



## **Gateway College Preparatory School**

### **2025–2026 Parent-Student Handbook and Code of Conduct**

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Para solicitar la traducción oral de todo o parte de este documento, llame a la oficina de la escuela.

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## PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to Gateway College Preparatory School! We wish this year to be an especially productive experience for each student. For this to happen, we must all work together: students, parents, and staff. This Parent–Student Handbook (“the Handbook”) is designed to help us accomplish this goal.

The Handbook is an overview of our school’s goals, services, and rules. It is an essential reference book describing what we expect of our students and parents, what they can expect of us, and how we will achieve our educational mission. We have attempted to make the language in this Handbook as straightforward as possible. Please note that the term “parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

The Handbook is divided into six sections. The first section includes general information regarding school policy and procedures. The second section provides important health and safety information. The third section provides information about academics and grading. The fourth section is the Student Code of Conduct, which is required by state law and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. Both students and parents need to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct. The Student Code of Conduct is also available in the front office and is posted on the school’s website. The fifth section is especially for parents, with information regarding parental rights. Finally, the sixth section contains important notices regarding student information, computer resources, and electronic communication devices.

This Handbook is designed to be in harmony with Board Policy. Please be aware that the Handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy and procedure that affect Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications. **In case of conflict between Board Policy and any provision of this Handbook, the provision that was most recently adopted by the Board of Directors will be followed.**

We ask our parents to review the entire Handbook with their students and to keep it as a reference during this school year. Parents or students with questions about the material in this Handbook should contact the Head of School.

**Finally, you must complete and return the last page of the Handbook – “Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook” – to the school office.**

On behalf of the entire Gateway College Preparatory School family, best wishes for a great school year!

Sincerely,

Missy Dean  
Head of School

## **SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Our K-12 Mission: Citizen, Scholar, Athlete**

#### **Board of Directors**

Andrew Cottrill, President  
Travis Graves, Vice-President  
Mick Swope, Member  
Tory Gant, Member  
Richard N Rickey, Ex-Officio

#### **Administration**

Superintendent	Carla Silber
Head of School	Missy Dean
Head of High School	Colby Blackwell
Head of Middle	Kyla Ardoin
Head of Elementary	Gregory Vidal
Dean of Special Programs	Lerachelle Stewart
Dean of Admissions and College Readiness	Jessica Bond
Chief Financial Officer	Margina Escobar
Director of Human Resources	Teresa Moreno
Director of Academic Programs	Jessica Shugars
Director of Operations	Shelley Williams
Director of Development and Community Relations	Adam Price
Director of Special Education	Misty Granderson
Director of IT	Albert Rodriguez

#### **Orenda Education – Sponsoring Entity**

Board President	Andrew Cottrill
Founder/CEO	Richard Rickey

#### **About Gateway College Preparatory School**

As our name implies, we are a college preparatory school. Furthermore, our mission is to develop and implement programs that will create well-rounded scholars who are also good citizens, artists, and athletes. Students in our elementary programs will learn the fundamentals of math, reading, and writing, and be challenged individually as they interact with the world around them. Students in our intermediate, middle, and high school programs will gain the skills and knowledge, and develop a work ethic that will propel them to success at the post-secondary level. They will be engaged through the use of appropriate technology, projects, and collaborative learning models.

Our middle and high school students take Honors courses starting in grade 6 that prepare them for success in Advanced Placement Courses beginning in their freshman year.

To better prepare all students, we have implemented AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination, a college readiness system that is designed to increase school-wide learning and performance through the use of research-based learning strategies aimed at preparing students for college success.

Learning at Gateway Preparatory College School (“Gateway” or the “School”) is not limited to core classes. We are proud of our fine arts, languages other than English, and athletic programming options. We also offer competitive programs within academics and debate. There are options for students interested in science and technology, as we offer a competitive robotics program. Our goal is to get as many students involved in our programs as possible.

Finally, we cannot overstate the value that YOU as families bring to our school. Regardless of our growth, we have been and will remain an open door environment that welcomes and encourages parental input, support, criticism, and help. Our PTO and Booster Clubs are just two of the many ways that you can become involved with our school community.

### **Circle of Courage Approach**

Orenda schools are based on the “Circle of Courage” philosophy. The Circle of Courage is an integrated, holistic approach to child development and learning intended to promote a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. The Circle of Courage serves as a moral character development guide for our faculty and our students and helps set the tone for the students to become successful academically. At the core is our commitment to provide a school culture where all our students feel welcomed and know they are a vital part of the school community (**Belonging**). We believe that each student has unique talents and gifts that must be discovered before the student can begin to feel competent. Increased competency enhances self-esteem and provides the motivation for further achievement (**Mastery**). At Orenda schools, our goal is to provide a stimulating academic experience where students can grow, develop and have ownership over their learning. Our schools are a place where students can have the freedom to learn in their own style, at their own pace and through their own interests (**Independence**). We also believe every student has a tremendous capacity for good will. We teach the importance of being generous and unselfish and expect our students to serve the school and the community through participation in our various service clubs (**Generosity**).

Gateway shall provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning and student achievement. All components of the Student Code of Conduct, located in Section 4 of the Handbook, and classroom rules and procedures have been created under these guiding principles. **All components of the Student Code of Conduct are applicable to students in grades K-12.**

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

Gateway College Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs and admissions. Gateway College Preparatory School complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

Any questions or concerns about Gateway’s compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the following persons designated as being responsible for coordinating compliance with these requirements:

- The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender, is Shelley Williams, Director of Operations, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020.

- The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is Misty Granderson, Director of Special Education, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020.
- The Age Discrimination Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is Teresa Moreno, Director of Human Resources, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020.
- The Race, Color, or National Origin Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is Teresa Moreno, Director of Human Resources, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to Carla Silber, Superintendent, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020.

### **General Admissions and Enrollment Information**

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the geographic boundaries stated in the School’s charter, and who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. The total number of students enrolled in Gateway shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by Gateway based on occupancy limitations, code compliance and staffing requirements as deemed necessary.

*In accordance with state law, Gateway does not discriminate in its admissions policy on the basis of sex; national origin; ethnicity; religion; disability; academic, artistic, or athletic ability; or the district the child would otherwise attend.*

### **Exclusion from Admission**

As authorized by the Orenda Charter School and Texas Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), students who have engaged in conduct outlined in Texas Education Code Section 37.006 related to placement in a disciplinary alternative education program or juvenile justice alternative education program, have engaged in conduct outlined in Texas Education Code Section 37.007 related to expulsion, or have been convicted of a criminal offense or has a juvenile court adjudication may be excluded from admission and enrollment in Orenda Charter School.

### **Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery**

Students wanting to attend Gateway must submit an application during the School’s open enrollment period, which takes place **during the month of January each year**, or as otherwise set by the administration. Enrollment forms are available at Gateway’s information sessions (“Gator Bites”), at individual appointments with the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness, and online through the School’s website.

If fewer applications than spots available are received, students will be offered admission on a first-come, first-served basis. If Gateway receives more applications than it has spots available in any grade level, it will conduct a random lottery. Each applicant selected during the lottery (up until all open seats are filled) will be offered admission. Once all enrollment spots have been filled by the lottery, the lottery will continue and applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the next school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

If an application is received after the application period has passed, the applicant's name will be added to the waiting list behind the names of the applicants who timely applied.

Families offered an enrollment seat will be sent a registration packet with instructions for registering. This notice will be sent **no later than February 28**. Families must complete and return the registration packet by the published deadline in order to secure enrollment. If an enrollment offer is declined or if you do not complete the registration packet by the established deadline, your child's seat will be offered to the next potential student on the waiting list.

*Exceptions to Lottery Process:* Federal guidelines permit Gateway to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending the School including students transferring from another Orenda campus; siblings of students already admitted to or attending an Orenda campus; and children of the School's founders, teachers, and staff, so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the School's total enrollment.

### **Official Enrollment and "No Show"**

Per the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook, students are not officially enrolled until the student is physically present during the official attendance accounting period for that school year on a particular campus. Students not in attendance by the third day of the school year will be considered a "no show" and will lose their seat. Students who are not in attendance by the district deadline of three days after submitting their completed registration will lose their seat. Parents may submit a request in writing by email to the Superintendent to start later than the district enrollment deadline due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness or death of an immediate family member. Requests need to be submitted no later than the first day of school, based on the published campus calendar.

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001**

Homeless children and youth are ensured specific educational rights and protections. A listing of these specific rights may be obtained from Gateway by contacting Shelley Williams, Director of Operations, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020.

"Homeless children and youth" as defined and covered by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001:

- Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- Includes children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations.
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Are abandoned in hospitals, or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.

Parents of students in homeless situations can keep their students in their schools of origin (the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last

enrolled even if the student is now residing outside the school attendance area or school district) or enroll them in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.

### **Student Information**

Any student admitted to Gateway must have records, including: report cards, transcripts, discipline, and attendance records from the previous school to verify his or her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling in the School for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students must be in compliance with all immunization requirements on the first day of attendance or qualify for provisional enrollment for the first 30 days.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in the School, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school. Students will not be denied enrollment because they failed to meet this requirement.

Gateway will forward a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parents' consent.

### **Food Allergy Information**

The parent of each student enrolled in the School must complete a [form](#) provided by Gateway that discloses (1) whether the child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that should be disclosed to Gateway to enable it to take any necessary precautions regarding the child's safety, and (2) specifies the food(s) to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction.

For purposes of this requirement, the term "severe food allergy" means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Gateway may also require information from a child's physician if the child has food allergies.

Procedures for the care of students with diagnosed food allergies who are at risk for anaphylaxis will include:

1. Development and implementation of food allergy action plans, emergency action plans, and Section 504 plans, as appropriate;
2. Training, as necessary, for employees, including strategies for reducing student risk of exposure to diagnosed allergens; and
3. Periodic review of general procedures to limit the potential health risks to students.

Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child's student records, and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board policy and as permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ("FERPA").

## **Establishing Identification**

Any of the following documents are acceptable for proof of identification and age: birth certificate; driver's license; passport; school ID card; records, or report card; military ID; hospital birth records; adoption records; church baptismal record; or any other legal document that establishes identity.

## **Undocumented Students**

Enrollment may not be denied to children who are not legally admitted into the United States.

## **Residency Verification**

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in Gateway, each student must reside within the district's approved geographical boundaries and each student's parent must show proof of residency. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation, and other means, including, but not limited to:

1. A recently paid rent receipt,
2. A current lease agreement,
3. The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,
4. A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers,
5. Mailing addresses of the residence occupiers,
6. Visual inspection of the residence,
7. Interviews with persons with relevant information, or
8. Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1st of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only).

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

When the school staff are made aware, either verbally, in writing, or from returned mail, that the student is no longer residing at the address matching the residency documentation on file, the enrolling parent/guardian will be contacted in writing at the email address on file with the school. The enrolling parent/guardian will have 10 school days to provide new residency documenting that the student resides within the approved geographical boundaries. If the parent/guardian fails to respond to the request for new residency documentation by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> school day or the new residency documentation confirms the student no longer resides within the approved geographic boundaries, the student will no longer be eligible for enrollment and will be withdrawn by the school.

## **School Calendar**

Gateway operates according to the school calendar adopted annually by the Board of Directors. Holidays may be used as school make-up days for days lost due to bad weather. The latest changes to the calendar will be available on the School's website.

## **Recognition Dates**

Orenda Charter School will regularly observe the following recognition days, weeks, and months, as required under state law, by appropriate activities in public schools:

***Hydrocephalus Awareness Month:*** September is Hydrocephalus Awareness Month to:

- Increase public awareness of hydrocephalus; and
- Encourage the development of partnerships between the federal government, health care professionals, and patient advocacy groups to advance the public's understanding of the condition, improve the diagnosis and treatment of the condition, and support research for a cure.

***Texas History Month:*** March is Texas History Month in honor of those Texans who helped shape the history of the State of Texas and in recognition of events throughout Texas' history. Texas History Month shall be regularly observed by appropriate celebrations and activities in public schools to promote interest in and knowledge of Texas history.

***Celebrate Freedom Week:*** To educate students about the sacrifices made for freedom in the founding of this country and the values on which this country was founded, the week in which September 17 falls is designated as Celebrate Freedom Week.

***Generation Texas Month:*** To educate middle school and high school students about the importance of higher education, the month of November shall be Generation Texas Month.

During the designated month, each middle school and high school shall provide students with comprehensive grade-appropriate information regarding the pursuit of higher education. The information provided must include information regarding:

1. Higher education options available to students;
2. Standard admission requirements for institutions of higher education, including:
  - a. Overall high school grade point average;
  - b. Required curriculum;
  - c. College readiness standards and expectations as determined under Education Code 28.008; and
  - d. Scores necessary on generally recognized tests or assessment instruments used in admissions determinations, including the Scholastic Assessment Test and the American College Test;
3. Automatic admission of certain students to general academic teaching institutions as provided by Education Code 51.803; and
4. Financial aid availability and requirement, including the financial aid information provided under Education Code 33.007(b).

Additionally, each middle school, junior high school, and high school shall provide to the students during the designated month at least one public speaker to promote the importance of higher education.

***Holocaust Remembrance Week:*** The governor shall designate a week to be known as "Holocaust Remembrance Week" in public schools to educate students about the Holocaust and inspire a sense of responsibility to recognize and uphold human value and to prevent future atrocities.

Holocaust Remembrance Week shall include age-appropriate instruction, as determined by Orenda Charter School:

1. Information about the history of and lessons learned from the Holocaust;
2. Participation, in person or using technology, in learning projects about the Holocaust; and
3. The use of materials developed or approved by the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission.

***American Indian Heritage Day:*** The last Friday in September is American Indian Heritage Day in recognition of the historic, cultural, and social contributions American Indian communities and leaders have made to this state. American Indian Heritage Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs in public schools to honor American Indians in this state and to celebrate the rich traditional and contemporary American Indian culture.

**Constitution Day:** Upon receipt of federal funds, Orenda Charter School shall recognize September 17 as Constitution Day and hold an educational program on the United States Constitution for students served by Orenda Charter School.

**Father of Texas Day:** November 3 is Father of Texas Day in memory of Stephen F. Austin. Father of Texas Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate and patriotic programs in public schools to properly commemorate the birthday of Stephen F. Austin and to inspire a greater love for this state.

**Public School Paraprofessional Day:** The second Wednesday in May of each year is Public School Paraprofessional Day in recognition of education paraprofessionals including teacher assistants, instructional aides, educational trainers, library attendants, bilingual assistants, special education associates, mentors, and tutors. Public School Paraprofessional Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies and activities in public schools to properly recognize the paraprofessionals who have made tremendous contributions to the educational process.

**Sam Rayburn Day:** January 6 is Sam Rayburn Day in memory of the Texas and American statesman, Sam Rayburn. Sam Rayburn Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate programs in public schools to commemorate the birthday of Sam Rayburn. *Gov't Code 662.041.*

**September 11:** To commemorate the events of September 11, 2001, in each year that date falls on a regular school day, each public elementary or secondary school shall provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first class period of that day. Immediately before the period of observance required by this section, the class instructor shall make a statement of reference to the memory of individuals who died on September 11, 2001. The period of observance required by this section may be held in conjunction with the minute of silence required by Section 25.082.

**State of Texas Anniversary Remembrance Day:** February 19 is State of Texas Anniversary Remembrance Day (STAR Day) in honor of Texas joining the Union and the day that James Pinckney Henderson became the first governor of the State of Texas in 1846. STAR Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate and patriotic programs in the public schools to properly commemorate the annexation of this state and to inspire a greater appreciation for the history of this state.

**Texas First Responders Day:** September 11 is Texas First Responders Day in honor of the bravery, courage, and determination of Texas men and women who assist others in emergencies. Texas First Responders Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies in public schools to honor Texas first responders.

**Texas Fruit and Vegetable Day:** The first Friday in April is designated as Texas Fruit and Vegetable Day in public schools to promote awareness of the health benefits of fruits and vegetables and to encourage students to consume more fruits and vegetables during Texas Fruit and Vegetable Month. Texas Fruit and Vegetable Day shall include appropriate instruction, as determined by Orenda Charter School.

**Texas Girls in STEM Day:** March 1 is designated as Texas Girls in STEM Day to celebrate and encourage the participation of girls in fields related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Texas Girls in STEM Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs in public schools to:

1. Encourage girls in this state to consider career fields in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; and
2. Celebrate and honor the women of this state who have excelled in those fields.

***Texas Military Heroes Day:*** The governor shall designate a day to be known as Texas Military Heroes Day in public schools to educate students about the sacrifices made by Texans who have served in the armed forces of the United States. Texas Military Heroes Day will include appropriate instruction, as determined by Orenda Charter School. Instruction may include:

1. Information about persons who have served in the armed forces of the United States and are from the community or the geographic area in which Orenda Charter School is located; and
2. Participation, in person or using technology, in age-appropriate learning projects at battlefields and gravesites associated with a person who has served in the armed forces.

