrounds, and circumstances are equipped with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need in order to achieve more healthy and successful futures. For further information, see the district's abuse prevention instruction website at https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/counseling.

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.)
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** and FNG for information on the grievance and appeals process.

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction; Dating Violence** on; and **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**]

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 campus counselor will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after he/she learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

The district has established procedures for staff to notify the campus counselor regarding a student who may need intervention as well as re-entry procedures for any student who has been absent from school for an extended period.

The mental health liaison can be reached at:

Aileen Hays
Coordinator of Counseling and Student Support
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
ahays@shermanisd.net
903-891-6421

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as resource 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**.]

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

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

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

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

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

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's *Parenting and Paternity Awareness Program (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 it:

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

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

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.
Per Texas Education Code (TEC) Sec. 26.009 (2), “An employee or contractor of a school district must obtain the written consent of a child’s parent before the employee or contractor may make or authorize the making of a videotape of a child or record or authorize the recording of a child’s voice”.

Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines.
For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. A parent is welcome to access such a page.
However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity must communicate with a student participating in that activity.
The employee is required to include the student’s parent as a recipient on all text messages. It is not recommended at any time for any teacher to text a student one-to-one without parent approval.
A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

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); and

- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period.)

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal. [See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information**. This is included during the Annual Student Verification process.]
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; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams. Parent electronic mail addresses shall also be considered directory information. School-sponsored purposes shall include school-related releases to school resource officers and parents of students on campus. 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 name, address, telephone listing, and grade level. This request must go through the Open Records Request process. Please reference ***[Sherman Independent School District]*** Board Policy **FL (LOCAL)**for more information.
Note: Review 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 his or her student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests from military recruiters or institutions of higher education for the student's:

- Name,
- Address, and
- 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.

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 must 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; or
- 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 EFA(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 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; and

- 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), including a PPRA Complaint Form (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 Before 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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Religious or Moral Beliefs

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.
The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester.
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; or
- Results from diagnostic assessments.

The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible.
In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.
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.]

Parental Rights Regarding Library Materials

Library Catalog

Because parents are the primary decision-makers regarding what their child can access in the library, the district will make accessible to them a catalog of all library materials available to their child. After reviewing the catalog, a parent will have the right to submit to the school a list of library materials that their child may not be allowed to check out or otherwise access for use outside of the library.
While the board votes on what library materials are allowed, a parent has the right to appeal a board's decision. A parent also has the right to appeal any action taken in response to their original appeal.

Library Record

A parent has the right to receive a record of each time the parent's child checks out or otherwise uses outside the school library a library material.

Local School Library Advisory Council

The Local School Board Advisory Council will assist the district in ensuring that local community values are reflected in the library catalogs. Parents have the right to be the majority vote on the Council. The Council will meet at least twice a year and will post public notices so that parents have the opportunity to attend, as is their right. Parents will also have the ability to view recordings of the Council meetings via the district's website.

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

Instructional Materials

All instructional materials will follow board policy EFA and EFB procedures for selection and purchasing.

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. All teachers are expected to have login information on their website. If you have any questions, please contact Sherman Independent School District at apesina@shermanisd.net for more information.

A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day. A school must provide printed versions of electronic instructional materials to a student if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. A school district or school may not unreasonably deny this request and a school district or school shall comply with any applicable court order of which the district or school has knowledge.

[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 his or her child's participation in required assessments.

Student Records

Accessing Student Records

A parent may review his or her child's records. These records include:

- Attendance records;
- Test scores;
- Grades;
- Disciplinary records;
- Parental consent documents;
- 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;
- Records relating to school library materials the child obtains from the school library;
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child; and
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child's classroom. Parents have a right to review the test with the teacher. See **Grading Guidelines**.

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. Any record created about a student must have prior permission by the parent to share under these guidelines.

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; and
- 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 pertaining to student performance—including grades, test results, and disciplinary records—is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records is restricted to an eligible student or a student's parent 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:

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

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

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

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- Working with the student;

- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
- Compiling statistical data;
- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs. School officials may include:
- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer);
- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district's safe and supportive school program;
- A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

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

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- When the disclosure is information that the district has designated as "directory information" under *34 CFR 99.31(a)(11)*. [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. Director of Student Services 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 he or she wants to inspect.
Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.
A parent or eligible student who submits a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the records.
You may contact the custodian of records for currently enrolled students by contacting your campus principal. You may contact the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated at:
Susan Leverette
Director of PEIMS
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
suleverette@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.
A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.
Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL).
[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences,** Complaints and Concerns on, 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 on the district's website at *https://policyconnect.org/org/sherman-isd*.

Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications

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

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

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

A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances

Children of Military Families

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

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

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

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

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

Additional information may be found at Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency (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 his or her child to another classroom or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.

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

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

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

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

[See policy FDE for more information.]

The board will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to another district campus, ***or*** 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 FDE policy, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal

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

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

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

The district will 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 prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school.

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

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

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

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration**, **Course Credit**, and **Students in Foster Care**.]

A Student Who Is Homeless

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; and
- Graduation requirements.

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

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration**, **Course Credit** , and **Students who are Homeless**.]

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

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

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

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

Special Education Referrals

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

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

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

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

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

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

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

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

Melissa Ramirez
Director of Special Education

2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
mramirez@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

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

Melissa Ramirez
Director of Special Education
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
mramirez@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

Section 504 Referrals

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

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

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals

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

Karrissa Norris
Compliance Coordinator
Sherman Independent School District
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
knorris@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

[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.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-LandingPage.aspx?DT=G&LID=en)
- Partner Resource Network (http://prntexas.org/)
- SPEDTEX: Special Education Information Center (https://www.spedtex.org/)
- Texas First Project (http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/)

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English

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

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

[See **English Learners** and **Special Programs**.]

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.]