***Women's Independence Day:*** August 26 is Women's Independence Day to commemorate the ratification in 1920 of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which guaranteed women the right to vote. Women's Independence Day shall be regularly observed by appropriate programs in the public schools to inspire a greater appreciation of the importance of women's suffrage.

### **School Day**

Elementary classes start at 7:45 a.m. and are dismissed at 3:05 p.m. Grades 5–12 begin classes at 8:30 a.m. and are dismissed at 3:50 p.m. Students may be dropped off as early as 7:00 a.m. They will be supervised, but there are no organized activities before the instructional day begins.

On early release days, students in K–4 are dismissed at 12:15 p.m. and students in grades 5–12 are dismissed at 1:00 p.m.

Students in grades K–12 enrolled in after-school programming may be on campus, provided that all applicable fees for activities have been paid. These fees vary, and will be published on our LMS/website and communicated to elementary parents.

**Students in grades K–4 who are not scheduled for after-school programming are expected to be picked up by 3:20 p.m. at the latest, unless arrangements have been made at least 24 hours in advance.**

**Students in grades 5–8 who are not scheduled for after-school programming are expected to be picked up by 4:15 p.m. at the latest unless arrangements have been made at least 24 hours in advance.**

**Students in grades 9–12 are expected to be picked up by 4:15 p.m. at the latest.** After those times, students not in after-school programming (clubs, athletics, UIL, dance, etc.) will not be supervised by a Gateway staff member. Students staying for academic help from an individual teacher are exempt from this rule, provided their teacher is supervising them and they are picked up at a pre-determined and reasonable time.

Sibling Pick Up students will be dismissed at 3:50 p.m. to their secondary sibling and will need to head to the K-8 loop to be picked up unless the older sibling is a student driver; in that case, those siblings will walk to the parking lot at dismissal.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures**

All students must be dropped off and picked up ONLY in the designated areas. Parents can also park and walk to drop off and pick up their child from the designated areas. The current drop off and pick up maps are available at [www.gatewaycps.org](http://www.gatewaycps.org). If you are picking up your K-4 child prior to dismissal, you must

do so before 2:45 p.m., and if you are picking up your grade 5-12 child prior to dismissal, you must do so before 3:30 p.m.

For maximum safety, stay in a single line in the drop-off and pick-up line so students can exit from both sides of the vehicle. PLEASE DO NOT PASS CARS UNLOADING STUDENTS. While in the school parking lot, please refrain from using your cell phone and drive slowly and carefully. As a reminder, Gateway College Prep is a tobacco free campus. Smoking and vaping is not permitted while on campus or in your vehicle.

Secondary parents do not need to arrive on campus for dismissal prior to 3:50 p.m. to ensure that all K-4 students are picked up.

Parents or designated adults who are responsible for picking up children in the elementary car line must have a grade-level appropriate car tag. Parents will receive these tags at Meet the Teacher night and are available for replacement via email to your child's teacher. Anyone picking up your child needs to be on file with the office as approved by the parent and may be required to show valid identification. **If pick up arrangements change, a written or emailed request needs to be delivered to the classroom teacher no later than 90 minutes before dismissal. Any changes after that time need to be made through the front office via phone call.**

**Car Tag colors will be as follows:**

- Kindergarten - Orange
- 1<sup>st</sup> Grade - Purple
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade - Yellow
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade -Green
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade - Blue
- MS/HS getting picked up in the K-8 loop - White
- Sibling Pick Up - Pink

**Student Drivers and Parking**

All student drivers must hold a valid driver's license and insurance. Students driving to school must park in the gym parking lot and have paid any required campus parking fees, if applicable. Students may not go to their cars during the school day. Students must also drive in a manner that is safe and does not disrupt the learning environment or school community in any way. Students who fail to follow these guidelines will have their driving privileges suspended or revoked, and may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct.

**Staff Parking**

All staff will utilize all of the parking space on the K-8 side of the campus first; any staff overflow will use the Student Union parking lot. The first row by the gym will be reserved for coaches only.

**Attendance**

Regular attendance is expected of all Gateway students due to the rigor of our curriculum. Consistent school attendance is an essential component of each student's education. Official attendance is taken each day and recorded each instructional period. Tardies and early checkouts are also recorded each day.

Absence from school will affect a student's ability to succeed in class; therefore, students and parents should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Additionally, state law mandates compulsory school attendance for children of a certain age, and Gateway policy deals with attendance for course credit and a student's final grade. These items are discussed below.

## **Texas Compulsory Attendance Law**

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of six and 19 must attend school and school-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. Gateway staff must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered “truant” and subject to disciplinary action.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 19 years of age or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, Gateway may revoke the student’s enrollment, except that Gateway may not revoke the enrollment on a day on which the student is physically present at school. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. Prior to revoking the student’s enrollment, Gateway shall issue a warning letter to the student, after the third unexcused absence, stating that the student’s enrollment may be revoked for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking enrollment, Gateway may impose a behavior improvement plan.

*Notice to Parents: Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the student’s parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093; and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Texas Family Code § 65.003(a).*

*Gateway shall notify a student’s parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent’s duty to monitor the student’s school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the parent is needed to discuss the absences.*

## **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

In accordance with the Gateway charter and Board Policy, a student must attend at least 90% of the days a class is offered in order to receive credit or a final grade in the class. These days include both excused and unexcused absences. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes, no later than June 30th, an Individual Academic Plan (“IAP”) approved by the Head of School that allows the student to make-up lost instructional time to fulfill the requirements for the class. A student under the jurisdiction of a court in a criminal or juvenile justice proceeding may not receive credit or a final grade without approval from the judge presiding over the student’s case.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the student or parent may submit an appeal following the grievance policy process starting at Level Two – Superintendent.

## **Absence and Tardiness**

When a student must be absent from school, parents are asked to report the absence via the Gateway College Preparatory website. If parents are unable to report the absence through the Gateway website, students must bring a note, signed by the parent, or a medical excuse signed and dated by a provider that describes the reason for the absence. Notes should be submitted to the school attendance clerk in person, scanned and emailed, or faxed. **If a note is not received within five school days of the absence, the**

**absence will be recorded as unexcused.** In addition, *only a maximum of three parent notes per semester will be accepted for absences.* Any additional absences will require a doctor's note or other medical documentation to qualify as an excused absence. Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence. The final determination of excused/unexcused will be made by the Head of School.

Because excessive absences are considered truancy under state law, Gateway reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

The School recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the School's expectations. Students and parents should also be aware of the School's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

### **Excused Absences**

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

- Religious holy days.
- Required court appearances.
- Activities related to obtaining student's own United States citizenship including US nationalization oath.
- Service as an election clerk.
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A consultation over the phone or via video (telemedicine) is considered an appointment with a health care professional. If a student returns to school the same day or attends part of the day prior to a doctor's appointment and then presents a doctor's note verifying the appointment, the absence is excused and the student is counted present. Students should be picked up and signed out for early dismissal in the office. We cannot call your student from the classroom until you are in the front office signing them out.
- Mental health or therapy appointments for students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state.
- A student is in the conservatorship of the DFPS and misses school: o to participate in an activity ordered by a court under the Texas Family Code, Chapter 262 or Chapter 263, provided that scheduling the participation outside of school hours is not practicable; or to attend an activity under a service plan under the Texas Family Code, Chapter 263, Subchapter B. 82. The student may be considered in attendance for travel days for this purpose. Travel days for which the student is considered in attendance are limited to not more than one day for travel to and one day for travel from the site where the student is participating in the activity, appointment, or visitation.
- A junior or senior student may also be absent for up to two days per school year for purposes of visiting a college or university or for a career investigation day to visit a professional at the professional's workplace, so long as the student obtains permission for the visit using the [College or Professional Workplace Visit Request Form](#) at least 1 week prior to the visit, and makes up any work missed due to the absence. Within two school days of the visit, students must submit the completed [College or Professional Workplace Visit Request Form](#) for the absence to be considered excused.
- A student who is 17 years of age or older and pursuing enlistment in a branch of the United States Armed Services or the National Guard may be absent for up to four days for activities related to pursuing enlistment, so long as the student obtains permission from the Principal prior to the

absence, follows the School's procedures to verify the activities, and makes up any work missed due to the absence. Within five school days of the activities, students must submit documentation from the branch of the United States Armed Services or the National Guard on letterhead signed by an official verifying the student activities related to pursuing enlistment on the scheduled date for the absence to be excused.

- A student may also be absent for up to two days in a school year for service as an early voting clerk, provided the student receives approval from the Head of School prior to the absence and informs his or teachers of the absence.
- Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments of at least four months outside the locality where the parent, stepparent, or guardian regularly resides. An excused absence for this purpose must be taken no earlier than 60 days before the date of deployment or no later than 30 days after the date of return from deployment.
- Visiting a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner permit. The student must be enrolled in high school and 15 years of age or older. Your district may not excuse the student for more than one day of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school for each purpose (obtaining a driver's license and obtaining a learner license). Documentation from the driver's license office that includes the student's name, date, and time must be submitted when the student returns to campus.
- The result of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible, if the parent or guardian provides on the [Orenda Life Threatening Illness Form](#) a certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the following information, as determined by the physician: the student's illness, a statement that the illness is serious or life-threatening, the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment, and a statement that the illness makes the student's attendance infeasible during the anticipated period of absence.
- A student with a mental health or substance abuse condition who is being treated for a serious illness in an outpatient day treatment program or partial hospitalization program, under the care of a health care professional licensed, certified, or registered to practice in Texas, shall be excused for the authorized treatment period, and shall not be withdrawn from school. The discharge summary from the outpatient day treatment or partial hospitalization program must include treatment admission and discharge dates to be provided to the school by the family or medical facility upon return to school as documentation to excuse absences for the duration of the authorized outpatient treatment plan or partial hospitalization.
- For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, and services as an election clerk, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by the School.
- Participating in an activity that is approved by the Orenda Charter School Board and is under the direction of a professional staff member, an adjunct staff member, or a paraprofessional staff member of Orenda Charter School.
- The student is absent to participate in a released time course. A released time course is a course in religious instruction offered by a third-party entity off campus. The student's parent or legal guardian must provide written consent for the student to attend the released time course and is responsible for transportation to and from the course. The student will be excused at least one hour but not more than five hours in a week for this purpose. Additionally, the private entity offering the released time course must maintain attendance records and make the records available to Orenda Charter School.

If a student is absent for one of the state-approved absences above and the necessary documentation has been submitted to the school, the student is eligible to participate in extracurricular and/or UIL contests on these days.

The only additional excused absences are for personal illness, death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, or member of the immediate household), a school-related absence or an absence approved in advance by the Head of School due to extenuating circumstances.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Any absence not listed above or approved in advance by the Head of School due to extenuating circumstances will be considered an unexcused absence.

### **Tardiness and Late Arrival**

K-4 students who arrive late, after 8:00 a.m. must sign in with their parent at the main office in the Student Union. 5-12 students who arrive late, after 8:30 p.m. must sign themselves in upon arriving to school. Late arrivals are documented. Any student arriving after the official attendance time of 10:15 a.m. will be marked absent for average daily attendance purposes.

For K-4 students who show up late before official attendance time, an absence will be marked in the ELA period. Students who are signed out early after the official attendance time will have an absence marked in the Math period. 4 of these absences will equal 1 unexcused absence. Make sure to turn in appropriate notes in a timely manner for excused absences. Students who arrive less than 10 minutes late to any class during the school day will be marked tardy.

Students in grades 5-12 who arrive 10 or more minutes late or leave before the last 10 minutes for any class during the school day, with the exception of the official attendance class, will be mark absent for that class. A cumulative total of 4 period tardies will equal 1-day absence. These absences will be counted towards mandatory attendance requirements. Any student arriving after the official attendance time will be marked absent for average daily attendance purposes.

### **Make-Up Work**

If a student misses class for any excused absence reasons above, a teacher may assign make-up work that incorporates the instructional objectives for the class and that will assist the student to master the essential knowledge and skills necessary to meet subject or course requirements. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. Teachers will provide students and parents with additional information regarding penalties for failure to complete make-up work within the time allotted, and the process for making up tests missed due to absence. No work will be provided in advance of an absence.

### **Except as outlined below, students are not allowed to make-up work for unexcused absences.**

For students in grades K–4 ONLY, any work missed during an unexcused absence will result in a grade of 65 if the work is completed and returned after the unexcused absence within the deadline set by the teacher.

### **Driver's License Attendance Verification**

The Texas Department of Public Safety ("DPS") is required to verify the attendance records of a student between the ages of 16 and 18 that is seeking to obtain or renew a driver's license. In order for DPS to access this information or, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the attendance information to DPS, written parental permission must be obtained. Students may request the required

Verification of Enrollment (“VOE”) form from the School office. Completed forms may be picked up at the school office five business days after the request is submitted. If a student owes time for attendance for credit due to having more than 90% absences, until they have fulfilled their IAP, they will not receive their VOE.

### **Release of Students from School**

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the Head of School or designee and in accordance with campus sign-out procedures. K-4 students cannot get picked up prior to dismissal after 2:45 p.m., and grade 5-12 students cannot get picked up prior to dismissal after 3:30 p.m. Parental consent is needed before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. Gateway has put the following procedures in place to document parental consent:

For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the Student Union and sign the student out. Parents should be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow parents to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the Student Union upon the student’s return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student’s parent authorizes the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student’s need to leave campus. Once the office has received the student’s parent written consent to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to give to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 19 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student’s parent and document the parent’s decision regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student’s parent, or if the student is age 19 or is an emancipated minor, the student must sign out at the Student Union. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

Because class time is important, doctor’s appointments or meetings with other professionals should be scheduled at times when the student will not miss instructional time, if possible.

### **Closed Campus**

Students are not permitted to leave campus for lunch. Parents are welcome to eat lunch with their child. Parents may only bring lunch for their own children. Students and adults may not bring in or give away food to other students.

### **Withdrawals**

#### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

A student under 19 years of age may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. Gateway requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. Parents may obtain a withdrawal form from the main office. The parent shall also provide the name of the new

school in which the student will be enrolled, and must sign the withdrawal request to document that the student will continue to be enrolled in a school as required by compulsory attendance laws.

A student who is 19 years of age or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Complete any make-up work assigned;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any; and
- Sign a release of student records.

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

### **Involuntary Withdrawal**

Gateway may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 19 for non-attendance if:

1. the student has been absent 10 consecutive school days, and
2. repeated efforts by the School to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

Additionally, Gateway may revoke the enrollment of a student 19 years of age or older who has more than five unexcused absences in one semester.

### **Dress and Grooming**

The School's dress and grooming standards are designed to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards, and provide a dress standard that offers flexibility for the parent and student. Students must come to school cleanly and neatly groomed and wearing clothing that will not be a health or safety hazard to the student or others, and that will not distract from the educational atmosphere of the School. Students are required to arrive in proper attire every day.

Students who do not follow the School's guidelines for personal attire and appearance may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, a parent may be contacted to bring an acceptable change of clothing to school, and the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day until a change of clothes is brought to the school.

Gateway students are expected to dress in a manner that conveys respect for their learning community and communicates a message of personal confidence and pride. The following specific guidelines must be adhered to:

Students may **NOT** wear:

- Clothing or conspicuously displayed jewelry or accessories with inappropriate advertising or statements that are offensive or inflammatory are prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, alcoholic beverages, profanity, sex, tobacco, drugs, gangs, guns and other weapons, excessively violent or gory imagery, and the promotion of violence.
- Any pajama-type pants or tops, or other sleeping attire. This includes onesies.
- Any form of slippers or "house shoes."

- Blankets are not jackets and are not allowed.
- Yoga pants, athletic pants, tights without covering them with appropriate dress code shorts, shirt, or skirt. Leggings are not pants.
- Large chains, such as those attached to wallets.
- Jeans or any pants that have tears or holes larger than one inch. NO holes or tears may be above fingertip length.
- Any clothing, jewelry, or other item that is gang related or shows affiliation with any other inappropriate organization.
- Hair must be neat and clean. Gateway College Preparatory School does not discriminate against a hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race. The term “protective hairstyle” includes braids, locks, and twists. Unconventional hairstyles that are considered to be distracting and/or disruptive to the educational environment are prohibited. For further clarification on what is unconventional, please consult with the campus administration.
- No masks or “costume like” attire (tails, paws, ears, etc.).
- No face paint allowed unless it’s a designated spirit day.
- Visible tattoos and similar body painting(s) that promote violence or reflect gang activity are prohibited. Visible tattoos and similar body painting(s) that are considered offensive, inflammatory or disruptive to the learning environment are prohibited. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate advertising or statements that are offensive or inflammatory alcoholic beverages, profanity, sex, tobacco, drugs, gangs, guns and other weapons, excessively violent or gory imagery, and the promotion of violence.
- Skirts and shorts must reach at least fingertip length.
- Halter tops, exposed midriffs, strapless and/or low cut tops that expose breasts or cleavage, exposed backs, spaghetti straps and see-through clothing are not permitted.
- Shirts may not expose midriffs and must go to the waistband.
- Undergarments must not be able to be seen through clothing.
- Any sleeveless tops must have straps that are at least two inches wide. Oversized armholes/jersey-type tanks are not permitted without a sleeved undershirt or tank top.
- Clothing may not be too tight or revealing.
- Pants must be worn at the waist and secured with a belt, if needed.