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

Compulsory Attendance

Pre-K and Kindergarten
Students enrolled in pre-k 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 his or her 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 for the following activities and events, as long as the student makes up all work and follows all other necessary requirements:

- Religious holy days;
- Released time course;
- 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;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services and appointments with a mental health professional;
- 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 or who have children who are under conservatorship of the state:

- An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
- Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments. [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 will be monitored by the district. For more information, see **Telecommunication and Other Electronic Devices**.

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 his or her visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any work missed.

[See **Driver License Attendance Verification**]

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent for up to two days per academic school year to visit a college or university, provided:

- The board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL);
- The principal has approved the student's absence; and
- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit and makes up for 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, provided the district's board has authorized this in policy FEA(LOCAL), the student notifies his or her teachers, and the student receives approval from the principal prior to the absences; or
- 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.

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.

Chronically absent and truant students shall be identified as at risk of dropping out.

Students with Disabilities

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

Ages 6–18

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

The notice will:

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

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is each campus assistant principal. For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator. A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year. If a student aged 12–18 incurs ten or more unexcused

absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court. [See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

Age 19 and Older

After a student aged 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 he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the class's instructional requirements. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

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

With the exception of 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 principal or 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—Exemptions** 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 10:00 a.m.

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

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.]

With the exception of 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 principal or 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—Exemptions** on page 27 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).

With the exception of 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 principal or 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—Exemptions** 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 10:00 a.m. A student absent for any portion of the day, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

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.]

With the exception of 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 principal or 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—Exemptions** 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 10:00 a.m.

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.

A note signed by the student will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. The campus will document in its attendance records whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

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

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

Upon returning to school, a student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a valid 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 shall require a doctor or health clinic to utilize the district provided form to provide necessary information 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) is available online.

Further information may be found on the Texas Department of Public Safety website (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)

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

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

Accountability information can be found on the district's website. 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).

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.

Contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

Awards and Honors (All Grade Levels)

Each campus may honor students throughout the school year. Please contact your campus principal or campus counselor for a list of possible eligible awards.

Bullying (All Grade Levels)

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a respectful school climate; 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; or
- 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 age appropriate and approved by the SHAC committee.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Any district employee aware of a report of a bullying incident will relate 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 by going to the district https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/counseling/prevention-intervention.

A person who makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

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

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

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.

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 parents, 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**, **Hazing**, 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:

- Arts, Audio/Video & Communications
- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Human Services with Education and Training
- Health Science
- Business, Marketing & Finance
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
- Advanced Manufacturing, and

Admission to these programs is based on open enrollment, and in some situations, completing the course prerequisite which is based on TEA requirements and recommendations.

A complete list and description of all our CTE and work-based programs can be found on our website at https://www.shermanisd.net/cte and in our Academic Course Guide found at https://www.shermanisd.net/academics/secondary-education/course-offerings. For additional information, please contact:

Elizabeth Clayton
Coordinator of Career – Military Workforce Development
2907 West Travis Street, Sherman, Texas 75092
eclayton@shermanisd.net
903-891-6440

Admission and enrollment to these programs is based on the student maintaining a position with an area business and/or industry that builds employment experiences and skills.

District policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities, as required by Title VI of

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

District policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, 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 **Statement of Nondiscrimination** 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. Therefore, it is imperative to 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**]

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

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at *district* improvement plan found on the ***Sherman Independent School District*** website. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking. For any student to participate in any program relating to this topic, parents must opt in and give the district permission prior to any instruction.

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

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

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

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

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

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** and **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**.]

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 make contact with 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, jewelry, technology);

- Tattoos or branding;
- Refillable gift cards;
- Frequent runaway episodes;
- Multiple phones or social media accounts;
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone;
- Unexplained injuries;
- Isolation from family, friends, and community; and
- Older 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;
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off;
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours;
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss;
- Not being in control of his or her own money;
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver; and
- • A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

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

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

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

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

If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child

available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs.

To find out what services may be available in your county, see Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County (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 at1-800- 252-5400 or on the web at Texas Abuse Hotline Website (www.txabusehotline.org).

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

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

- Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet (https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/*whatiscan*.pdf)
- KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse (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)
- 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/)
- National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking (https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools/child-labor- trafficking)

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

Details regarding class rank calculations can be found by going to the ***Sherman Independent School District*** Board Policy EIC(LOCAL) at https://policyconnect.org/org/sherman-isd..

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** for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

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 ten percent of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program [see **Foundation Graduation Program**]; or
- 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 his or her 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 2022 term through the spring 2024 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.

Students should meet and discuss automatic admission with the campus counselor to understand the automatic admission policy.

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

- Automatic college admission;
- Curriculum requirements for financial aid;

- Benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid; and
- 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** for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation** for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **Students 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), International Baccalaureate (IB), 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 Tarrant County College, which may be offered on or off campus; and
- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities.

AP courses are open enrollment; dual credit courses require students to receive a passing score on the Texas Success Initiative (TSI).

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

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.

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

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 updating all contact information during the Annual Student Registration. If a contact or address changes after the start of school, please log on to update your child's information or contact the campus registrar to update information immediately. Please note, the primary contact number will receive all automated phone calls. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes.

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** for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

Automated Nonemergency 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 school. [See **Safety** for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)

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

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy at FNG(LOCAL). The parent must file the complaint within the required timeframes to comply with this policy.

This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at https://policyconnect.org/org/sherman-isd . 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. The written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the appropriate administrator, as outlined in the district's policies.

Conduct (All Grade Levels)

Applicability of School Rules

The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior, in accordance with law, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities —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 preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of 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 in the Student Code of Conduct found on the district's website at https://www.shermanisd.net/families/handbook-code-of-conduct

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, for purposes of this section, disruptive activity is:

(1) obstructing or restraining the passage of persons in an exit, entrance, or hallway of a building without the authorization of the administration of the school;

(2) seizing control of a building or portion of a building to interfere with an administrative, educational, research, or other authorized activity;

(3) preventing or attempting to prevent by force or violence or the threat of force or violence a lawful assembly authorized by the school administration so that a person attempting to participate in the assembly is unable to participate due to the use of force or violence or due to a reasonable fear that force or violence is likely to occur;

(4) disrupting by force or violence or the threat of force or violence a lawful assembly in progress; or

(5) obstructing or restraining the passage of a person at an exit or entrance to the campus or property or preventing or attempting to prevent by force or violence or by threats of force or violence the ingress or egress of a person to or from the property or campus without the authorization of the administration of the school.