**Appropriate undergarments must be worn at all times, and may not be visible or exposed.**

**If a student is in a Gateway athletic or extracurricular uniform with the coach’s permission, that is acceptable attire, as these are considered uniforms as part of the school.**

Kindergarten students only are asked to bring a change of clothes in a labeled bag to include a shirt, pair of shorts or pants, pair of socks, and clean underwear. These items will remain in the student backpack and will need to be replenished as they are used.

Gateway will periodically review its dress and grooming policies, and make changes as needed.

**While it is inevitable that there will be differences of opinion as to the appropriateness of dress, grooming, and/or determining whether or not a student’s attire is disruptive or distracting to the educational environment of the School, the final determination will be made by the Head of School.** Any student who does not comply with the dress code will be removed from the regular school setting until the student complies with this code.

Any student in violation of the dress code will options to choose from to correct their attire. Students will have the following three options to choose from:

1. Call home to have new clothes brought to school.
2. Find a friend with a change of clothes who will let you wear them for the day.
3. Wear the designated Gateway clothes we give you.

*\*\*If a student refuses to correct his/her dress code violation, he/she will immediately receive an office referral. As a reminder, office referrals lead to Mid-Term Final Exam Non-Exemption.*

If a student gets dress coded, he/she will have the following consequences:

1. Documented verbal warning
2. 3 Detentions
3. Office referral

### **ID Badges**

Students must wear their ID badges around their neck at all times. If a student needs a replacement badge for any reason, one can be made for your child for a \$5 fee each time.

### **Student Fees**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, notebooks, calculators, headsets, etc. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including:

1. Fees for materials used in any program in which the resultant product is in excess of minimum requirements and, at the student's option, becomes the personal property of the student. Fees may not exceed the cost of materials.
2. Membership dues in student organizations or clubs, and admission fees or charges for attending extracurricular activities when membership or attendance is voluntary.
3. Security deposits for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
4. Fees for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel. However, any student may provide his or her own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety established by the Board.
5. Fees for items of personal use or products that a student may purchase at the student's option, such as student publications, class rings, annuals, and graduation announcements.
6. Fees specifically permitted by any other statute.
7. Fees for an authorized, voluntary student health and accident benefit plan.
8. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by Orenda Charter School.
9. Fees for items of personal apparel that become the property of the student and that are used in extracurricular activities.
10. Parking fees and fees for identification cards.
11. Fees for driver training courses, provided that such fees shall not exceed the actual Orenda Charter School cost per student in such programs for the current school year.
12. Fees for courses offered for credit that require the use of facilities not available on the school premises or the employment of an educator who is not part of the school's regular staff, if participation in the course is at the student's option.
13. Fees for courses offered during summer school, except that the Board may charge a fee for a course required for graduation only if the course is also offered without a fee during the regular school term.

14. A reasonable fee for transportation of a student who lives within two miles of the school the student attends to and from that school, except that the Board may not charge a fee for transportation for which Orenda Charter School receives funds under Education Code 48.151(d).
15. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required under Education Code 25.092.
16. If Orenda Charter School does not receive any funds under Section 48.151 and does not participate in a county transportation system for which an allotment is provided under Section 48.151(i), a reasonable fee for the transportation of a student to and from the school the student attends.
17. A fee for enrollment in an electronic course provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) in accordance with Education Code 30A.155.

Gateway may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver must be made in writing to the Head of School or designee, and include evidence of inability to pay. Details for the fee waiver are available in the front office. Fee waivers will not be approved without filling out a compensatory education form.

Supply lists are posted on the School website and are distinct for each of our programs. For secondary students, the most important supply will be a device with which to access our Learning Management System. Gateway does not provide printing/copying services for students.

Students, especially K–4, are discouraged from bringing money to school except when needed for lunch, supplies, or other special requests such as field trips and school pictures. Any money (cash or check) sent to school should be placed in an envelope labeled with the student's name, teacher's name, and the reason for the payment.

Families are responsible for paying all fees associated with extra-curricular programs, including clubs, parking, athletics, UIL fine arts, and UIL academics prior to participation. Students who do not pay obligations or fees will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities and will be removed from athletics class.

### **Textbooks and Curriculum Materials**

State-approved textbooks and additional curriculum materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class, except for dual credit courses. Materials must be used by the students as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued damaged materials should report the damage to the teacher.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the student and/or parent pay for the damages. However, a student will be provided textbooks and educational materials for use during the school day. Gateway may reduce or waive the payment requirement if the student is from a low-income family. Release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment for lost or severely damaged textbooks or other outstanding fees owed.

### **Food Service**

Gateway provides a wide variety of food options including breakfast, lunch, and snacks for all students through its own food service program. Menus and ordering information are located on our website. If parents do not want their child purchasing certain items, please notify the cafeteria to put a note on the

child's account. Payments may be made to Orenda Education via check or online through PayPams. Parents and students are expected to keep their accounts at a positive balance. For accounts that have a negative balance of more than \$10, students may be given an alternative low cost meal option and will not be permitted to purchase snacks or other a la carte items. Families that are experiencing financial difficulty should contact Gateway's administration for other arrangements and assistance.

Gateway does not have any vending machines available to students.

During breakfast and lunch in the cafeteria, students must:

1. Respect other students and adults.
2. Keep hands, feet, and belongings to themselves.
3. Use appropriate table manners.
4. Use quiet voices.
5. Remain seated.
6. Raise your hand for assistance.
7. Do not share any food or drinks.
8. Do not play with your food, tray, or trash.
9. Clean up your area and drop all trash into the wastebasket upon dismissal.
10. Follow line expectations at all times, including purchasing food.

Consequences for inappropriate cafeteria behavior follow the Student Code of Conduct. As a general practice, students in K-4 will receive a verbal warning for the first offense. Further infractions will result in being placed on the behavior tracker and will result in appropriate consequences.

### **Transportation**

Gateway does not provide regular transportation to and from school, unless required by a student's Individualized Education Plan ("IEP"), for a student with disabilities. However, Gateway may provide transportation in school vehicles for educational field trips and participation in athletic and other extra-curricular events. Buses transporting students for field trips might not have seatbelts. However, we will exert every effort possible to ensure that all buses used for field trips have seatbelts for our students.

Riding a school vehicle is a privilege. School vehicle drivers have the authority to maintain discipline and require seating charts. When riding a school vehicle, students are held to behavioral standards established in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

1. Follow the driver's directions at all times;
2. Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner;
3. Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle;
4. Not deface the vehicle or its equipment;
5. Not put head, hands, arms, legs, or an object out of any window; and
6. Wait for the driver's signal in order to leave or cross in front of the vehicle.

Only designated students are allowed to ride in the vehicle. Students may neither ride the vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities. Parents and non-students are not allowed to ride in school vehicles.

If a student with a disability is receiving school transportation as a result of an IEP, the Admission Review and Dismissal ("ARD") Committee will have the discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary consequences related to inappropriate behavior in a school vehicle.

## **Field Trips**

Field trips are an extension of the learning experience and align to grade level essential knowledge and skills. Students are representatives of Gateway and are held to behavioral standards established in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct while on field trips. Annual permission is required prior to students attending any field trips.

Parents will not be charged for field trips required as part of a basic educational program or course. For all other field trips, parents are responsible for the cost of admission to field trip destinations. Field trips are subject to last minute cancellations for reasons related to student safety or other unexpected events. Gateway is not responsible for any non-refundable monies paid by students, parents, or guardians in the event trips are cancelled. Gateway will do its best to reschedule any cancelled field trips. If the cancelled trip cannot be rescheduled, Gateway will refund any fees not paid in advance. If a student or chaperone does not attend a field trip due to illness or other unexpected absence, there will be no refunds on fees paid in advance.

## **Birthdays**

Birthday treats, along with all the necessary paper goods and utensils, can be brought by the parent to school at the beginning of the school day for teacher distribution. Parents should notify their child's teacher of this event at least 24 hours prior to delivery so precautions and preparations can be made, especially for students with medical issues such as food allergies.

Invitations to birthday parties can be distributed to students in grades K-4 during the school day as long as **each** student in the class receives one or at minimum, all students of the same sex. Should parents desire to exclude any classmates, all invitations should be distributed at home.

## **Transcripts**

Gateway maintains an academic achievement record (or transcript) for each student enrolled. Transcripts list complete personal student data, give complete scholastic grades, and report student activities, honors, and scores on standardized achievement tests. Requests for transcripts should be made to the campus registrar. Students are provided with five free official transcripts. Each additional transcript is \$3.00. Payments should be made at the time of the request in either cash or check. Official transcripts may be picked up from the campus registrar **five business days** after the request is submitted except at the end of the semester. GPA and class rank are recalculated at the end of each semester and updated transcripts are not available until after the end of the fourth business week after the end of the semester.

## **Award Assemblies**

Students in grades K-4 have the opportunity to earn honor roll, and citizenship awards, and assemblies to recognize those students will be held at the end of each semester. Students have the opportunity to earn the following awards:

**“A” Honor Roll:** Grades in all subjects of a 90–100 on the 9-week report card.

**“A-B” Honor Roll:** Grades in all subjects of an 80–100 on the 9-week report card.

**Circle of Courage Award:** Demonstrates 1 of the core principles, Mastery, Belonging, Generosity, Independence

**AVID Award:** Demonstrates mastery of WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading)

Various award ceremonies in areas such as fine arts, athletics, academics, and other extracurricular activities will be held for students in grades 5-12 throughout the year. Visit the Gateway website for specific dates and times.

### **Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work**

Teachers may display student work in classrooms, elsewhere on campus, or at the district office as recognition of student achievement. However, Gateway will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the Gateway website, on any campus or classroom website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. Gateway will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

### **Distribution of Materials or Documents**

#### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for Gateway may be posted or distributed with prior approval by the Head of School and/or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, murals, etc.

#### **Non-School Materials**

Students must obtain express prior approval of the Head of School or designee before distributing, posting, selling, or circulating written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials on campus.

Non-school literature shall not be distributed by students on Gateway property if:

1. The distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person.
2. The materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action.
3. The materials are hate literature or similar publications that scurrilously attack ethnic, religious, or racial groups or contain content aimed at creating hostility and violence; and the materials would materially and substantially interfere with school activities or the rights of others.
4. The materials are obscene, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience.
5. The materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others.
6. The materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students.
7. The materials promote illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances.
8. There is reasonable cause to believe that distribution of the non-school literature would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others. Orenda Charter School may not demonstrate reasonable cause to believe that the expression would engender material and substantial interference solely because other students, teachers, administrators, or parents may disagree with its content.

Any student who posts 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.

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials over which Gateway does not exercise control shall not be sold, circulated, or distributed by persons or groups not associated with Gateway or a school support group on school premises unless the person or group obtains specific prior approval from the Superintendent or designee. To be considered,

any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring organization or individual. The requestor may appeal the Superintendent or designee's decision in accordance with Board policy.

### **Electronic Device Policy**

Students are prohibited from using a personal communication device while the student is on school property during the school day. It is recommended students do NOT bring personal communication devices to school.

Students who bring a personal communication device on school property during the school day will be required to power off the device and store the device according to the established campus procedures in the student's backpack for the duration of the school day.

Devices must remain stored for the entirety of the school day. Students may not hold or have their device in their hands or on their person during the school day. Students found physically accessing the device from their backpack, either in the open or by attempting to access within a backpack, are in violation of this policy.

Personal communication devices are defined as a:

- Telephone or cell phone, such as a smartphone or flip phone;
- Tablet;
- Smartwatch;
- Radio device;
- Paging device; or
- Any other electronic device capable of telecommunication or digital communication.

**Grades 5- 12 ONLY:** The definition does not include a laptop or other portable computers, excluding tablets and smartphones, owned by a student as part of the district's bring-your-own-device (BYOD) program. All device's must be connected only to the district internet, which disables the ability to engage in communication with other devices except those devices that are part of the school system's instructional program, is used under observation by and at the direction of a teacher, during school time when instruction is occurring, and used in accordance with the district's BYOD acceptable use policies.

The "school day" is defined as the official start time of the school day until the official end time of the school today. The official start and end times are published on the school calendars for each campus.

Before- and after-school school-sponsored extracurricular activities are not considered part of the school day. Students may use personal electronic devices during extracurricular activities.

"Use" is defined as a device in possession of a student that is turned on and capable of receiving or sending a communication signal.

"School property" means anywhere on a school's campus or in a district facility where instruction is provided, including but not limited to: classrooms, hallways, gyms, cafeterias, band halls and all other extracurricular spaces; outdoor fields, tracks, and other athletic areas; all breezeways, courtyards, playgrounds, and other outdoor areas, specifically including all school parking lots.

Students are only authorized to use a personal communication device on school property during the school day under the following conditions:

- a) Necessary to implement an IEP or Section 504 Plan;
- b) By a student with a documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician; or
- c) Necessary to comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as part of the

school's safety protocols.

If a student possesses such devices on school property or while attending school-related events, Orenda Charter School is authorized to confiscate, power on or off, manipulate and do all things necessary to search the device and recover or intercept communications (including but not limited to text messaging) when reasonable suspicion exists that such device has been used to transmit or receive communications in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation.

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated, under a Level I Offense in the Student Code of Conduct. The first time a device is confiscated, it's turned into the appropriate Section Head and the student is allowed to pick it up at the end of the school day. A Level I Offense is recorded as an official referral. If a student's item is collected a second time, a parent will be contacted to pick up the item. A second Level I Offense is recorded as an official referral. If a student's item is collected a third (or more) time(s), a parent will be contacted to pick up the item, and the student will receive a disciplinary consequence as a Level II Offense: Two or more Level I Offenses. Level II disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

If a personal telecommunications device is not retrieved, Orenda Charter School shall dispose of the device after providing 90 days notice required by law.

If a personal communication device is in the possession of the school, the school will take appropriate efforts to keep the device appropriately stored and free from damage. However, Orenda Charter School is not be responsible for damage to or loss or theft of confiscated items and electronic devices brought to school. Parents will not be compensated for devices that have been in the school's possession in the event those devices are lost or damaged while in possession of the school.

### **Toys, Animals, Valuables and Other Personal Items**

Toys, including items such as trading cards, games, and stuffed animals, are not permitted on campus unless they are part of the instructional program and have been pre-approved by the classroom teacher. If these items are brought to school, they will be confiscated by the teacher, labeled, stored, and returned to the student at the discretion of the administrator.

Live animals (except for an approved service animal) should not be brought on campus unless special arrangements have been made in advance with the Head of School or designee.

Students should not bring expensive jewelry, personal valuables or large amounts of cash to school and, if any jewelry is worn, it must be kept on at all times. The loss of valuables can be traumatic for students. Gateway is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Students in 5-12 need to understand that we are not responsible for lost or stolen BYOD devices.

### **Lost and Found**

Parents are encouraged to label items such as jackets, lunch boxes, and backpacks so lost items can be identified and returned to the owner. Lost and found boxes are located in each campus building. Any items not claimed by the end of the nine weeks will be donated to a charitable organization.

### **Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence**

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

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

### **Recitation of the Declaration of Independence**

State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during “Celebrate Freedom Week.” A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, Gateway determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States extends diplomatic immunity.

### **Prayer and Meditation**

Students have a right to individually, silently, and voluntarily pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other school activities. Gateway will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. The governing board voted not to adopt a policy that requires a period of prayer and reading of the Bible or other religious text on each school day.

## **SECTION 2: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Alcohol-Free School Notice**

In order to provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on Gateway property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off School property. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Tobacco-Free School Notice**

Smoking (including electronic cigarettes, cigars, and pipes) and using tobacco products is prohibited in school buildings, vehicles, or on or near school property, or at school-related or school-sanctioned events off school property. Students may not possess tobacco products at any of the locations or activities listed above. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Drug-Free School Notice**

Gateway believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, Gateway prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. Gateway also prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of look-alike substances and/or synthetic substances designed to imitate the look and/or effects of illicit drugs. In addition, possession of any medications, prescription or over-the-counter, by students unless approved by campus administration is prohibited. At no time should students sell or give any medications

to another student. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention**

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The Texas Department of State Health Services (“TDSHS”) maintains information regarding children’s mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa-child-adolescent-services/>.

### **Suicide Awareness**

Gateway is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access <http://www.texassuicideprevention.org> or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

### **Fentanyl Abuse Prevention and Poisoning Awareness**

Orenda Charter School shall annually provide researched-based instruction related to fentanyl abuse prevention and drug poisoning awareness to students in grades 6 through 12. This instruction must include:

1. Suicide prevention;
2. Prevention of the abuse of and addiction to fentanyl;
3. Awareness of local school and community resources and any processes involved in accessing those resources; and
4. Health education that includes information about substance use and abuse, including youth substance use and abuse.

The Governor will designate a week to be known as Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Week in public schools to educate students about the dangers posed by the drug fentanyl and the risks of fentanyl poisoning, including overdose.

### **Bleeding Control Training and Stations**

HB 496 requires public schools to provide the appropriate, TEA-approved staff training on the use of bleeding control stations. The bleed control stations are stored in the same location(s) as the automated external defibrillators. The law also requires a district or charter school to offer instruction to students. It does not require students to receive the instruction. The training to be offered to students is the same training for students in grades 7-12 and must be offered each year to all students in that grade range.

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

All school facilities have been inspected for asbestos by a licensed Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (“AHERA”) inspector. An Asbestos Management Plan has been created for the School in accordance with federal regulations. Parents may view the Asbestos Management Plan at the campus office.

### **Bacterial Meningitis Information**

State law requires Gateway to provide the following information:

#### **WHAT IS MENINGITIS?**

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

Bacterial meningitis can be caused by multiple organisms. Two common types are *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, with over 80 serogroups that can cause illness, and *Neisseria meningitidis*, with 5 serogroups that most commonly cause meningitis.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

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

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

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

### **HOW SERIOUS IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, most people make a complete recovery. If left untreated or treatment is delayed, bacterial meningitis can be fatal, or a person may be left with permanent disability.

### **HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS SPREAD?**

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis is as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes) or when people cough or sneeze without covering their mouth and nose.

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

### **HOW CAN BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?**

#### **Vaccination**

Bacterial meningitis caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* may be prevented through vaccination. The vaccine which protects against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is called pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or PCV. This vaccine is recommended by the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for children in the first year of life. *Neisseria meningitidis* is prevented through two types of vaccines. The first is a meningococcal conjugate vaccine which protects against 4 serogroups A, C, W, and Y and is referred to as MCV4. The second is a vaccine against *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B and is referred to as MenB.

The ACIP recommends MCV4 for children at age 11-12 years, with a booster dose at 16-18 years. In Texas, one dose of MCV4 given at or after age 11 years is required for children in 7th-12th grades. One dose of MCV4 received in the previous five years is required in Texas for those under the age of 22 years and enrolling in college. Teens and young adults (16-23 years of age) may be vaccinated with MenB. This vaccine is not required for school or college enrollment in Texas.

Vaccines to protect against bacterial meningitis are safe and effective. Common side effects include redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops about 1-2 weeks after the vaccines are given and lasts for 5 years to life depending on vaccine.

### **Healthy habits**

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Wash your hands. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest and not having close contact with people who are sick, also helps.

### **WHO IS AT RISK FOR BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?**

Certain groups are at increased risk for bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. These risk factors include HIV infection, travel to places where meningococcal disease is common (such as certain countries in Africa and in Saudi Arabia), and college students living in a dormitory. Other risk factors include having a previous viral infection, living in a crowded household, or having an underlying chronic illness.

Children ages 11-15 years have the second highest rate of death from bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. And children ages 16-23 years also have the second highest rates of disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*.

### **WHAT YOU SHOULD DO IF YOU THINK YOU OR A FRIEND MIGHT HAVE BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?**

Seek prompt medical attention.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all infectious diseases. You may call your family doctor or [local health department](#) office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html> and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS): <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/PreteenVaccines.aspx> or <https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/meningitis/Meningitis.aspx>

### **Communicable Diseases**

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the Head of School or designee so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. School authorities will report those students who are suspected of having a reportable condition. A list of reportable conditions can be found on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/>.

Any student excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods, as determined by the local health authority:

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting;
- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or

- Meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

Please contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether a child should stay home. or guidance specific to COVID, please refer to the [Orenda Return to In-Person Instruction Plan](#).

### **Head Lice**

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is common among children and is spread through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice or nits (eggs), the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. The parent may choose to take their student home for treatment at that time, and the remainder of that day will be an excused absence. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used, and the student may return to school. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return. All treatments regimens require retreatment 7-10 days following the first treatment in order to prevent reinfestation. More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS website at: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>.

### **Immunization Requirements**

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with an established immunization schedule. Students must be up-to-date on all required immunizations to be eligible to attend the first day of school unless he or she qualifies for provisional enrollment. Except as provided by the TEC, §38.001(c), a student who is not fully immunized and has not begun the required immunization must not attend school.

To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read “the most current “Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grades K–12.” For specific immunization requirements, please contact the school nurse or visit the Texas Department of State Health Services at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school>.

Proof of immunization may be personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

### **Provisional Enrollment**

A student can be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if he or she transfers from one Texas school to another, and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record.

A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate required vaccine. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school. Gateway shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, then the student is not in compliance and Gateway shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

A student who is homeless, as defined by the McKinney Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302), shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. Gateway shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

### **Exclusions from Immunization Requirements**

Exclusions from immunization requirements are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience (including a religious belief), and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

To claim exclusion for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the student's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the student, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed Texas Department of State Health Services ("TDSHS") affidavit must be presented by the student's parent, stating that the student's parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a period of two years. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>. The form must be submitted to the Head of School within 90 days from the date it is notarized. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

To claim exclusion for armed forces, the student must prove that he or she is serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

### **Immunization Records Reporting**

The School's record of a student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments, and TDSHS, and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of the student to those schools.

### **Annual Health Services Notification and Consent**

In compliance with Texas Senate Bill 12, districts must inform parents about all health-related services provided to students during the school year and allow parents the right to withhold consent or decline a health-related service.

You as a parent or guardian have the fundamental right to make decisions regarding the upbringing and control of your child. Our goal as a school is to be a supportive partner in that effort, providing effective academic instruction to maximize student learning. In service of that goal, we also work to support the general well-being of our students so they can remain academically focused. As you might expect, teachers and other employees will periodically inquire about a child's well-being, (e.g., asking how a student is feeling). In some cases, though, more formalized efforts may be appropriate, and if that is the case, our intent is to work in ways that are consistent with your goals as the parent.

TEA has defined three types of health services (**health-care services, health-related services, and general caretaking**) and clarified what parent rights and consent are needed for school staff to provide

each type of service.

### **Health-Care Services**

In the [draft rule text](#) released by TEA, **health-care services** require **written consent from the parent prior** to any services being provided. Below are the **health-care services** offered by our district and what method of consent is needed.

- Psychological examination or test (**parent notice and consent through the special education evaluation process**)
- Psychological treatment (**special education services agreed upon by the ARD committee as part of a student's Individual Education Plan with parent notice and consent**)
- Medical procedures (**parent consent and a physician's order**)
- Medical treatment, including chronic disease management under an individualized healthcare plan (IHP) (**parent consent and a physician's order**)
- Dispensing Over-the-Counter (OTC) medication (**parent consent**)
- Dispensing prescription medication (**parent consent and a physician's order**)

**Separate consent is needed for any health-care services.**

**Health-related services** provided by our district are listed below with the option to opt-out of any of those **health-related services**.

**First Aid:** Providing immediate care for illnesses and non-life threatening injuries. (i.e. taking temperature, cleansing a scrape & applying a band aid, assessing stomach ache, headaches). This does **NOT** include administering any medications.

**Health and wellness education:** Providing education on nutrition, hygiene, disease prevention, general wellness that is beyond what is taught through grade-level or course instruction. This does **NOT** include human sexuality, sexual orientation, or gender identities instruction.

**Care Coordination:** Collaborating with physicians, families, and school staff to ensure comprehensive care, advocacy and communicate health information effectively. (i.e. ensuring all staff are aware of child medical needs and support needed throughout the school day).

**State-Mandated Health Screenings:** Conducting the following screenings on select students as required by state law: vision, hearing, spinal screening, acanthosis nigricans (Texas Risk Assessment for Type 2 Diabetes in Children).

**Mental Health Support:** Provide mental health first aid care and crisis intervention, then partner with and transfer care to the campus counselors for further support if warranted.

### **Counseling-Related Services:**

- Early mental health prevention and intervention
- Building skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision-making
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention
- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention
- Grief-informed and trauma-informed practices
- Safe, supportive and positive school climates, meaning the quality and character of school life, including interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures
- Positive behavior interventions and supports
- Positive youth development

**Referrals to Community Resources:** Connecting students and families with community healthcare providers and social services.

**General Caretaking** In the [draft rule text](#) released by TEA, “general caretaking” means noninvasive actions to address student claims of not feeling well or adult observations of a child being physically unwell. These can include the following:

- Cleaning up spills and other accidents
- Offering a change of clothing
- Providing band aids
- Wiping up a bloody nose
- Providing feminine products for students on their menstrual cycle
- Providing support for a child’s expression of being unwell (i.e. feeling a student’s forehead)

Per TEA, **“General caretaking is not a health-related service.” These actions do not require parent notice, consent or opt-out.**

This notice is meant to inform you of all available **health-related services**, not necessarily to indicate all these services will be provided to your child. You have the right to consent and withhold consent or decline the provision of any of these **health-related services** to your child.

Consent for services will be considered effective until the end of the school year, unless you provide a change of your consent decisions during the year.

School personnel are always expected to encourage your child to discuss any issues related to their well-being with you. School personnel can also facilitate a conversation between you and your child about any issues related to their well-being. Furthermore, employees are expected to keep parents informed related to observations of their child’s mental, emotional, or physical health. You have the right to access your child’s education and health records at any time.

Sometimes in addition to general inquiries into a student’s well-being, school personnel might determine that a student needs some additional observation – called monitoring – and perhaps specific services in relation to the student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being. Monitoring in this context means planned and recurring observations of a student in one or more areas of mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being. A service in this context is the planned, routine, and standard use of a method or technique that is designed to affect the behavior, attitude, emotions, or physical health of a student beyond what is taught in a course of instruction. These would not include in-the-moment or unplanned interactions or techniques used to deescalate isolated behavioral incidents.

Any proposed change in services provided to a student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being will be shared with you before the change takes place, except in emergencies. You will have the right to withhold or decline consent for the service. The district will attempt to notify you prior to initiating any proposed change in monitoring related to a student’s mental, emotional, or physical health or well-being. If prior notification is not possible, you will be notified within 5 school days.

With certain legally required activities, such as behavioral threat assessments, district personnel must provide parental notification, but the law does not expressly allow a parent to opt-out of such activity.

Additional information and answers to common questions can be found on the district document, [Senate Bill 12 - What Parents Need to Know](#).

### **Student Health Information**

Orenda Charter School staff will share health information provided with staff who are directly involved with a student to ensure the student's safety during the day. School staff may contact the doctor's office or health clinic related to immunizations and health plans to provide clarification on implementation at school. Parents should keep health and contact information up-to-date (emergency phone numbers, allergies, health conditions, etc.). Updates can be made at any time during the year in the Frontline (formally TEAMS) Parent Portal.

### **Student Health Insurance**

Orenda Charter School does not provide student health insurance to cover the costs of medical treatment for any school-related injuries or ongoing medical treatment.

### **Student Illness**

When your child is ill, please contact the School to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. Students must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication, and must be free of vomiting/diarrhea without the use of vomiting/diarrhea suppressing medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. School staff will provide first aid for minor illness and injuries. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, Gateway staff will seek emergency medical treatment.

### **Administration of Medication**

Medication should be administered at home whenever possible. If necessary, medication can be administered at school by the school nurse under the following circumstances:

1. Nonprescription medication brought to school must be submitted to Gateway by a parent along with a written request. The medication must also be in the original and properly labeled container.
2. Prescription medications administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner ("ANP") licensed to practice medicine in the United States and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. **In accordance with the Texas Board of Nursing's Nurse Practice Act, Gateway will not administer medications prescribed or fulfilled in Mexico.**
3. Prescription medications must be submitted in a labeled container showing the student's name, name of the medication, reason the medication is being given, proper dosage amounts, the time the medication must be taken, and the method used to administer the medication. Medications sent in plastic baggies or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
4. If the substance is herbal or a dietary supplement, it must be provided by the parent and will be administered only if required by the student's Individualized Education Program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
5. Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to Gateway, *i.e.*, enough medication to last one day, one week, etc. In cases of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Extra medication will not be sent home with the student.
6. When students are attending a field trip or off-campus school-sponsored event, any prescription medication that is scheduled to be administered during school hours will be sent with the

student's teacher, sponsor, or another staff member trained in the proper administration of medication along with the instructions on the administration of the medication.

Changes to daily medications require written instruction from the physician or ANP and written permission from the parent. Parents are responsible for advising Gateway that a medication has been discontinued. Students are not allowed to possess medication of any type while on school property except under the conditions below.

### **Opioid Antagonist Medication**

School personnel and school volunteers who are authorized and trained may administer opioid antagonists to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose. Such authorized and trained school employees and volunteers may administer the opioid antagonist medication on a school campus or at a school sponsored event. Not later than the 10th business day after the date a school personnel member or school volunteer administers an opioid antagonist, Orenda Charter School is required to report the information to the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

### **Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication**

Asthma and anaphylaxis are life-threatening conditions, and students with those conditions are entitled to possess and self-administer prescription medication while on Kingsland School property or at school-related events.

Student possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires the student to demonstrate his or her ability to self-administer the medication to the student's physician or other licensed health care provider and the school nurse or designee, if available. Requirements also include written authorization from the student's parent and physician or other licensed health care provider on file in the school office indicating the student is capable of independently administering his or her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication. Medication in a student's possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

### **Unassigned Epinephrine Auto-Injectors (Anaphylaxis Medication)**

School personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained to administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus. School personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained may also administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis at an off-campus school event or while in transit to or from a school event. Not later than the 10th business day after the date a school personnel member or school volunteer administers an epinephrine auto-injector Orenda Charter School is required to report the information to the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

### **Unassigned Medication for Respiratory Distress (Asthma)**

School personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained to administer a medication for respiratory distress to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing respiratory distress on a school campus. School personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained may also administer a medication for respiratory distress to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing respiratory distress at an off-campus school event or while in transit to or from a school event. Not later than the 10th business day after the date a school personnel member or school volunteer administers a medication for respiratory distress, Orenda Charter School is required to report the information to the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

### **Seizure Management Plan**

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

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

A seizure management and treatment plan must be submitted on the form adopted by the Texas Education Agency, [Seizure Management and Treatment Plan Form](#).

### **Sunscreen Products**

A student may possess and use a topical sunscreen product while on school property or at a school-related event or activity to avoid overexposure to the sun and not for the medical treatment of an injury or illness if the product is approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use.

### **Child Water Safety**

If Orenda Charter School authorizes a child to engage in an organized water activity, the school shall require the parent or legal guardian of each child under 12 years of age to affirm in writing whether the child is able to swim or is at risk of injury or death when swimming or otherwise accessing a body of water. An "organized water activity" means any activity in which a participant will enter or travel on a body of water as part of the activity.

For each child who is unable to swim or is at risk of injury or death when swimming or otherwise entering a body of water, Orenda Charter School will provide a properly fitted and fastened Type I, II, or III United States Coast Guard approved personal flotation device or equivalent device and ensure the child is wearing the personal flotation device and that the device is properly fitted and fastened for the child.

Orenda Charter School is not required to provide a child with a flotation device or ensure the child is wearing the device if the child is actively participating in swim instruction or a competition and Orenda Charter School ensures each child participating in the instruction or a competition is closely supervised during the instruction or competition.

### **Steroid Notice**

Gateway does not permit steroid use. A notice shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the school gym or in each other place in a building where physical education classes are conducted.

### **Dyslexia and Related Disorders**

All kindergarten and first-graders students will be screened for dyslexia and related disorders. Additionally, all students beyond first grade will be screened or tested as appropriate. The parent or guardian of each student in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade who is determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on the results of the screener and reading instruments will be notified, and an accelerated reading program will be provided to these students.

### **Fitness Testing**

According to requirements under state law, Gateway will annually assess the physical fitness of students. Gateway is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified

by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate. Parents can request a copy of their child's fitness testing by contacting their child's physical education teacher.

### **Spinal Screening**

All girls will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature during the fall semester of grade 5 and grade 7. All boys will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature during the fall semester of grade 8.

A parent who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by Gateway must submit to the Head of School or designee documentation of a professional examination which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to Gateway during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

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

### **Vision and Hearing Screenings**

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

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the TDSHS or a local health department, and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

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

### **Risk Assessment for Type 2 Diabetes**

As soon as possible after admission and as required by rule, each student required to be assessed shall undergo approved risk assessment for type 2 diabetes. The risk assessment should:

1. Identify students with acanthosis nigricans; and
2. Further assess students identified under paragraph 1 to determine the students':
  - a. Body mass index; and
  - b. Blood pressure.

The risk assessment shall be performed at the same time hearing and vision screening or spinal screening is performed.

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the TDSHS or a local health department, and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

Exemption: A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor's parent,

managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the Principal or designee on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **Mental Health Supports**

Orenda Charter School has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

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

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

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

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.

### **Gang-Free Zones**

Gang-related behavior and hazing shall be prohibited by Orenda Charter School. The consequences for gang-related behaviors and hazing shall be addressed in the Student Code of Conduct.