Disruption of classes or other school activities while on or within 500 feet of district property may result in disciplinary action. These disruptions include:

- Making loud noises;
- Trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and
- Entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.

Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district 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 his or her guest.

Students attending a social event (such as a dance), when leaving before the end of the event will not be readmitted.

Students will not be allowed to have guests at Homecoming.

Students who want to bring a guest to Prom must have prior approval from the Senior High Principal.

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

Counseling

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

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

The program materials, and curriculum can be viewed at *www.shermanisd.net* or in person during school hours. 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, Intermediate and Middle 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 through the Career Investigation course, and they will learn how best to prepare for high school, college, and a career. Students will utilize the Naviance college and career planning tool. More information about the use of Naviance and College and Career prep can be found on the **Sherman Independent School District** website at www.shermanisd.net

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 regarding:

- 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; and
- 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 concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should come to the counselor office for a visit or email the counselor to set up an appointment. The Counselor will notify the parent upon conclusion of the visit. 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**, **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children**, 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.

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 prior to the scheduled testing date. [See policy EHDC for more information.]

Acceleration

Students in Grades K–5

A student in grades K - 5 is eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if:

- 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; and
- 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 with:

- A passing score of at least 80 on an examination approved by the board; or
- A scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP); or
- A score of 3 or higher on an AP examination, as applicable.

A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the

beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

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

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

Students are expected to treat other students, employees, volunteers, and guests of the district with courtesy and respect, avoid offensive behaviors, and stop those behaviors as directed. District employees and volunteers are likewise expected to treat students with courtesy and respect. Students are prohibited from engaging in conduct that includes discrimination, harassment, dating violence, or retaliation.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, 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 on the district's website at www.shermanisd.net . [See policy FFH for more information.]

To report discrimination, harassment, dating violence, or retaliation, See **Reporting Procedures**.

Discrimination

Discrimination is an action taken against or in favor of a student based on the student's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law that denies access to an education program or activity.

Harassment

Harassment, is conduct by a student with respect to another student, or an employee, volunteer or guest of the district that includes any of the following:

- Threatening to cause harm or bodily injury;
- Engaging in sexually intimidating conduct;
- Causing physically damage to the property of another student;
- Subjecting another student to physical confinement or restraint;
- Maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety; or
- Harassment under Section 42.07 of the Texas Penal Code

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive or derogatory language;
- Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct;
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors;
- Cyberharassment
- Physical aggression or assault;
- Graffiti or printed material including offensive or derogatory language or images; or
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Sexual Harassment – Title IX

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct by a student with respect to another student, or unwelcome conduct from an employee, volunteer or guest of the district on the basis of sex that is reasonably determined to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to an education program or activity; or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

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.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome touching or physical contact that is sexual in nature;
- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- Unwelcome conversations of a sexual nature;
- Other unwelcome sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact; or
- Other kinds of aggressive, intimidating, or harmful conduct such as theft or damage to property.

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; or
- 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)
- The CDC's Preventing Teen Dating Violence (https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact. html).

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

Retaliation

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

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

Reporting Procedures

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

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident by going to the district's Stopit reporting system at https://appweb.stopitsolutions.com/login.

Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. 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**]

The district will promptly notify the parent of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district. In the event alleged prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parent of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy FFH. All notifications of any alleged incident should be provided within 3 business days after the original report was received.

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

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct 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 **Discrimination, Harassment, Dating Violence, and Retaliation**]

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.

Students should speak to their campus counselor or reach out to the counselor coordinator to learn about the distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to students. The distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to students are through University of Texas, Texas Tech online high school, and Texas Virtual School Network.

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, or counselor, prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

Any student wishing to take any distance learning courses must get prior approval from the campus counselor or campus principal prior to enrolling in the course.

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**.] 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 counselor, 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 district Coordinator of Counseling.

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 10 copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. 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 non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See 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 non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the Communications Department for prior review. The Communications Department 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.]

The campus principal will designate the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-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 **Sherman Independent School District** dress code is established to prevent disruption and minimize safety hazards. All students are expected to dress in a respectful manner within the acceptable standards of the community and in such a manner as to contribute to the academic atmosphere, not detract from it.

Sherman Independent School District expects that all students will dress in a way that is appropriate for the school day and for any school sponsored event.

- Students must always wear their ID when at school or traveling to and from school using District transportation.
- Student clothing must completely cover the student's torso and legs in the undergarment area. Shirts and blouses must be buttoned or snapped to conceal all skin to 3 inches below the collar bone. See the figure below for areas.
- Pre-K–5th Grade Only: Shirts and blouses must have at least one-inch coverage between the shoulder and neck. Spaghetti straps are not allowed.
- 6th Grade–12th Grade Only: Students may not wear tank tops, strapless dresses, or spaghetti straps. Tank tops are not allowed, regardless of the width of the straps. Short sleeves must be at least square with the shoulders. Shoulder less tops are not allowed.
- Students can wear shorts, skirts, and/or dresses, provided they do not expose undergarments or private body parts.
- All pants, shorts, and skirts must be worn at waist level. Sagging and loose pants, shorts, or skirts are prohibited.
- Jeans or pants with holes, shorts, skorts, and leggings that do not expose undergarments or private body parts are acceptable. Garments must always cover all undergarments, whether in standing, reaching, stooping, bending over, or sitting positions.
- Tops that are torn, ragged, frayed, or contain holes are not permitted without appropriate coverings underneath their garments, such as undershirts.
- Tights, leggings, jeggings, bike shorts, and other skin-tight/form-fitting pants must be worn with shirts, skirts, "skorts," or shorts that extend and cover the buttocks.
- Any clothing articles designed as underwear or sleepwear may not be worn as outerwear.
- All undergarments, in their entirety, must be concealed at all times, including straps and boxers.
- The chest, midriff, and buttocks should be covered at all times with non-see-through material. Undergarments must not be seen while standing, reaching, stooping, bending over, sitting, or making other movements.
- Hats, caps, sweatbands, bandannas, sunglasses, other headwear, and hoods on hooded jackets or pullovers may not be worn inside the school building.
- Students undergoing or recently receiving chemotherapy or any medication causing hair loss may wear head coverings approved by the campus principal.
- Hair, by color or design, may not distract from the learning environment. Nonnatural hair color is permitted as an accent. If designs are shaved into the hair, they must be school-appropriate and may not condone or represent drugs, gangs, alcohol, profanity, violence, obscenity, or anything deemed inappropriate by the school administration.