All Orenda Charter School campuses and any other property owned, rented, or leased by the Orenda Charter School are "gang-free zones." Certain criminal offenses that occur in, on, or within 1,000 feet of a school or any other property owned, rented, or leased by the Orenda Charter School will be enhanced in the criminal justice system to the next highest category of offense if they are determined to be committed by a person who is a member of a criminal street gang, unless the offense is already punishable as a first degree felony. Affected offenses include (1) murder, capital murder, arson, aggravated robbery, robbery, aggravated kidnapping, kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, forgery, deadly conduct, and assault resulting in bodily injury; (2) unlawful manufacture, transportation, repair, or sale of firearms or prohibited weapons, excluding knuckles; (3) obscene display or distribution, obscenity, sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor, sexual performance by a child, employment harmful to children, possession or promotion of child pornography when a child younger than 18 years of age is depicted or involved in the offense. Penal Code § 71.028

## **Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

### **Statement of Nondiscrimination**

Gateway prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Gateway also prohibits dating violence, as defined by this Handbook. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of School policy.

### **Discrimination**

For purposes of this Handbook, discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law and that adversely affects the student.

### **Prohibited Harassment**

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

In compliance with the requirements of Title IX, Gateway does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Gateway also does not tolerate sexual harassment of a student by School employees. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and School employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a School employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

Sexual harassment of a student by a School employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- A School employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
- The conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:
  - Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
  - Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender.

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Dating violence is not tolerated at school. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engaged in these behaviors.

For purposes of this Handbook, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- Affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

### **Prevention**

Gateway will provide prevention of and education concerning the unwanted physical or verbal aggression and sexual harassment in school, on school grounds, and in school vehicles. This age-appropriate education is provided through health and counseling instruction with resources aligned to the coordinated school health program. Age-appropriate educational materials related to the dangers of dating violence and resources to students seeking help will be made available to students and parents.

### **Retaliation**

Gateway prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation. 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.

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a school investigation regarding discrimination or harassment is subject to appropriate discipline.

### **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment or believes that another student has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, the Head of School or designee, or other school employee. Alternatively, a student may report prohibited harassment directly to the appropriate Compliance Coordinator designated on pages 10–11 of this Handbook. The Head of School or designee will immediately notify the parent or guardian of a student about a report received by district identifying the student as an alleged victim or perpetrator of dating violence or prohibited harassment, including sexual harassment.

A student shall not be required to report prohibited harassment to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX Coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, and/or the Age Discrimination Coordinator may be directed to Carla Silber, Superintendent, 2951 Williams Drive, Building 1, Georgetown, Texas 78628, 512-869-3020. If a report is made directly to the Superintendent, Gateway shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

### **Investigation of Complaints**

After receiving a complaint of prohibited discrimination or harassment, Gateway may, but need not, require the student to prepare a written report. Oral complaints will be reduced to written form. Upon receipt of a complaint, the appropriate Compliance Coordinator or other authorized School official shall promptly authorize and undertake an investigation. Following completion of the investigation, the Compliance Coordinator or other authorized School official will prepare a written decision regarding the complaint, including a determination of whether prohibited discrimination or harassment occurred.

When appropriate, Gateway may take interim action to avoid additional opportunities for discrimination or harassment. The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and any others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. If the results of the investigation establish that prohibited discrimination or harassment occurred, Gateway shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the discrimination or harassment and prevent its recurrence. Gateway may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if the School concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or policy.

Dating violence and prohibited harassment actions can include addressing safety planning, enforcement of protective orders, school-based alternatives to protective orders, training for teachers and administrators at each campus, counseling for affected students, and awareness education for students and parents.

### **Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, Gateway shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with applicable law.

## **Appeal**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Gateway grievance procedure. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

## **Freedom from Bullying and Cyber-bullying**

Gateway prohibits bullying as defined by this section, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process. Bullying occurs when 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 occurs on school property at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by Gateway 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; or
- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described above is considered bullying if that conduct:

- Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of Gateway.

Gateway also prohibits cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of any electronic communication device to engage in bullying or intimidation.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of bullying, or believes that another student has experienced bullying, should immediately report the alleged acts to a school employee or anonymously report through paper forms available on campus or online via a link on the Gateway website. Any School employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the Head of School or designee.

## **Investigation of Report**

The Head of School or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment, and if so, proceed under that policy instead. The Head of School or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent hazing and/or bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

The Head of School or designee shall complete a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether hazing and/or bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that hazing and/or bullying occurred, the School shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Gateway may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the School concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of hazing and/or bullying under this policy. The parent/guardian of the alleged victim will be notified on or before the third business day after the incident was reported. The parent/guardian of the alleged bully will be notified within a reasonable timeframe after the date the incident was reported.

## **Confidentiality**

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

## **Appeal**

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the Gateway grievance procedure.

## **Bullying Prevention**

To assist with the reduction and prevention of bullying incidents, Orenda Charter School is implementing the following the bullying prevention strategies through integrating age-appropriate instruction and curriculum, bullying compliance committee, and bullying survey.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

Student in early primary grades will receive:

- Explicit instruction designed so students can recognize bullying, including cyberbullying, behaviors and how to report them;
- Age-appropriate classroom culture building discussion that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying behaviors; and
- Explicit instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that result from the student's need to acquire more mature social coping skills

Students in secondary grades will receive:

- Explicit direct instruction on the brain's neuroplasticity so the student recognizes bullying, including cyberbullying, can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an immutable trait;
- Classroom-culture building discussions that portray bullying as an undesirable behavior and means for attaining or maintaining social status in school, and to dissuade students from using bullying as a tool for reputation management; and
- Explicit direct instruction designed so students can recognize the role reporting plays in promoting a safe school community.

### ***Bullying Compliance Committee***

Gateway College Preparatory School shall establish a committee, which must include parents and secondary level students if secondary grades are served at the campus, to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives. The Campus Principal shall designate members of the bullying committee.

### ***Bullying Survey***

In order to define how positive school culture and building healthy relationships between students and staff will be measured in alignment with the school's mission, vision, and values, Orenda Charter School will use an age-appropriate survey that includes relevant questions on bullying, including cyberbullying, that includes appropriate privacy controls in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

The Campus Principal will be responsible to develop and oversee the implementation of action plans based on the results that address student concerns regarding bullying, including cyberbullying.

## **Dangers of Students Sharing Visual Material**

There are several dangers and possible consequences of students sharing visual material depicting minor engaged in sexual conduct, including:

- Legal consequences, including criminal penalties;
- Negative effects on relationships;
- Loss of educational and employment;
- Removal from an Orenda Charter School campus, school programs, and extracurricular activities;
- Search and replication capabilities when shared on the internet and other communications networks; and
- Potential worldwide audience when shared on the internet and other communications networks.

More information and resources can be found at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/initiatives/cyber-safety>.

## **Law Enforcement Agencies**

### **Questioning of Students**

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

1. The Head of School or designee shall verify and record the identity of the official and request an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
2. The Head of School or designee ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent, unless the interviewer raises what the Head of School or designee considers to be a valid objection.
3. The Head of School or designee ordinarily will be present during the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the Head of School or designee considers to be a valid objection.

When the investigation involves allegations of child abuse, special rules apply.

### **Students Taken into Custody**

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

1. Pursuant to an order of the juvenile court;
2. Pursuant to the laws of arrest;
3. By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in conduct that violates a penal law, delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision, or conduct that violates a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court;
4. By a probation officer if there is a probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court;
5. Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend; or
6. By an authorized representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("TDFPS"), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in Section 262.104 of the Texas Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.

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

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

FERPA permits schools to disclose student records to law enforcement and other agencies in connection with an emergency, without parent consent, if the information is necessary to protect the health and safety of a student or other individuals.

### **Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

Gateway provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. The School also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse or maltreatment. Assistance, interventions and counseling options are also available.

The School's administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect at school. School officials may not require the investigator to permit School personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

### **Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children**

#### **What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?**

The Texas Family Code defines "sexual abuse" as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.

#### **What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?**

Under State law, "other maltreatment" of a child includes "abuse" or "neglect," as defined by Texas Family Code sections 261.001 and 261.401.

#### **Reporting Obligation**

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS"). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or, in non-emergency situations only;
- <http://www.txabusehotline.org>;
- Your local police department; or
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

Gateway has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children (the “Plan”). The Plan is addressed in this section of the Handbook.

### **Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children**

**For Staff:** Gateway annually trains staff in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration.

**For Students:** School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age appropriate conversation and materials no less than once per school year. These discussions will occur in classroom group settings.

**For Parents:** Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Also remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

The Principal will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. The DFPS also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. Services available in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp)

These websites are also helpful:

- Texas Education Agency – Prevention of Child Abuse Overview:  
[http://tea.texas.gov/Texas\\_Schools/Safe\\_and\\_Healthy\\_Schools/Child\\_Abuse\\_Prevention/Child\\_Abuse\\_Prevention\\_Overview/](http://tea.texas.gov/Texas_Schools/Safe_and_Healthy_Schools/Child_Abuse_Prevention/Child_Abuse_Prevention_Overview/)
- Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs:  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/programs/sexualabuse/>
- Promoting Healthy Families in Your Neighborhood:  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/packet.pdf>
- Signs of Child Abuse:  
[http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child\\_abuse.html](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child_abuse.html)
- DFPS – Prevent Child Abuse (HelpandHope.org)  
<http://helpandhope.org>  
DFPS – How to Report Child Abuse or Neglect  
[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_us/report_abuse.asp)

- Texas Attorney General – What Can We Do About Child Abuse?  
<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/what-can-we-do-about-child-abuse>
- Prevent Child Abuse.org – Texas Chapter  
[www.preventchildabusetexas.org](http://www.preventchildabusetexas.org)
- Texas Council on Family Violence – Abuse Prevention Links  
<http://www.tcfv.org/>

### **Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment**

Psychological and behavioral signs of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation.
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; becoming withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, “checking out” or showing significant changes in eating habits.
- Depression or irritability.
- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb sucking.
- Developing fear of certain places, or resisting being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons.
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting, or removing clothes, even in appropriate situations.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Refusal to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child.
- Leaving clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Intentionally harming him or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, and sexual promiscuity.
- Thinking of self or body as repulsive, dirty, or bad.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.

Physical symptoms of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment include:

- Stomachaches or illness, often with no identifiable reason.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Stained or bloody underwear.
- Genital or rectal pain, itching, swelling, redness, or discharge.
- Bruises or other injuries in the genital or rectal area.
- Unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around mouth, sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Often signs first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

### **Actions That a Child Who Is a Victim of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment Should Take**

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse and other maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any

way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

### **Available Counseling Options**

A list of counseling providers can be found at:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/)

### **Interrogations and Searches**

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

Administrators, teachers and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student's own conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students have no claim to the right not to incriminate themselves.

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation, and (2) the scope of the search is reasonably related to the circumstances justifying the search, such as the extent of the search, the objectives of the search, the age and sex of the student, and the nature of the infraction.

### **Desk and Locker Searches**

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their lockers, desks or other school property. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of Gateway. The School will make periodic inspections of lockers and desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy or that may potentially be dangerous.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks, and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found therein. A student's parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker or desk, or on the student's person.

### **Vehicles on Campus**

Vehicles parked on school property and property under school control are under the jurisdiction of Gateway and may be searched at any time if *reasonable suspicion* exists to believe that the search will result in evidence that school rules or other laws have been violated. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student shall be asked to unlock the vehicle and consent to a search of the vehicle. If the student refuses to permit the vehicle to be searched, Gateway may contact the student's parents and/or law enforcement officials. *A student may be held responsible for and in possession of prohibited items found in his or her vehicle parked on school property or at a school-related event.*

### **Random Drug Searches**

In order to ensure a drug-free learning environment, Gateway may conduct random drug searches of all school facilities. Gateway may use or contract for specially trained nonaggressive dogs to sniff out and alert school officials to the current presence of concealed prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and

alcohol. Canine visits may be unannounced. The dogs shall be used to search vacant classrooms, vacant common areas, the areas around student lockers, and the areas where vehicles are parked on Gateway property or at school-related events. The dogs shall not be asked to alert on students. A dog alert to a locker, vehicle, or item in a classroom, constitutes reasonable grounds for a search by school officials.

### **Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs**

School employees, volunteers or independent contractors are authorized to use restraint in the event of an emergency and subject to the following limitations:

- Only reasonable force, necessary to address the emergency, may be used.
- The restraint must be discontinued at the point at which the emergency no longer exists.
- The restraint must be implemented in such a way as to protect the health and safety of the student and others.
- The student may not be deprived of basic human necessities.

At no time, however, may a student be placed in seclusion.

A student with a disability may not be confined in a locked box, locked closet or other specially designated locked space as either a discipline management practice or a behavior management technique.

### **Visitor and Volunteer Policy**

Gateway encourages parents and family members to regularly visit the school and become involved in student activities. The impact that positive parental involvement has on the learning and development of students is immeasurable. With that in mind, the following policies must be adhered to so that a safe, secure, and productive learning environment can be ensured for all.

- Visitors **MUST** sign in at the main office whenever they are on campus. They will be provided with a visitor ID that must be worn while on campus. Visitors are not permitted to make unscheduled or drop-in visits to classrooms.
- When visiting campus to meet with teaching staff, visitors must have a pre-arranged time set up with the teacher(s) in question except for urgent matters. Times are best arranged via email. An email directory is located on our website. With few exceptions, conferences are scheduled during teacher/team planning time, and/or immediately before or after school. Under no circumstances can a teacher be interrupted while providing instruction before, during, or after the school day to meet with a parent.
- Visitors to campus must be the parent, guardians, or other adult family members with permission of the parent/guardian. Students' friends, younger siblings, and other non-related individuals cannot visit the campus during school hours.
- Volunteers **MUST** go through a background check conducted by our district office and must complete volunteer application annually at the beginning of each school year. There is a link on the campus website to complete both forms. Once the check is cleared, volunteers are notified and may begin helping on campus. Until this clearance is obtained, they are not to be involved in any educational or extra-curricular activities, including attending field trips.

The Principal may limit or prohibit visitors and volunteers on campus during times of high community spread of communicable diseases and other high threat levels due to health and safety. Visitors and volunteers may also be limited or prohibited from the campus during testing or special events to maintain a safe and secure environment.

Additionally, the Head of School or designee may take the following actions whenever there is a school visitor:

- Establish an electronic database for the purpose of storing information concerning visitors. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security, and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.
- Verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety or any other database accessible by Gateway.

Any visitor identified as a sex offender shall be escorted by school personnel at all times during a school visit, and shall have access only to common areas of the campus.

### **Disruptions**

In order to protect student safety and sustain an educational program free from disruption, state law permits Gateway to take action against any person – student or nonstudent – who:

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

### **Student and Senior Pranks**

A student or senior prank is defined as anything that is organized by a student or group of students enrolled in the district that costs the school time or money, causes any damage, and/or disrupts or interferes with school activities. **Student and senior pranks, in any form, are not approved or allowed.** Students involved in a student prank will receive consequences consistent with the Student Code of Conduct based on the severity of the prank and damage, which may include paying to repair damages and/or filing charges with law enforcement. Graduating seniors who are involved in a prank will not be allowed to participate in graduation and final senior activities.

### **Emergency Closings**

The decision to delay or cancel a school day is officially made by the Orenda Charter School Superintendent, and that decision is posted on the school web site no later than 6 a.m. Gateway may also need to close during certain emergency situations beyond the control of school officials. The announcement of non-weather related school closings will be posted on the school website and the Gateway Mobile App.

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

Students, teachers, and other staff will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of school staff quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Order rather than speed shall be stressed. Defined instructions for vacating each room will be posted in each room, and students should familiarize themselves with these instructions.

Students in grades 7-12 will annually be provided instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

### **Bomb Threat or Terroristic Threat**

A school district that receives a bomb threat or terroristic threat relating to a campus or other district facility at which students are present shall provide notification of the threat as soon as possible to the parent or guardian of or other person standing in parental relation to each student who is assigned to the campus or who regularly uses the facility, as applicable.

### **Pest Control Information**

Gateway periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 24 hours before application. Students may not reenter a treated area inside a building or use an area on school grounds for at least 12 hours following application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Head of School.

### **Right to Transfer**

Students who attend a persistently dangerous school, as identified by TEA, or who have been victimized during a violent criminal incident have the right to transfer to a safe school campus. Parents will be offered a transfer within 14 calendar days of the incident. In order to request a transfer for safety reasons, a parent must submit a written transfer application to the Superintendent or designee. All transfer requests will be processed and approved within 14 calendar days of the date the request is made known to Orenda in writing. The transfer approval will include the duration of the transfer and the procedures for renewal of the transfer.

### **Videotaping of Students**

For safety purposes, including the maintenance of order and discipline, surveillance cameras may be used to monitor student behavior in classrooms, on school vehicles, and in school common areas. Video recordings may be reviewed routinely to document student misconduct and used by Gateway staff when investigating an incident. Tapes and other video recordings that are owned and maintained by Orenda will be available for viewing pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"). Video recording that are not created and owned by Orenda are not stored and maintained by Orenda as part of student records under FERPA.

## **SECTION 3: ACADEMICS AND GRADING**

### **Academic Programs**

The Head of School will provide students and parents with information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.

A student removed from the regular classroom or another setting will have an opportunity to complete his or her daily work just as if they were in the regular learning center.

Students and parents are encouraged to discuss options for ensuring that students complete all work required with a teacher or the Head of School.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (“TEKS”) require all students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across all subject areas. TEKS are the basis of curricular planning for each grade level and each content area. All students enrolled in grades 3-11 will participate in the appropriate Texas state assessments.

Gateway offers instruction in the TEKS of the appropriate grade levels in the following required curriculum:

1. A foundation curriculum that includes:
  - a. English language arts and reading;
  - b. Mathematics;
  - c. Science;
  - d. Social studies; and
2. An enrichment curriculum that includes
  - a. Languages other than English, to the extent possible;
  - b. Health education;
  - c. Physical education (“PE”);
  - d. Fine Arts; and
  - e. Technology applications.
3. Character Traits and Personal Skills instruction that includes:
  - a. Courage;
  - b. Trustworthiness, including honesty, reliability, punctuality, and loyalty;
  - c. Integrity;
  - d. Respect and courtesy;
  - e. Responsibility, including accountability, diligence, perseverance, self-management skills, and self-control;
  - f. Fairness, including justice and freedom from prejudice;
  - g. Caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion, consideration, patience, generosity, charity, and interpersonal skills;
  - h. Good citizenship, including patriotism, concern for the common good and the community, responsible decision-making skills, and respect for authority and the law;
  - i. School pride; and
  - j. Gratitude.

## **Social Studies Instruction**

An Orenda Charter School teacher may not require, make part of a course, or award a grade or course credit, including extra credit, for a student's:

1. political activism, lobbying, or efforts to persuade members of the legislative or executive branch at the federal, state, or local level to take specific actions by direct communication; or
2. participation in any internship, practicum, or similar activity involving social or public policy advocacy

## **Progress Reports/Report Cards**

Students and parents are provided a report card every nine weeks. Interim progress reports are sent to students who are below a 75% midway through the report cards by the end of week five. *Please familiarize yourself with our school calendar and our marking periods.* Please note that teachers regularly update their grades via our Learning Management System (“LMS”), and families are expected to follow student progress on a regular basis. Students who are enrolled in virtual classes will also receive regular progress reports every four to five weeks and report cards that will reflect their progress in their courses as of the end of each respective marking period. Additionally, parents of K–4 students will receive a Grade Level Expectation report in the fall, winter, and spring.

For students receiving special education services, progress is reported in the same manner as all students. The student’s ARD committee will conduct at least one formal annual review each year to evaluate overall progress.

## **Grading and Credit**

All nine-week and semester grades in kindergarten and grade 1 are reported using checklists with the following letter grades:

- E = Exceeds Expectations -Exceeds age appropriate expectations consistently
- S = Satisfactory – Meets age appropriate expectations
- N = Needs Improvement – Frequently needs support to meet age appropriate expectations
- U = Unsatisfactory – Rarely meets age appropriate expectations

All nine-week and semester grades in grades 2–12 are recorded as numerical grades reflecting students’ mastery of the content submitted by the teacher of record. In determining course credit, the following method is used:

- 90-100 = A
- 80-89 = B
- 75-79 = C
- 70-74 = D
- < 70 = F

For middle and high school classes, credit will be awarded for an average of 70 or higher in each course. In courses that are two-semester courses, credit will be awarded when an average of the two semesters is 70 or higher.

For credit earned outside of Orenda Charter School where letter grades are awarded such as dual credit and transfer courses, the letter grade shall correlate to the highest numeric grade for the corresponding letter grade according the chart below. The numeric grade will appear on the student’s transcript.

- A=100
- B=89
- C=79
- D=74
- F=69

Grades 2-12 classes use weighted category grading. More information on each teacher’s weighted category grades can be found in the teacher’s syllabus and LMS page.

Conduct grades are given for K–1 students as the following:

- E = Exceeds Expectations -Exceeds classroom expectations consistently
- S = Satisfactory – Meets classroom expectations with occasional need for redirection
- N = Needs Improvement – Frequent need for redirection
- U = Unsatisfactory – Very frequent need for redirection

### **Homework and Assignments**

Research reveals that homework, when carefully designed, implemented, and evaluated, is an effective tool for improving understanding, enriching learning, encouraging personal connections, and providing opportunities to pursue special interests. In broad terms, homework includes written work, reading, studying and preparing for class, and other activities related to classroom work, but assigned to be done at home. Homework is designed for students to complete independently given reasonable effort. Teachers have the discretion to set deadlines for students to complete and return homework and other assignments.

For K–4 students, students are expected to orally practice their reading and math facts for a minimum of 20 minutes per night. In addition to night reading and math for 20 minutes, parents should expect homework assigned with the following time parameters:

- Kindergarten – 10 minutes
- First Grade – 15 minutes
- Second Grade – 20 minutes
- Third Grade – 30 minutes
- Fourth Grade – 40 minutes

### **Late Work**

For grades K–4, the highest grade a student may earn for a late assignment is a 70. All work must be submitted no more than 1 week after the due date.

For grades 5–8, ZAP (zeros aren't permitted) is implemented. PLP and AVID teachers will help communicate with students that they have missing assignments. Students will have 1 extra week to complete late assignments, but after the extra week, students will receive a zero for any work that is not turned in.

For grades 9-12, students will be able to turn an assignment in late within three school days. Teachers are allowed to not accept late work for specific assignments (excluding students with approved extra time accommodations) as long as "No Late Work Accepted" is posted in writing on the assignment in the LMS when the work is originally assigned to students. After the original posting, due dates are not allowed to be changed to an earlier date by the teacher but may change to a later date due.

Grades 5-12: The max score for a late assignment cannot exceed a 70. Any incorrect or incomplete assignments will result in a lower grade and points will be deducted from the max score of 70.

Example: A student turns work in late but has perfect performance on the late work, the student will receive a 70 (which would have been a 100 if turned in on time). Students earn deductions from 70 on late work (as though the 70 would be a 100). Therefore, if a student would have made an 80 on an assignment (if turned in on time), the student would receive a score of 56 because it's late. *\*\*The percent of 70 dictates the scale score on late work.\*\**

**Any work not submitted within the appropriate time frame will result in a zero.**

For absences due to other legitimate reason such as personal medical events/illness, deaths in immediate family, or any other unforeseen events, staff and teachers will work cooperatively with parents and students to adjust the due dates. Make-up work will only be accepted with prior approval after the student has returned from the absence. Students in grades K–12 are not allowed to make-up work from unexcused absences, including family vacations, except as otherwise provided in this Handbook.

Given the dynamic nature of learning based on best practices under the Teaching-Learning Cycle where teachers are modifying their curriculum to fit learning needs, it is not always possible for teachers to have an exact plan of assignments for future weeks. For this reason, it is not possible to provide students work in advance of other students to facilitate time off. Teacher lessons and assignments are posted weekly on the LMS.

### **Grades 9–12 Courses and Credits**

Credits are given for each course in grades 9–12; therefore, each course stands alone in counting towards graduation. Credit will be awarded for an average of 70 or higher in each course. In courses that are two-semester courses, credit will be awarded when an average of the two semesters is 70 or higher when the semesters are taken during the same school year, which includes summer school courses for that school year. Keep in mind that if a student was not in attendance 90% of the time or have not met their AIP, they will not receive credit for their course.

### **Grades 7–8 Courses and Credits**

Gateway students enrolled in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8th grade have the opportunity to earn up to three high school credits by successfully completing the following high school courses: Algebra 1, Spanish 1, Spanish 2, Music Technology I, and Fundamentals of Computer Science. Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade can enroll in a maximum of one high school credit, with the exception of advanced math students taking Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Qualification will be determined based on previous school recommendations, state testing history, and placement testing. Students successfully completing a high school course in middle school will be given the corresponding credit towards graduation requirements and will continue to advance to the next level of course, as appropriate. High school credit courses taken in middle school do not count in the 6.0 weighted GPA but do count into the 4.0 unweighted GPA.

Students who take Algebra I in middle school are required to take the SAT or ACT at least once prior to high school graduation.

### **High School Grade Level Classification and Reclassification**

- 9th Grade: A student must have been promoted from the 8th grade
- 10th Grade: A student must have satisfactorily completed 6.5 credits and one year of high school
- 11th Grade: A student must have satisfactorily completed 13 credits and two years of high school
- 12th Grade: A student must have satisfactorily completed 19.5 credits and three years of high school or have a plan on file to graduate in less than four years

A student will only be reclassified at the end of the first and second semester of each school year as determined by the school calendar.

### **Midterm and Final Exam Exemption**

Students in grades 9-11 and any middle school (grades 6-8) who are enrolled in a high school course for credit who meet all the criteria below are eligible to exempt up to 2 midterm or final exams per semester. Seniors (grade 12 students) who meet all the criteria below are eligible to

exempt up to 3 midterm or final exams per semester. Students must meet all eligibility requirements below.

If a student is exempt from a final exam, he/she still has to be on campus in that class for attendance purposes.

If a student will be absent the day of the midterm or final exam, they must receive the teacher, Head of Section, and Head of School's permission to take the test at a later date but has to take the exam within the testing window provided by the school. All spring semester final exams must be taken by June 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### Midterm and Final Exam Exemption Eligibility

- 85 or above for semester cumulative average
- No more than 3 absences (excused or unexcused) per semester (excludes absences due to school-sponsored field trips and UIL events)  
NOTE: 4 tardies = 1 absence under this exemption
- No disciplinary referrals
- No occurrences of academic dishonesty

#### The following reasons count towards absences for final exam exemptions:

- Unexcused (U)
- Parent Notes (A)
- Suspension (S)
- More than 3 absences for a funeral (F) (funeral documentation is still needed for the first 3 absences)

All other absences, as listed under "Excused Absences" in this handbook, will not count towards the absences to be eligible to exempt semester and final exams. If attendance documentation is not received by the school within five school days of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unexcused and will count as an absence towards final exam exemptions.

If a student is exempt from an exam, he/she has to be on campus in that class the day of the exam for attendance purposes.

#### **Advanced Placement and OnRamps Courses**

The recommendations below are used to help students determine which Advanced Placement and OnRamps courses they are prepared for and likely to be the most successful.

- 85 or higher in the previous course for that subject and recommendation by teacher; and/or
- Masters on the last STAAR test for that subject; and/or
- PSAT 8/9 score of 1090 or higher

#### **Honors Course Transfer Policy**

After the first week of school, students may only change from an AP course to an honors course at the beginning of the next nine week grading period or semester. All changes require approval by an administrator. If a student changes at the nine week grading period, the transfer grade into the honors course is the grade earned in the AP course plus 10 points. For example, the student made a 64 in the AP course during the first nine weeks. This grade will transfer as a 74 into the honors course to average for the first semester.

If the student transfers from an AP course to an honors course at the semester, the AP semester

1 grade and honors semester 2 grade will NOT average together for year-long course credit. Credit is only awarded per semester. Students must pass each semester course to receive credit.

### **PLP 9 Exemption**

In order to exempt PLP 9, a student must meet the following guidelines.

- Students must have earned their speech credit prior to starting their PLP 9 in their freshman year.
- Students must be exempting PLP 9 to take a credited academic or elective course. (A student may not exempt PLP 9 for a study hall or off-period.)
- If the student drops the academic/elective course replacing PLP 9, the student will be enrolled in PLP 9 for the remainder of the school year.

### **PLP 10 Exemption**

In order to exempt PLP 10, a student must meet the following guidelines.

- Students must have earned all credits their freshman year and be classified as a sophomore.
- Students must have earned their health credit prior to starting their PLP 10 in their sophomore year.
- Students exempting PLP 10 must attend and complete CPR instruction with PLP 10 or on their own before or during their sophomore year.
- Students must be exempting PLP 10 to take a credited academic or elective course. (A student may not exempt PLP 10 for a study hall or off-period.)
- If the student drops the academic/elective course replacing PLP 10, the student will be enrolled in PLP 10 for the remainder of the school year.

### **PLP 11 Exemption**

In order to exempt PLP 11, a student must meet the following guidelines.

- Students must have earned all credits their sophomore year and be classified as a junior.
- Students must have earned their personal financial literacy credit prior to starting their PLP 11 in their junior year.
- Students must be exempting PLP 11 to take a credited academic or elective course. (A student may not exempt PLP 11 for a study hall or off-period.)
- If the student drops the academic/elective course replacing PLP 11, the student will be enrolled in PLP 11 for the remainder of the school year.

### **Off and Aide Periods**

Juniors and seniors are eligible for up to two off **OR** aide periods per semester. Students may not have more than one Off Period or Aide Period per day. Students need to apply for an off/aide period each semester. Students must be caught up with community service through the end of the prior year and be caught up with all credits and graduation requirements, including EOC Assessments, CPR and CCMR, to be eligible for an off period. In addition, off periods are subject to students having passing grades in all coursework each grading period.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Gateway shall ensure that each student enrolls in the courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education (“SBOE”) for the foundation high school program, or the recommended or advanced high school program.

### **Requirements for a Diploma Beginning with the 2014–2015 School Year**

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 in the 2014–2015 school year, a student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma:

1. Complete the required number of credits established by the State and any additional credits required by Gateway;
2. Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the State;
3. Achieve passing scores on certain EOC assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law; and
4. Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by Gateway, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education.

### **Testing Requirements for Graduation**

Students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment should a student choose this option. See the Head of School or the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness for more information on the State testing requirements for graduation.

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

### **Individual Graduation Committee Decisions**

A student who has failed the EOC assessment graduation requirements for no more than two courses may receive a high school diploma if the student has qualified to graduate by means of an individual graduation committee (“IGC”). A student may not graduate under an IGC if the student did not take each required EOC assessment or an approved substitute assessment for each course for which there is an EOC assessment.

Please see the Head of School or the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness for more information on the makeup of an IGC and all other requirements for graduation.

### **Foundation Graduation Program**

Students who enter grade 9 in the 2014–2015 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “foundation school program.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (“STEM”); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript and diploma. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and the student’s parent are advised

of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to an appropriate School administrator for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement, and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn "performance acknowledgements" that will be acknowledged on a student's diploma and transcript. Performance acknowledgements are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT exam; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgements are prescribed by state rules, and the Head of School can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

All Gateway College Preparatory freshmen will begin high school on the Distinguished Level of Achievement program. All students who enroll during their sophomore year and the beginning of their junior year will also begin on the Distinguished Level of Achievement program. An individual graduation plan will be developed for each student at the beginning of their freshman year or at the time of enrollment that outlines the requirements and timeline for meeting the Distinguished Level of Achievement program, including meeting at least one of the endorsements. Each student's graduation plan will be reviewed at least twice a year.

Students enrolling after the beginning of their junior year and anytime during their senior year will meet with the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness or campus principal to develop an individual plan to graduate on the Distinguished Level of Achievement program, if possible, or the Endorsements program.

For a student to move from the Distinguished Level of Achievement, the student's parent must request in writing to move to the Endorsements plan and include an explanation of why the Distinguished Level of Achievement is not possible. The request will be reviewed and must be approved by the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness, Head of School, and Chief Operating Officer BEFORE the student will be allowed to move to the Endorsements program.

If a student at Gateway College Preparatory School wants to move to the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement, the following requirements under state law must be met:

- (1) The student and the student's parent or person standing in parental relation are advised by a school counselor of the specific benefits of graduating from high school with one or more endorsements; and
- (2) The student's parent or person standing in parental relation files with a school counselor written permission, on a form adopted by the Texas Education Agency, allowing the student to graduate under the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement.

The request will be reviewed and must be approved by the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness, Head of School, and Chief Operating Officer BEFORE the student will be allowed to move to the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement.

Requests to move to the foundation high school program will only be considered for students who are in danger of not graduating in four years from the year they entered high school.

In addition to these state requirements, the student may not move to the foundation high school program without earning an endorsement in order to graduate in less than four years. The decision must be approved by the Chief Operating Officer.

### **Foundation Plus Endorsements High School Program**

- 4 English (English I, II, III, one credit in any advanced English course)
- 4 Math (Algebra I, Geometry, two credits in any advanced math course)
- 4 Science (Biology, one credit in IPC or advanced science, two additional credits in any advanced science)
- 4 Social Studies (World Geography, World History, US History, Government, Economics)
- 2 LOTE or Computer Programming
- 1 Physical Education (4 credits maximum)
- 1 Fine Arts
- 0.5 Health (or Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness)
- 0.5 Communication Applications (or Professional Communication)
- 0.5 Personal Financial Literacy
- 4.5 Elective Credits to include courses to meet at least one endorsement\*

26 Credits Total

### **Distinguished Level of Achievement**

- 4 English (English I, II, III, one credit in any advanced English course)
- 4 Math (Algebra I, Geometry, two credits in any advanced math course, one must be Algebra II)
- 4 Science (Biology, one credit in IPC or advanced science, two additional credits in any advanced science)
- 4 Social Studies (World Geography, World History, US History, Government, Economics)
- 2 LOTE or Computer Programming
- 1 Physical Education (4 credits maximum)
- 1 Fine Arts
- 0.5 Health (or Lifetime Nutrition and Wellness)
- 0.5 Communication Applications (or Professional Communication)
- 0.5 Personal Financial Literacy
- 4.5 Elective Credits to include courses to meet at least one endorsement\*

26 Credits Total

### **\*Endorsement Options**

Students will use their state graduation electives, with the 26 required credits, to meet an endorsement of their choice. Student may choose more than one endorsement.