- Hair spiked or arranged in a disruptive or distracting style will not be allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, Mohawk haircuts.
- Eyes must be visible at all times and not covered by hair or other objects, unless approved by the campus principal based on a medical physician's authorization.
- Footwear must be worn at all times. Shower shoes and beach shoes, house shoes, slippers, or shoes with wheels or lights are prohibited. Students must have shoes that are safe and appropriate for a normal school day or participation in school-related activities. Medical shoes may be worn with a medical physician's authorization.
- Students may not wear tongue rings, lip rings, eyebrow rings, ear gauges, spacers, facial jewelry such as hoops or rings, or facial decorations. They may, however, wear one small nose stud.
- Jewelry that distracts from the instructional environment is unacceptable.
- Any class, student organization, or school-sponsored group t-shirt designed and intended to be worn at school must receive final approval from the campus principal.
- Distracting or excessive make-up is prohibited.
- Clothing, grooming, and overall appearance may not reflect gang affiliation by any means, whether intentional or unintentional. The Sherman ISD Police Department will maintain a list of gang-affiliated attire and grooming.
- Students may not wear any clothing article that depicts or advertises alcohol, tobacco products, drugs, violence, or behavior perceived as lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene.
- Metal chains (e.g., wallet chains, belt chains, etc.), costume clothing or costume accessories, metal hair picks, and blankets are prohibited.

The principal may prohibit any dress or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause distraction, interfere with normal school operations, or create a safety hazard, even if the distraction is not explicitly spelled out in the Dress and Grooming Code. In addition, the principal's judgment related to dress and grooming is final; you may not be adhering to the Dress and Grooming Code. Please consult your campus principal prior to coming to school to avoid any disruption to your daily instructional schedule.

Students in violation of the Dress and Grooming Code is a violation of the SISD Student Code of Conduct and the student will be expected to immediately change to acceptable attire when violations are brought to their attention. Students will not be allowed to leave campus for the purpose of changing. If a student is unable to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Code, or they're unable to immediately change, the student will be assigned to

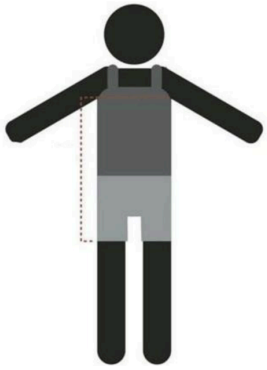
In-School Suspension until a parent/guardian is able to bring an acceptable alternative. Parents are encouraged to provide a change of dress and grooming attire so that their student may return to their normal class routine as soon as possible.

The District's Dress and Grooming Code applies to all SISD students during regular school hours, as well as school-sponsored events that are outside of the regular school day. Certain school-sponsored events, such as graduation, may have a specific dress requirement for participants. Jefferson Learning Center, JDC, Grayson Post, and DAEP will maintain different standards of dress and grooming.

Note: The principal, in connection with the sponsor, coach, or other person in charge of an extracurricular activity, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in the activity and may impose higher standards.

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Sherman ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

See the figure below for the required areas that must be covered at all times:



Personal Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)

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

The following outlines the electronic device policy to be regulated and enforced by campus administration. For the purposes of this document, personal electronic devices encompass, but are not limited to, cell phones and wearable technology such as the Apple Watch, smartwatches, fitness watches, paging device, radio device, or any device capable of receiving notifications or facilitating communication.

Students are prohibited from using a personal communication device while on school property during the school day. Students may either leave their devices at home or keep them completely turned off and stored in their bag, for the entirety of the school day.

All personal communication devices must be turned off before entering campus each school day.

Devices must be stored in the student's backpack or locker and not on the student's person, such as inside the pockets of their clothing.

Personal communication devices must remain powered off, silent and completely out of view throughout the school day.

Use or visible possession of any personal communication device during the school day will result in confiscation and disciplinary action consistent with the Student Code of Conduct.

Devices may be turned back on only after the final bell at dismissal.

Exceptions to this rule will be decided on a case-by-case basis and in compliance with relevant law and policy.

No personal electronic device is allowed in school or during the instructional day. This includes no cell phones will be allowed during lunch, recess or before or after school.

Consequences For Violating Cell Phone And/Or Personal Electronic Device Usage Policy

1st Offense

- Warning
- Device confiscated
- Parent/guardian contacted
- Student may pick up the device at the end of the school day

- Incident documented

2nd Offense

- Device confiscated
- Parent/guardian contacted
- Parent/guardian must pick up the device at the end of the school day
- Incident documented

Subsequent Offenses

Repeated violations may result in disciplinary placement, including In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS).

Confiscated personal electronic devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents, will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE for more information.]

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

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

Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources

The ***Sherman Independent School District*** Student Technology Acceptable Use Policy can be located on the district website at https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/technology-services/policies-procedures

Students and parents sign the agreement during the Annual Student Registration process at the start of each school year.

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" Sexting Prevention Course (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** and **Standardized Testing**.]