### STEM

Complete Algebra II, chemistry, and physics plus one of the following: 5 science credits (two advanced science plus Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) **OR** complete 5 math credits including two advanced courses beyond Algebra II **OR** complete Program of Study in Programming & Software Development.

### ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Complete 1 additional social studies or English elective **OR** complete four credits of the same language or 2 levels of one language and 2 levels of another language **OR** a sequence of four credits of Art, Theater, Music, or Dance

MULTIDISCIPLINARY

Complete four Advanced Placement (AP) or dual credit courses in Math, English, Science, Social Studies, LOTE or Fine Arts **OR** complete four credits in each of the four core subjects to include English IV, chemistry, and physics.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Complete Program of Study in Audio Visual Production (Digital Communications), Business Management, Programming & Software Development, or Marketing & Sales.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Complete Program of Study in Health Sciences or Law Enforcement.

**High School Required Course Sequence**

Below is the schedule of required courses for each high school year through Orenda Charter School. Students may take a course listed in the table below **prior** to the scheduled year, if the required prerequisites are met, but may not take the course later than the schedule year unless they have not received credit yet for the required prerequisites.

Students interested in course acceleration **must** receive credit for the entire course (first and second semester) **prior** to the first day of the school year in which they are scheduled to take the year-long (1.0 credit) course, as listed below. For semester (0.5 credit) only courses, such as government and economics, students must receive credit for the course prior to the first day of the semester in which the student is scheduled to take that course on campus. Course acceleration options include summer school, Credit by Exam, and dual enrollment. Students who are planning to exempt PLP 9, 10 or 11 must meet those requirement prior to the first day of the school year in which they are scheduled to take the course.

	<b>9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>
<b>English</b>	Honors English I	Honors English 2	Honors English 3 <b>OR</b> AP Language and Literature*	Honors English 4 <b>OR</b> AP Literature and Literature*
<b>Science</b>	Honors Biology	Honors or OnRamps Chemistry	Honors or AP Physics	AP Biology, AP Environmental Science, Anatomy & Physiology, <b>OR</b> Engineering
<b>Social Studies</b>	Honors World Geography <b>OR</b> AP Human Geography	Honors World History <b>OR</b> AP World History	Honors US History <b>OR</b> AP US History	AP US Government <b>AND</b> AP Macroeconomics
<b>Math <u>OR</u></b>	Honors Algebra I	Honors Geometry	Honors or OnRamps Algebra 2	Honors Pre-Calculus, AP Pre-Calculus, AQR, <b>OR</b> AP Statistics
<b>Advanced Math</b>	Honors Geometry	Honors or OnRamps Algebra 2	Honors or AP Pre-Calculus	AQR, AP Statistics, <b>OR</b> AP Calculus

<b>(Algebra I Taken in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)</b>				
<b>PLP/AVID</b>	PLP 9 <b>OR</b> AVID 1 (both courses include 0.5 Speech)	PLP 10 <b>OR</b> AVID 1 (both courses include 0.5 Heath)	School-to-College/Money Matters <b>OR</b> AVID 3+Personal Financial Literacy	AVID 4 (not required but highly recommended for students who completed AVID 1-3)

Courses required for graduation not listed in the table above can be taken at any time during high school, as long as the required prerequisites are met as listed in the course catalog.

\*English 4 can be take in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and English 3 in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, depending on when the courses are offered on the campus.

### Performance Acknowledgements

Students may earn a performance acknowledgement on his or her transcript for outstanding performance in the following areas by meeting criteria under 19 TAC 74.13.

- Dual Credit
- Bilingualism and Biliteracy
- College Board Advanced Placement Test
- Nationally Norm-Referenced Preliminary College Preparation Assessment (PSAT, ACT Aspire, PreACT, ACT, SAT)
- Business or Industry Certification or License

### Service Learning

Students must complete eight service hours per school year in order to graduate with a high school diploma from Gateway College Preparatory School. At minimum, all students must have completed 32 service hours by graduation; however, if a student earns 100+ service hours, he/she will be awarded a service hour cord upon graduation. Information on the requirements and documentation forms can be found on the Gateway College Preparatory website.

### Student CPR

Texas requires all students to receive instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillator prior to graduation. Students will receive CPR and AED instruction using a nationally recognized, evidence-based guidelines for emergency cardiovascular care and incorporating psychomotor skills. Students who have received this instruction through a prior school or organization can submit documentation to the campus registrar to satisfy this graduation requirement.

### Advanced Placement and/or Dual Credit Courses

Gateway College Preparatory students will complete at least 2 Advanced Placement and participate in at least 1 Advanced Placement exam OR 2 dual credit courses OR a combination of 2 Advancement Placement and dual credit courses to receive a diploma from Gateway College Preparatory School. To meet the dual credit requirement, students can take approved dual credit courses under the core curriculum or workforce programs or complete articulated

credit with a grade of 80 or higher. Students who are graduating in more than 4 years are exempt from the Advancement Placement/dual credit graduation requirement.

Students can also meet the Advancement Placement/Dual Credit graduation requirement by successfully completing the College Preparatory Math and/or English Language Arts Course(s) through an approved Memorandum of Understanding between Orenda Charter School and an Institute of Higher Education, only if they are in 12th grade and meet one of the following criteria:

- Performance on an EOC assessment does not meet the college readiness standard; **OR**
- Performance in previous honors or Advancement Placement course(s) was below passing for a semester or final grade; **OR**
- Performance on SAT, ACT, or TSIA does not meet the college readiness standard.

### **Proper Interaction with Peace Officers**

Students in grades 9-12 are required to receive instruction on proper interaction with peace officers during traffic stops and other in-person encounters prior to graduation. The new requirement applies to any student who enters grade 9 in the 2018-2019 school year and thereafter and will appear on the student's transcript.

### **Accelerated Testers**

Students who took the Algebra I, English II, and/or Biology EOC assessment(s) prior to 9<sup>th</sup> grade are required to take the SAT or ACT prior to high school graduation to satisfy the federal assessment requirement and to meet the local graduation requirement to receive a diploma from Orenda Charter School.

### **FAFSA and TAFSA**

As introduced with House Bill 3 (2019) and beginning with the school year 2021-2022, all high school seniors must take one of the following actions to graduate:

- Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Complete and submit the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA)
- Submit a signed opt-out agreement

### **College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)**

Starting with the graduating class of 2024-25, students need to demonstrate college, career, or military readiness in any one of the ways established by the state in order to graduate from an Orenda Charter School campus.

### **GPA and Class Rank**

#### **Weighted GPA and Class Rank**

Weighted Grade Point Average (GPA) or 6.0 GPA is calculated and will appear on the student's official transcript along with the unweighted or 4.0 GPA. The weighted GPA is also used to determine rank in class. Courses that will be counted in the weighted grade point average include credits from the following content areas taken in grades 9-12 as defined by the TEKS: English, mathematics, social studies, science, and languages other than English. Approved, dual credit college courses within the core areas described above are also counted in the calculation of weighted GPA. A maximum of four dual credit courses per semester will be calculated into weighted GPA. The end of semester numerical grade is used to compute grade point average and is recorded on the student's Academic Achievement Record (transcript).

Weighted GPA, unweighted GPA, and class rank are calculated at the end of a student’s 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, and subsequently at the end of each semester in grades 10-12. Class rank is calculated at the end of each semester only.

Grades earned in the following courses shall be excluded when calculating the weighted GPA and academic class rank:

- Correspondence courses
- Summer school courses
- Credit by examination
- Credit for acceleration
- Credit recovery courses not taken through an Orenda Charter School
- Home school courses
- Distance Learning and online courses from a non-accredited private or public school
- Courses taken in foreign countries (unless offered by an accredited U.S. school)
- High school courses taken while the student is in middle school
- Pass/fail courses
- Non-accredited private schools

The weighted GPA is determined by semester grades earned in the core courses (English, Math, Science, Socials Studies, and Languages Other Than English, and other selected advanced academic courses) taken in grades 9–12. All courses within the Pre-AP/honors category are calculated on a 5.0 scale. Advanced placement courses and dual enrollment are calculated on a 6.0 scale. Elective, non-core courses and local credit courses are not included in the calculation of the weighted GPA and academic class rank. In determining class rank, students graduating on the minimum plan will be ranked below students graduating on the foundation and/or recommended and distinguished graduation plans. Students attending Gateway on a temporary foreign study basis will be excluded from class rank.

<b>Numerical Grade</b>	<b>Regular Courses (R)</b>	<b>Pre-AP/Honors Courses (H)</b>	<b>Advancement Placement and Dual Enrollment Courses (A)</b>
100	4.0	5.0	6.0
99	3.9	4.9	5.9
98	3.8	4.8	5.8
97	3.7	4.7	5.7
96	3.6	4.6	5.6
95	3.5	4.5	5.5
94	3.4	4.4	5.4
93	3.3	4.3	5.3
92	3.2	4.2	5.2
91	3.1	4.1	5.1
90	3.0	4.0	5.0
89	2.9	3.9	4.9
88	2.8	3.8	4.8
87	2.7	3.7	4.7
86	2.6	3.6	4.6
85	2.5	3.5	4.5
84	2.4	3.4	4.4
83	2.3	3.3	4.3
82	2.2	3.2	4.2
81	2.1	3.1	4.1

80	2.0	3.0	4.0
79	1.9	2.9	3.9
78	1.8	2.8	3.8
77	1.7	2.7	3.7
76	1.6	2.6	3.6
75	1.5	2.5	3.5
74	1.4	2.4	3.4
73	1.3	2.3	3.3
72	1.2	2.2	3.2
71	1.1	2.1	3.1
70	1.0	2.0	3.0

### Courses Included in Weighted GPA

English	Mathematics	Science
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English I (R)</li> <li>• Honors English I (H)</li> <li>• English II (R)</li> <li>• Honors English 2 (H)</li> <li>• English III (R)</li> <li>• Honors English III (H)</li> <li>• AP Language and Composition (A)</li> <li>• English IV (R)</li> <li>• Honors English IV (H)</li> <li>• Business English (R)</li> <li>• College Preparatory English (R)</li> <li>• AP Literature and Composition (A)</li> <li>• DC Composition I (A)</li> <li>• DC Composition II (A)</li> <li>• DC American Literature (A)</li> <li>• DC British Literature (A)</li> <li>• Capstone Research Project in English (Independent Study in English, Journalism, or Speech) (H)</li> <li>• Advanced college English courses* (A)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I (R)</li> <li>• Honors Algebra I (H)</li> <li>• Geometry (R)</li> <li>• Honors Geometry (H)</li> <li>• Algebra II (R)</li> <li>• Honors Algebra II (H)</li> <li>• OnRamps Algebra II (A)</li> <li>• Math Models (R)</li> <li>• Engineering Math (R)</li> <li>• Precalculus (H)</li> <li>• AP Precalculus (A)</li> <li>• College Preparatory Math (R)</li> <li>• Advanced Quantitative Reasoning (H)</li> <li>• AP Calculus AB (A)</li> <li>• AP Calculus BC (A)</li> <li>• AP Statistics (A)</li> <li>• AP Computer Science (A)</li> <li>• Capstone Independent Study Project in Mathematics (H)</li> <li>• Advanced college mathematics courses* (A)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology (R)</li> <li>• Honors Biology (H)</li> <li>• Chemistry (R)</li> <li>• Honors Chemistry (H)</li> <li>• OnRamps Chemistry (A)</li> <li>• Physics (R)</li> <li>• Honors Physics (H)</li> <li>• Integrated Physics and Chemistry (R)</li> <li>• Aquatic Science (R)</li> <li>• Astronomy (R)</li> <li>• Forensic Science (R)</li> <li>• Earth and Space Science (R)</li> <li>• Environmental Systems (R)</li> <li>• Engineering Design and Problem-solving (H)</li> <li>• AP Biology (A)</li> <li>• AP Chemistry (A)</li> <li>• AP Physics B (A)</li> <li>• AP Physics C (A)</li> <li>• AP Environmental Science (A)</li> <li>• Advanced Biotechnology (H)</li> <li>• Anatomy and Physiology (H)</li> <li>• Anatomy and Physiology SEQ or RX (R)</li> <li>• Capstone Research in Science Project (Scientific Research and Design) (H)</li> <li>• Advanced college science courses* (A)</li> </ul>

Social Studies	Languages Other Than English (LOTE)	Explanations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World Geography (R)</li> <li>• Honors World Geography (H)</li> <li>• AP Human Geography (A)</li> <li>• World History (R)</li> <li>• Honors World History (H)</li> <li>• AP World History (A)</li> <li>• US History (R)</li> <li>• Honors US History (H)</li> <li>• DC US History I (A)</li> <li>• DC US History II (A)</li> <li>• AP US History (A)</li> <li>• Government (R)</li> <li>• AP US Government (A)</li> <li>• DC Government (A)</li> <li>• Economics (R)</li> <li>• DC Economics (A)</li> <li>• AP Macroeconomics (A)</li> <li>• AP European History (A)</li> <li>• AP Psychology (A)</li> <li>• Capstone Research Project in Social Studies (Social Studies Advanced Studies) (H)</li> <li>• Advanced college social studies courses* (A)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LOTE I (R)</li> <li>• LOTE II (R)</li> <li>• Honors LOTE II (H)</li> <li>• Computer Science I (R)</li> <li>• Computer Science II (R)</li> <li>• LOTE III (R)</li> <li>• Honors LOTE III (H)</li> <li>• LOTE IV (R)</li> <li>• AP Spanish IV, Language (A)</li> <li>• AP Spanish IV, Literature (A)</li> <li>• AP French IV (A)</li> <li>• AP German IV (A)</li> <li>• AP Latin IV (A)</li> <li>• AP Computer Science Principles (A)</li> <li>• College LOTE courses* (A)</li> </ul>	<p><b>R = Regular weight</b>  <b>H = Honors weight</b>  <b>A=AP weight</b></p> <p><b>DC = Dual credit college course</b></p> <p><b>*Equivalent college courses to those listed are allowed as well as courses that count as the 4th or higher credit in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and languages other than English (LOTE).</b></p>

### Unweighted GPA

The unweighted or 4.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) provides easily usable information to colleges and universities and is sometimes referred to as the 4.0 college GPA. The unweighted GPA is calculated based on the straight average of all semester grades for all classes where:

- A=4.0 (90- 100)
- B=3.0 (80-89)
- C=2.0 (75-79)
- D=1.0 (70-74)
- F=0.0 (<70)

The semester averages of all state-approved courses and elective courses will be included in the calculation of the unweighted GPA. Classes taken for high school credit during junior high are used in calculating the unweighted GPA but are NOT included in calculation of the weighted GPA. Summer school grades are used in calculating the unweighted GPA.

## **Valedictorian and Salutatorian**

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be selected at the end of the second semester of the senior year. The valedictorian and the salutatorian shall be the two graduating seniors with the highest rank in class (weighted grade point average). To be eligible, a student shall have been enrolled in the School for the entire last three semesters prior to graduation.

To qualify for valedictorian or salutatorian, the student must graduate in no more than four years.

### *Breaking a Tie for Valedictorian/Salutatorian*

In case of a tie, the following method shall be used to determine who shall be recognized as valedictorian or salutatorian:

1. Compute the weighted grade point average to the maximum number of decimal places in the district computer system to break the tie.
2. If a tie still occurs, the student with the most AP courses shall be considered valedictorian or salutatorian.
3. If a tie still occurs, the student with the highest numerical weighted grade averages of all Advanced Placement courses taken shall be valedictorian or salutatorian.

All Valedictorian and Salutatorian speeches MUST be submitted to the High School Section Head, Head of School, and Superintendent at least 2 days prior to graduation for final review. Speeches may be subject to change if they do not meet the provided guidelines given upon Val/Sal announcement.

## **Early Graduates and Beyond 4-Year Continuers**

A student's class rank shall be determined within the graduating class of the school year in which the student completes all requirements for a diploma, regardless of the number of years the student is enrolled in high school.

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

Senate Bill 1888, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, added [Texas Education Code §28.0253](#), which establishes the Texas First Early High School Completion Program to allow public high school students who demonstrate early readiness for college to graduate early from high school.

The purpose of the Texas First Early High School Completion Program, in conjunction with the Texas First Scholarship Program ([Texas Education Code, Chapter 56, Subchapter K-1](#)), is to promote efficiency in the state public education system and incentivize the enrollment of high performing students at eligible institutions within the state of Texas.