English Learners (All Grade Levels)

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

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will designate instructional accommodations or

additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state- mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing**, may be administered to an English learner up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

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

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**]

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.uiltexas.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.

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

Parents may contact the Athletic Director for more information regarding football helmets.

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) course, or an 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 15 absences not related to post-district competition; however, a student shall be allowed unlimited absences for participation in post-district or state competition (FM LOCAL Policy). 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. Please contact your campus principal or campus counselor for a list of all clubs, organizations or extracurricular programs available for students.

Fees (All Grade Levels)

Basic educational program materials are provided at no charge to a student. However, a student is expected to provide his or her 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 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).
- Bus transportation
- Supply fees for certain programs. See Academic Planning Guide.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [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***
5-11.5	*Grade 10 (Sophomore)*
12-17.5	*Grade 11 (Junior)*
18+	*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; and
- Procedures for a student to follow after an absence.
- Details regarding all grading guidelines can be found at

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** 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); and
- 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 EOC assessments in:

- English I,
- English II,
- Algebra I,
- Biology, and
- 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

Sherman Independent School District provides very specific information regarding all graduation requirements in the Academic Planning Guide (APG).

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; and
- 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.

A **Personal Graduation Plan** will be completed for each high school student, as described.

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 parents may request that the student graduate without an endorsement. The district will advise the student and the student's parents 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 his or her 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

Please reference the Course Guide for the most current and updated information regarding graduation requirements. New information is available to students who graduate during different years. The Course Guide can be found at:
https://www.shermanisd.net/academics/secondary-education/course-offerings

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. Any 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 upon entering grade 9 which endorsement he or she wishes to pursue. Please reference the APG at: ***https://www.shermanisd.net/academics/secondary-education*** for additional information about available endorsements.

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).

Please see this How to Guide to learn more about completing the FAFSA:

https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/counseling/post-secondary-planning

Additional information can be found in the Course Guide on the website at:
https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/counseling/post-secondary-planning

High school counselors detail this process in junior conference meetings with students and parents.

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; or
- A school counselor authorizes the student to opt out for a good cause.

Sherman Independent School District recommends that all high school students complete the FAFSA application even if the student has knowledge of earning scholarships. Please contact the school counselor for more information.

To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a TASFA, the student must submit:

- A screenshot that includes the processed date field of the FAFSA Apply Texas 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); or
- A copy of a financial aid award letter from an IHE.

Personal Graduation Plans

It is recommended that all students and parents read the Course Guide (APG) for more information. The Course Guide can be found on the Sherman Independent School District website at: *www.shermanisd.net*

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 a distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class.

The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parents. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parents 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).

A student may, with parental permission, amend his or her personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation. Parents must be informed prior to any amendments.

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.

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 his or her 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 his or her IEP may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. The student may then remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma but will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

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

Graduation Activities

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.

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.

[See the Student Code of Conduct and policy FNA(LOCAL) for more information.] [See **Student Speakers** 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. Please note that costs may be subject to change each year. [See **Fees**]

Scholarships and Grants

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the foundation graduation program may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Grant Program for 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. In addition, students and parents have access to the Naviance program to plan for College. More information about the use of Naviance and College and Career prep can be found on the **Sherman Independent School District** website www.shermanisd.net at https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/counseling/post-secondary-planning

Harassment

[See **Discrimination, Harassment, Dating Violence, and Retaliation**]

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; and
- Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated.

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.

[See **Bullying** and policies of 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 he or she 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, if a child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she 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. In addition, reportable communicable diseases can be found on the Texas Health and Human Services website at https://www.dshs.texas.gov/idps-home/school-communicable- disease-chart.

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 an affidavit 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://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/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 affidavit 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**.

[See the DSHS's Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements (https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school) and policy FFAB(LEGAL) for more information.]

Lice (All Grade Levels)

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

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

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to 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 can be obtained from the DSHS website Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home (https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm).

[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 his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. In accordance with policy FFAC, authorized employees may administer:

- Prescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container provided by the parent along with a written request.
- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. The dose administered must be unexpired and consistent with the instructions on the container's label. **Note:** Insect repellant is considered a nonprescription medication.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school.

At the elementary level, a 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. A student at this level may apply his or her own sunscreen if the student is able to do so.

At the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the 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 he or she has written authorization from his or her parents and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her 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**]

Unassigned Medication for Respiratory Distress

In accordance with Chapter 38, Subchapter E of the Education Code, the board has adopted a policy to allow authorized school personnel, 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).

"Unassigned medication for respiratory distress" means albuterol, albuterol, levalbuterol, or another medication designated by the executive commission of the Health and Human Services Commission for treatment of respiratory distress, prescribed by an authorized health-care provider in the name of the district with a non-patient-specific standing delegation order for the administration of a medication for respiratory distress, and issued by an authorized health-care provider.

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 a sufficient number of school personnel at each campus are trained to administer epinephrine so that at least one trained individual is present on campus during regular school hours and whenever 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 while in transit to or from a school event when an unassigned epinephrine auto-injector is available.

For additional information, see FFAC(LOCAL).

Opioid Antagonists (Possible Overdose)

Sherman Independent School District has taken steps to ensure the safety and well-being of its students by providing training for School Resource Officers (SROs) and campus nurses in administering Narcan nasal spray in case of drug overdoses. Narcan, also known as naloxone, is an opioid overdose reversal medication and can be lifesaving in emergency situations.

For any further information or specific details about ***Sherman Independent School District's*** policies and procedures regarding Narcan training or any other health-related protocols, please contact your school nurse. The nurse will have the most up-to-date information and

will be able to address any questions or concerns you may have regarding the school's efforts to keep students safe.

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.

Body building, 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. Please contact the athletic department for more information.

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; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

Sherman Independent School District provides support through various programs approved by the district's school board and the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC). These programs include Peer Helpers, Core Essential curriculum, counselor-developed guidance for students, training sessions for staff, LEAD curriculum by SROs, and ongoing mental health support outlined in the district's 5-year strategic plan.

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 campus counselor or 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** for campus and **community mental and physical health resources;** and
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

Physical Activity Requirements

Pre-K to Grade 4

The district will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten–grade 4 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity and/or recess for at least 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.

Grades 5 – 8

The district will ensure that students in grades 5 and 6, will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters. Students in grades 7 and 8 will engage in 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 intermediate and middle school student physical activity programs and requirements, please see the campus 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. Students will not be restricted from participating in recess or physical education as a way to manage or correct their behavior.

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 his or her 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 to be submitted annually to the district and all data is recorded in the district's athletic system, Rank One.

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

See the UIL's explanation of sudden cardiac arrest (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).

Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels)

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

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

Special Health Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)

Please see the district's website: *https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/college-requirements.aspx* 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**]

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 website (https://www.dshs.texas.gov/schoolhealth/allergiesandanaphylaxis/)

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 *https://www.shermanisd.net/departments/health-services*.

[See **Celebrations** 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.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** and contact the school nurse for more information.]

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

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

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

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 lead nurse is:

Kristen Bollier, R.N.
Lead Nurse

120 S. Binkley Park, Sherman, Texas 75090

kbollier@shermanisd.net

903-891-6650

The District Coordinator of Counseling and Student Services:

Aileen Hays

Coordinator of Counseling and Student Support

2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090

ahays@shermanisd.net

903-891-6421

The local public health authority, Grayson County Health Department, Sherman Clinic which may be contacted at 903-893-0131, 515 West Walnut, Sherman, Texas 75090.

The local mental health authority, Texoma Community Center (TCC), which may be contacted at 903-957-3416, 315 West McLain Drive, Sherman, Texas 75092. Crisis Line: 1-877-277-2226.

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 *https://policyconnect.org/org/sherman-isd.*

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: FFH
- 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.

- Student Wellness: Support and enhance student and staff wellness.

- Promote a positive and supportive school environment that is respectful and conducive to learning and achievement for all students.
- Create opportunities that develop resilience and conflict resolution skills to support healthy staff and students.

The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

For further information regarding these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan, please contact:

Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

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 regarding the district's SHAC is available from

Aileen Hays
Coordinator of Counseling and Student Support
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
ahays@shermanisd.net
903-891-6421

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, meeting minutes, and a recording of each meeting will be posted on the district website at *https://www.shermanisd.net/about/district-committees*

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction**, **Consent Before 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:

Aileen Hays
Coordinator of Counseling and Student Support

2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
ahays@shermanisd.net
903-891-6421

Homework (All Grade Levels)

Homework, an integral part of the learning process, supports, enriches, and reinforces topics covered in class. Students should be able to see the purpose of homework and clearly understand the requirements. The district encourages a reasonable amount of academic work to be done at home to complement learning during the school day. Homework also gives the child and parents an opportunity to share in the educational process. Any questions or concerns regarding homework should be directed to the teacher. The teacher's responsibility is to assign effective, well-planned homework assignments that aid the student in the mastery of the course's essential elements. This includes providing the student with ample notice of impending homework assignments. The student's responsibility is to complete assignments on time and to schedule after-school activities so that they do not interfere with the completion of assignments. The student assumes the responsibility for making up work when absent from class. A parent or guardian must take responsibility for ensuring that the child completes homework assignments. Regular monitoring of homework provides a good overview of what the student is learning in various subjects.

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. 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.
- Make reasonable efforts to notify the parents and gain consent, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- Be present for the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

NOTE – if the law enforcement agency deems contacting the parent to interfere with an investigation, the principal will abide by the request.

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 his or her 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.

Under Education Code 37.0012(d), the campus behavior coordinator must notify a student's parent when a student is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer when the reason is related to Subchapter A of Chapter 37 of the Education Code (Alternative Settings for Behavior Management).

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.
- A child's parent regarding a district employee who suspects that a criminal offense has been committed against the parent's child. The notification shall happen not alter than one school business day after the date the employee first has suspicion.

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

Leaving Campus Or Releasing Students From School (All Grade Levels)

Remember that 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.

State rules require parental consent 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, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office no later than two hours prior to the student's need 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 his or her 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 his or her parents 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.

All campuses in ***Sherman Independent School District*** are closed. Students will not be allowed to leave campus at any time during the day without parental consent. ***Sherman Independent School District*** is committed to the protection of students entrusted to its custody during the school day. Therefore, campus administrators shall exercise caution in releasing students during the school day. The procedures controlling the release of a student from school are as follows:

1. Definite and satisfactory identification (i.e., driver's license or picture ID) shall be required of the person authorized to talk with a student or to take a student from school. The following persons will be allowed access to a student:
    a. the student's parents/guardians;
    b. a person who has written authorization from the student's parent/guardian; or
    c. a person who is authorized by a legal order to take possession of a student.
2. A teacher shall not allow a student to leave class without securing the permission of the principal or administrative designee.
3. A telephone call from a person representing himself/herself as a parent shall be verified by a principal or designee. The parent shall be notified any time a request for the release of a student is denied by the principal. When checking a student out of school, a parent or guardian must report to the attendance office or front office.
4. High school students who have a car on campus must obtain an early dismissal pass to leave campus during the school day by presenting a signed and dated note from the parent. These students shall check out through the appropriate office before leaving the campus. Parents requesting that a student be allowed to leave the campus for medical or family matters must make a request, in writing or by personal contact. The principal or principal's designee will verify the request. Students who leave campus at any time without parental permission and administrative approval shall be considered truant and will be subject to disciplinary action.

a. Students in grade 9 and those who do not have a car on campus, still must have the parent/guardian report to the attendance office, or front office, before the student is released.

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)

Please reference the ***Sherman Independent School District*** Grading Guidelines at *https://www.shermanisd.net/academics/grading* for more details.

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 his or her 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**]

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

A student will be permitted to make up tests and 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, Intermediate and Middle School Grade Levels

Students who attend DAEP will be afforded the opportunity to complete all course work. The Coordinator of DAEP will work directly with campus principals and teachers to ensure all students receive appropriate work.

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), he or she 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.]

Statement of Nondiscrimination (All Grade Levels)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, ***Sherman Independent School District*** does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, 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 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 Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

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

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking:

Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
Sherman Independent School District
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

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 sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

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

For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, [see **Discrimination**]

Karrissa Norris
Compliance Coordinator
Sherman Independent School District
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
knorris@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the Director of Student Services:

Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
Sherman Independent School District
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

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

Nontraditional Academic Program (All Grade Levels)

Sherman Independent School District offers an Extended School Year (ESY) program for some students with disabilities. For more information see the **Summer School**.

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** on page 43.]
- 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 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or

before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 84.]

- Becoming a school volunteer. [See **Volunteers** on page 100 and policy GKG for more information.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations and contact information can be found on the ***Sherman Independent School District*** website at *www.shermanisd.net*. 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:

Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
Sherman Independent School District
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

- 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)** 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 Sherman ISD Administration Building, 2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75091. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 3 business days before each meeting by the main entrance and online at www.shermanisd.net. [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 to be eligible for a parking permit.

Students must request a parking permit and pay a fee to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits may be issued throughout the year.

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.

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 & Religious Text (All Grade Levels)

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily, or meditate and read religious text 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:

- Teacher recommendation,
- Grades,
- Scores on criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments, and

- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district.
- Any student with an IEP, an ARD meeting must be held for retention.

Prekindergarten — Grade 3

A parent may request in writing that a student may repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or grades 1, 2, or 3. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Elementary, Intermediate and Middle School Grade Levels

In kindergarten–grade 2, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on 70 percent mastery of the grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for each subject as indicated on the report card.

In grades 3–8, 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.

Repeating Pre-K to Grade 8 at Parent Request

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or any grade in grades 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** and policy EI]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** and **Standardized Testing**]

Repeating 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.

Release of Students from School

[See **Leaving Campus**.]

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 9 weeks.

At the end of the fourth week of a nine-week grading period], parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies 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** 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 reviewed in Frontline by the parent within 3 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.

Regardless of grades, the district shall provide the opportunity for at least two in-person conferences for parents and their child's teachers.

Retaliation

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

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 anonymously reporting an alleged incident to the district's online reporting system at https://report.iwatchtx.org
- 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. Please contact the district's Business Office for further information.

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 annually offer instruction in CPR, and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), at least once to students enrolled in in grades 7–12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR 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:

- Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed (https://www.dhs.gov/stopthebleed)
- Stop the Bleed Texas (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, which includes dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent;
- That person cannot be contacted; and
- 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 may contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation or loss of limb or eyesight. The nurse will make the best medical judgement based on injury for immediate treatment.

Emergency School Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to provide contact information in the event that 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:

- Sherman ISD website (www.shermanisd.net)
- Sherman ISD mass notification System: direct calls, text messages and emails to families and staff (If your contact information has recently changed, please visit the **SISD Parent Portal** to update your information to receive district notifications or contact the campus)
- Sherman ISD Social Media: Facebook, Twitter/X and Instagram
- Television Stations: KXII (Channel 12), KTEN (Channel 10), KXAS/NBC5 (Channel 5 in Fort Worth), WFAA (Channel 8 in Dallas), and KDFW (FOX 4 in Dallas)
- Radio Stations: K-MAD (102.5 FM), KMKT Katy Country (93.1 FM), KLAK (97.5), and HOT 107.3 FM.
- Newspaper: Herald Democrat

[See **Automated Emergency Communications**.]

SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests

[See **Standardized Testing**.]

Schedule Changes (Middle and High School Grade Levels)

Please reference the Academic Planning Guide (APG) for information about schedule changes. The APG can be found at *https://www.shermanisd.net/academics/secondary-education*

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:

Scott Conrad
Director of Maintenance and Operations
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
sconrad@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

Food and Nutrition Services (All Grade Levels)

The district offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law. For more information about the food and nutrition program.

Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent requests the student's information not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.
To apply for free or reduced-price meal services, contact:

Robert Rushing
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
rrushing@shermanisd.net
903-891-6426

[See policy CO for more information.]

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.

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 regarding these policies and guidelines, see the campus principal. [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:

Scott Conrad
Director of Maintenance and Operations
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
sconrad@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

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 a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. Please contact your campus principal regarding library access and usage.

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 librarian

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 Dr. Mignon Plyler at (903) 891-6400. A district employee or parent may request the reconsideration of library material by contacting the campus librarian or Dr. Mignon Plyler 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.

To find out which areas are open to students before school, please contact your campus principal.

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 from 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 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

Searches in General (All Grade Levels)

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

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

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property. If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

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** 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)

The district's policy FNF(LOCAL) addresses board authorization for drug testing of students. [See **Steroids**.]

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 **Discrimination, Harassment, Dating Violence, and Retaliation**.]

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, English learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact:

Jenifer Politi
Director of Student Services
2701 Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
jpoliti@shermanisd.net
903-891-6400

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Talking Book Program (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

Secondary Grade Levels

Pre-ACT/PSAT/SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)

Sherman Independent School District offers students a variety of college entrance exams. A complete listing and information regarding each of these tests can be found on the district website at **https://www.shermanisd.net/academics/assessment** or via your campus counselor.

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.

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

Note – parents have the ability to refuse to participate in the state assessment. Information about this can be found on the district website at *www.shermanisd.net*

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

A student in 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 prior to 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. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

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

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

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 Executive Director.

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on STAAR or EOC

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 subsequent school year by:

- 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, or
- 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.

A parent may elect to modify or remove a requirement for the [accelerated] instruction under these requirements by submitting a written request to the administrator at the campus in which the student is enrolled. To request the change in requirements, the student must have been administered and failed to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment or was administered a beginning-of-year assessment instrument aligned with the essential knowledge and skills for the applicable subject area. An LEA may select a beginning-of-year assessment designed to show grade level proficiency on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) as the selected beginning-of-year assessment. A student who does not have a failed STAAR assessment must be administered a beginning-of-year assessment for a parent to be able to opt out of requirements

HB 1416 makes several changes to law regarding accelerated instruction. For more detailed information, see TEA's Frequently Asked Questions on HB 1416.

Personal Graduation Plans For Middle School Students

For a middle-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 middle-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, and
- 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.]

[See **Graduation** on page 60.]

Students in Foster Care (All Grade Levels)

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).

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

Aileen Hays
Coordinator of Counseling and Student Support
2701Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
ahays@shermanisd.net
903-891-6421

[See **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)**.]

Students Who are Homeless (All Grade Levels)

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

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

Aileen Hays
Coordinator of Counseling and Student Support
2701Loy Lake Road, Sherman, Texas 75090
ahays@shermanisd.net
903-891-6421

[See **A Student Who is Homeless**.]

Student Speakers (All Grade Levels)

The district hereby creates a limited public forum for student speakers at all school events at which a student is to publicly speak. For each speaker, the District shall set a maximum time limit reasonable and appropriate to the occasion.

A “school event” is a school-sponsored event or activity that does not constitute part of the required instruction for a segment of the school’s curriculum, regardless of whether the event takes place during or after school.

To “publicly speak” means to address an audience at a school event using the student's own words. A student is not using his or her own words when the student is reading or performing from an approved script, is delivering a message that has been approved in advance or otherwise supervised by school officials or is making brief introductions or announcements. [FNA (LOCAL)]. [See **Graduation** for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies and policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities.]

Summer School (All Grade Levels)

Elementary Summer School (Grades 3-6)

The elementary summer school program is for students who need remediation or review in language arts and /or mathematics. Students qualify when their performance is below expectations on the state assessments, other locally developed data, and grade level performance. Students attend Monday through Thursday of each week. Parents will receive registration information from their child’s classroom teacher or counselor in May of each school year.

Secondary Summer School (Grades 9-12)

Secondary Summer School is a tuition-based program, open only to ***Sherman Independent School District*** students enrolled in grades 9-12. The enrollment period is from April to early May. Students wishing to participate must obtain approval from their counselor prior to enrollment. Two summer sessions are available with a variety of courses for which students will earn credits upon successful completion. The courses are publicized during the enrollment period; there must be sufficient enrollment before courses become finalized. Course offerings, dates of the summer sessions, tuition amounts, and other pertinent information are provided in the enrollment packet and are advertised on the District website.

Summer School Credit Recovery (Grades 7-12)

The Credit Recovery program is open to ***Sherman Independent School District*** students enrolled in grades 7-12 who have not successfully passed their classes during the school year. Students are recommended for this program by their ***Sherman Independent School District*** counselors. Course offerings, dates of the summer sessions, tuition amounts, and other pertinent information are provided in the enrollment packet and are advertised on the District website.

Summer School STAAR Academy

The STAAR Academy program is for students who have not successfully passed one or more subjects on the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) and is based on a recommendation from the student's counselor. Students who do not meet the requirement of the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) End-of-Course assessments in the spring should attend the STAAR Academy program to prepare for the retest.

Extended School Year (ESY) Program

The ESY program, held during the summer, is provided for some students with disabilities. The need for participation in the ESY program is determined on an individual basis at the annual Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee meeting. Services will be based on the individual and unique needs of each student as determined by the ARD. Guidelines for the ***Sherman Independent School District*** Extended School Year program can be requested from the campus diagnostician.

The determination of need for ESY services are based on a Regression-Recoupment Analysis. The analysis determines if the student has exhibited, or may be expected to exhibit, severe and substantial regression in one or more critical objectives that cannot be recouped in a reasonable time period. Additional considerations for recommending ESY may include:

- A skill is critical when the loss of that skill results, or is reasonably expected to result, in any of the following occurrences during the *first eight weeks* of the next regular school year (19 TAC 89.1065(4)): Placement in a more restrictive instructional arrangement (19 TAC89.1065(4)(A)); Significant loss of acquired skills necessary for the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum (19 TAC89.1065(4)(A)); Significant loss of self-sufficiency in self-help skill areas as evidenced by an increase in the number of direct service staff and/or amount of time required to provide special education or related services (19 TAC89.1065(4)(A)); Loss of access to community-based independent living skills

instruction or an independent living environment provided by non-educational sources as a result of regression in skills (19 TAC89.1065(4)(D)); or Loss of access to on-the-job training or productive employment as a result of regression in skills (19 TAC89.1065(4)(E)); and

- "Severe or substantial regression" means that the child has been, or will be, unable to maintain one or more acquired critical skills in the absence of ESY services (19 TAC89.1065(2)).

Tardies (All Grade Levels)

A student who is more than 10 minutes tardy to class may be assigned to detention hall or given another appropriate consequence. Any student who is absent from any portion of a class may be counted as tardy and/or truant.

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**, and **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties** or **Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services**, 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 his or her 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** on page 89.]

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.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually. Any subsequent 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.

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 the Director of Transportation at 903-891-6433.

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.]

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 may 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 the principal or the Executive Director of Special Programs that the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law. Additional information about cameras in specialized classrooms can be found at [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 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:

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

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL). [See the Student Code of Conduct.]

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students

Business, Civic, and Youth Groups

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

Career Day

The district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students. Career Day is scheduled each year and will be posted on the high school website.

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: Human Resource Department 903-891-6410. .

Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, the district requires a state criminal history background check for each volunteer, including parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district. The volunteer must pay all costs for the background check. Please contact the HR department to complete 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. All paperwork must be obtained by contacting the campus registrar.

Glossary

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

Attendance Review Committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

CPS stands for Child Protective Services.

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

DFPS 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.

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 he or she begins grade 9.

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

SAT refers to the Scholastic Aptitude Test, one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to 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 ; 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 English learners make in learning the English language and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

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

TXVSN stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public-school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors and 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.