Here are the eligibility requirements:

- Texas residency
- FAFSA completion
- At least 26 high school credits under the Distinguished Level of Achievement and a final GPA equivalent to 3.0 or higher
- Overall score in at least the 80th percentile on one or more of the following assessments: ACT, SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, TSIA/TSIA2, or GED; or, alternatively, a GPA in the top 10 percent of the student's class
- Completion of the STAAR EOC exams in English I or II, Algebra I, and Biology, or completion of eligible substitute assessments

- Demonstration of mastery in each subject area of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and a language other than English with one of the [Subject Area Assessments and Benchmarks](#)

If a student graduates two or more semesters early, he or she will receive a two-semester scholarship, worth several thousand dollars, to a participating university. If a student graduates one semester early, he or she receive a one semester scholarship to a participating university. A student must provide an official copy of their assessment results and transcripts, as applicable, to receive credit for the assessments and credits required to receive early graduation from the program.

Students may also be eligible for additional financial aid at most of these institutions! The Texas First Diploma does not guarantee automatic admission for students. However, the scholarship will only apply toward participating universities. The scholarship offer will expire at the end of the first academic year following graduation, so students are encouraged to attend college directly after high school. More information can be found on the [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board flyer](#).

### **Foreign Exchange Students**

All foreign exchange students who do not intend to graduate with a diploma from a Texas public school will be excluded from class rank.

### **Transfer Student Grades**

All incoming students' GPAs shall be converted to the system used by the School to determine the GPA and rank in class.

### **Participation in Graduation Ceremony**

Students must meet all the state and local graduation requirements including credits, state assessments, and service learning hours to participate in graduation ceremonies. Students are eligible to participate in the next available graduation ceremony after completing all graduation requirements with the Orenda campus issuing the diploma.

### **Graduation Regalia**

Only district and campus issued and approved [graduation regalia](#) may be worn during the graduation ceremony. Caps, gowns, and tassels must be ordered through the chosen school vendor with the approved color(s). **Caps may not be decorated.** The only cords and stoles that can be worn during graduation, including processional and recessional, are earned and awarded by the campus for 100 hours of community service, top 10%, valedictorian, salutatorian, "originals" cords, dual credit, National Honor Society, and participation in a district-approved national club or organization through the campus such as student council, AVID, and National Art Honor Society. In addition, UIL metals earned in high school at an Orenda campus may be worn. This includes UIL fine arts, academic, and athletic metals.

### **Withdrawal Prior to the End of the Semester**

Students who withdraw prior to the end of the semester and before all exams are completed will NOT receive a semester grade or semester credit from an Orenda Charter School campus. The grade in progress at the time of withdrawal will be sent to the new school. The student's new school will determine how the grade information sent by an Orenda Charter School for the current grading period will be processed and credits calculated/awarded.

### **Enrollment Prior to the End of the Semester**

If the previous school has not completed the semester, the withdrawal/transfer grades from the previous school will be used with the grades earned for the remainder of the grading period to determine that grade for the grading period. The student will take the semester final to be used in calculating the semester average and course credit.

## **Automatic College Admission and Curriculum Requirements for Financial Aid for High School Students**

### **Automatic Admission Requirements**

In accordance with Texas Education Code (TEC), §51.803, a student is eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public college or university as an undergraduate student if the student earned a grade point average in the **top 10 percent** of the student's high school graduating class or in the percentage of qualified applicants that are anticipated to be offered admission to the University of Texas at Austin\*, and the applicant:

- (1) successfully completed the requirements for the Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP);
- (2) earned the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program; or
- (3) satisfied ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks on the ACT assessment or earned on the SAT assessment a score of at least 1,500 out of 2,400 or the equivalent.

High school rank for students seeking automatic admission to a general academic teaching institution is determined and reported as follows.

- (1) Class rank must be based on the student's rank at the end of the 11th grade, middle of the 12th grade, or at high school graduation, whichever is most recent at the application deadline.
- (2) The top 10 percent of a high school class cannot contain more than 10 percent of the total class size.
- (3) The student's rank must be reported by the student's high school or school district as a specific number out of a specific number total class size.
- (4) Class rank shall be determined by the school or school district from which the student graduated or is expected to graduate.

A student is considered to have satisfied the course requirements of the RHSP, DAP, or the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program if the student completed the portion of those programs that was available to the student but which the student was unable to complete because the courses were unavailable as a result of circumstances not within the student's control.

### **To qualify for automatic admission an applicant must:**

- (1) submit an application before the deadline established by the Texas college or university to which the student seeks admission; and
- (2) provide a high school transcript or diploma that indicates whether the student has satisfied or is on schedule to satisfy the requirements of the RHSP, DAP, or the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program or the portion of the requirements of those programs that was available to the student.

Texas colleges and universities are required to admit an applicant for admission as an undergraduate student if the applicant is the child of a public servant who was killed or sustained a fatal injury in the line of duty and meets the minimum requirements, if any, established by the governing board of the college or university for high school or prior college- level grade point average and performance on standardized tests.

\* The University of Texas at Austin (UT) is not required to automatically admit applicants in excess of 75% of its enrollment capacity for first-time resident undergraduate students. Should the number of applicants who qualify for automatic admission exceed 75% of enrollment capacity, UT must provide notice of the percentage of qualified applicants that are anticipated to be offered admission.

**State Financial Aid Programs with Curriculum Requirements**

Under TEC, Title 3, there are several state financial aid programs available for Texas public high school students. The following state financial aid programs include certain curriculum requirements to be considered when planning a student’s high school career to ensure eligibility for financial aid under one of these programs. **Please note that this is not a complete list of requirements and additional eligibility requirements apply.** A full list of requirements is available through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s financial aid webpage at <http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=458>.

**Individuals interested in the following financial aid opportunities are strongly encouraged to check the status of each grant program for the anticipated year(s) of enrollment in an institution of higher education at <http://www.collegeforalltexas.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=458>.**

**Texas B-On-Time (BOT):**

Applicants must meet one of the following academic requirements:

- a. Graduated in the 2002–2003 academic year or later under the RHSP or DAP, or its equivalent
- b. Earned an associate’s degree from an eligible institution no earlier than May 1, 2005

**Top Ten Percent Scholarship**

To receive an initial award through the Top 10 Percent Scholarship Program, a student must have graduated while ranked in the top 10 percent of his or her graduating class and completed the RHSP or DAP curriculum or earned the distinguished level of achievement on the Foundation High School Program (or the equivalent) at an accredited public high school in Texas, or the equivalent at an accredited private high school in Texas.

**TEXAS Grant**

**Basic Initial Year (IY) Student Eligibility Curriculum Requirements**

A student must complete the Foundation High School Program, RHSP, or DAP (or the equivalent).

**Priority Model Initial Year (IY) Student Curriculum Eligibility Requirements**

In addition to the basic initial year (IY) student eligibility requirements, to receive priority consideration for an IY award through the TEXAS Grant Program, a student must meet at least one requirement in at least two of the four following areas:

<b>AREA</b>	<b>REQUIREMENT(S)</b>
<b>Advanced Academic Program</b>	Earn 12 hours of college credit (dual credit or AP courses), complete the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), or complete the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program
<b>TSI Readiness</b>	Meet the Texas Success Initiatives (TSI) assessment thresholds or qualify for an exemption
<b>Class Standing</b>	Graduate in the top one-third of the HS graduating class or have a B average
<b>Advanced Math</b>	Complete at least one math course beyond Algebra II as determined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) or complete at least one advanced career and technical course, as determined by TEA

A full list of TEXAS Grant eligibility requirements is provided at <http://www.collegeforalltexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=458>.

## **Placement of Former Home School Students**

### **High School Course Credits**

Students entering Gateway who wish to obtain high school level credit for courses completed in home school settings must follow the procedures below.

1. Request high school credit earned through home school within the first nine weeks of enrollment at Gateway.
2. Submit copies of student assessment results, work samples, and any other evidence of course completion.
3. Submit a detailed outline and/or course syllabus and copies of instructional materials.

All required items above should be given to the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness. After submission of the credit request and required items, Gateway staff will review the materials, and course credit will be awarded based on the level and type of work completed, relevancy of the course itself, and the level to which the course addresses the Texas state standards (TEKS) for the credit being requested. Submission of the credit request and required items does not guarantee public school credit. In addition, acceptance of home school credit by other private schools does not obligate or guarantee credit for these courses by Gateway.

If Gateway determines that the student appears to be deficient in particular areas of the course or not enough documentation is available to award course credit, the student will be required to complete an end-of-semester, end-of-course, or an equivalent exam to determine course credit. Such exams will assess overall content knowledge of the courses as outlined in the Texas state standards (TEKS).

### **Grades K-8 Placement**

Students entering Gateway in grades K–8 from home school programs will follow the same procedures 1–3 above for high school. Work completed in home school settings will be assessed by school staff to determine the level to which the grade-level and subjects align to Texas state standards (TEKS) and Gateway courses. Students in grades K–8 will also be given reading and math assessments upon enrollment. Data from these assessments will be used in conjunction with the overall assessment of the curriculum used in the home school setting to place the students in the appropriate grade.

## **Standardized Testing**

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

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students in grades 3–8 will take state-mandated assessments, such as the 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.

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

### **Paper STAAR Test**

School districts may administer assessments in a paper format to students upon request of parent, guardian, or teacher, up to 3% of district enrollment. Requests will be on a first-come first-serve basis until the 3% cap of district enrollment is reached. The 3% excludes any student whose ARD committee determines that the student requires an accommodation that must be delivered in a paper format. Requests must be submitted to district not later than 9/15 for fall administration and 12/1 for spring administration of assessments. Instructions and request forms are available on the campus website.

### **End-of-Course Assessments for Students in Grades 9–12**

Beginning with ninth graders in the 2011–2012 school year and, as modified by House Bill 5, end-of-course (“EOC”) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I;
- English I and II;
- Biology; and
- United States History.

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, except in circumstances where a student may be eligible to graduate in accordance with a plan approved by an Individual Graduation Committee. (See “Individual Graduation Committee Decisions” above.)

There are three testing windows during the school year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

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

### **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 Assessment (TSIA). The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through Gateway as well.

### **SAT and ACT Assessment Reimbursement**

Under House Bill 3, the Texas legislative session approved funding for college preparation assessments beginning with the 2019-20 school year. High school students starting in the spring of their 11th grade year may select and take once, at state cost, one of the valid, reliable and nationally norm-referenced assessment instruments used by colleges and universities as part of their undergraduate admissions processes. Reimbursement is provided for each student to take the ACT **OR** SAT one time. In addition, any high school student who took the Algebra I EOC in 8<sup>th</sup> grade is required to take the ACT or SAT prior to graduation. Contact the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness for more information on registering for the ACT and SAT and test fee reimbursement.

### **Advanced Placement Exam**

To be eligible to take an Advanced Placement Exam through an Orenda Charter School campus, the student needs to be currently enrolled in the AP course, have previously taken the AP courses and received credit, OR have an independent study plan on file at the school approved by the Head of School. Registration for AP Exams is due no later than November 15<sup>th</sup> or the deadline set by the College Board. All fees are the responsibility of the student/parent and must be paid prior to a test is ordered.

### **Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (“TELPAS”)**

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (“TELPAS”) is a system of statewide assessments administered to all Limited English Proficient (“LEP”) students in grades K–12. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stages of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

### **Promotion and Retention**

A student may be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and/or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade level standards and meet the requirements for attendance.

Students in grades K–8 will be advanced based on a number of factors, including local and state test results; reading and math ability; and class grades. Decisions are made by a committee comprised of teachers, administrators, and, where applicable, counseling and special education staff. Parents are notified at least nine weeks before the end of the school year if retention is a possibility.

In addition to the requirements listed above, a student may be considered for retention if they have met any of the following criteria:

1. failed one or more core subject areas;
2. failed one or more state assessments;
3. is below level in one or more core subject areas;
4. missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year. The decision must be made by a committee, which is comprised of the child’s core subject area teachers, the counselor, and the Principal.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

Parents of students who do not perform satisfactorily on their STAAR or EOC assessments will be notified that their child will participate in an Accelerated Instructional Program designed to improve performance.

### **Parent Election to Repeat a Grade/Course**

A parent or guardian may elect for a student in a grade up to grade 8 to repeat the grade in which the student was enrolled during the previous school year or for a student to repeat a high school course. Parent requests need to be submitted in writing through email to the campus Principal no later than May 1<sup>st</sup>.

For high school courses, the student may not repeat the course if he or she has met all requirements for graduation. In addition, for high school courses where credit was previously awarded, only the original grade with credit will be calculated into the student’s GPA, both the weighted and unweighted. The

repeated high school course and grade will not earn additional credit and will not calculate into the student's GPA.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal ("ARD") Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program ("IEP"). For students in grades 5 and 8, the ARD committee will meet after the first and second administration of the reading and math STAAR but before the retest to determine if the student will be promoted or retain and in what manner the students shall participate in accelerated instruction.

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

### **Supplemental Instruction**

Each time a student fails to perform satisfactorily on STAAR grades 3-8 and/or EOC, the school shall provide to the student accelerated instruction in the applicable subject area during the subsequent summer or school year following the requirements below in this section.

In providing accelerated instruction, the school may not remove a student, except under circumstances for which a student enrolled in the same grade level who is not receiving accelerated instruction would be removed, from:

1. Instruction in the foundation curriculum and enrichment curriculum for the grade level in which the student is enrolled; or
2. Recess or other physical activity that is available to other students enrolled in the same grade level.

Accelerated instruction provided during the following school year may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours.

The school must provide supplemental instruction aligned with the research on high impact tutoring in the TEKS for the applicable grade levels and subject area in the following manner:

1. **No less than 15 or 30 hours** depending on student performance and is provided in the summer or at least once per week in the school year;
2. **Limited to two subjects per year**, prioritizing math and RLA;
3. Provided in a group of **no more than four students**, unless the parent or guardian of each student in the group authorizes a larger group;
4. Designed to assist the student in achieving satisfactory performance in the applicable grade level and subject area and includes **effective instructional materials** designed for supplemental instruction;
5. Provided by a **person with training in the applicable instructional materials** for the supplemental instruction and provided by one person for the entirety of their accelerated instruction.

## **Credit by Exam and Grade Advancement**

Gateway uses examinations and guidelines established by the State Board of Education to offer credit and acceleration by exam. The dates on which exams are scheduled will be posted on the Gateway website.

### **If a Student has Prior Instruction**

A student in grades 6–12 who has previously taken a course or subject (but did not receive credit for it) may, in circumstances determined by the Head of School or designee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for the course or subject. To receive credit, a student must score at least 70% on the exam.

The Attendance Review Committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to receive credit for a course by passing an exam.

### **If a Student Has Not Taken the Course**

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by Gateway are approved by the Board of Directors and include University of Texas at Texas, Texas Tech University, College Board Advancement Placement (AP), and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam through University of Texas or Texas Tech University, a scaled score of 60 or higher on an exam administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam, as applicable. A student may take an exam to earn course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the approved exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's course sequence, the student must complete the course. If a student successfully earns credit by exam, the student's score will appear on their transcript; however, the grade will not calculate into the weighted GPA or class rank. AP and CLEP exams scores convert to the following grades on a student's transcript:

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| • AP Score 3 = 80  | CLEP Score 50 = 80  |
| • AP Score 4 = 90  | CLEP Score 60 = 90  |
| • AP Score 5 = 100 | CLEP Score 70 = 100 |

A student in grade K–8 will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if (1) the student scores at least 80 on each exam in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies; (2) the Head of School recommends that the student be accelerated; and (3) the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement. A K-8 student may take an exam for acceleration no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score of 80% on the approved exam before the first day of the school year, the student will be enrolled in the current grade level for the school year and will not be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level during the current school year. Students in grade K-8 are must take all four subject areas exams and are not eligible to take an individual subject exam to accelerate for only that subject.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. Gateway will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If Gateway agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the school, the student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam.

### **Middle School Advanced Math**

6<sup>th</sup> grade students who performs in the top 40% on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade STAAR math assessment or similar local measures will be enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Advanced Math. Parents may opt out of this requirement by emailing the campus principal to request the student stay enrolled in 6<sup>th</sup> grade math.

### **Credit Recovery Options**

Students will restore credit for courses first once they are enrolled in our program, if necessary. There are two options for this recovery process. Students who are involved in competitive athletics will repeat the entire course. Students who are not involved in these activities have the option of taking the course in the prescriptive mode, which allows students to show master of concepts without taking all of the lesson modules. To do this, students have to earn a minimum of 80% mastery on concepts before they are allowed to accelerate in this manner.

### **Dual Credit Opportunities**

A dual credit course is a college course taken by a high school student for which the student earns both college and high school credit. Dual credit is also known as concurrent enrollment.

A student is eligible to enroll in dual credit courses starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade if the student:

- Demonstrates college readiness by achieving the minimum passing standards under the Texas Success Initiative, as set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code § 4.85, on relevant section(s) of an assessment instrument approved by the State Board of Education; or
- Demonstrates that he or she is exempt under the provisions of the Texas Success Initiative, as set forth in 19 Texas Administrative Code § 19.54.

Students are eligible to enroll in workforce education dual credit courses if the student demonstrates that he or she achieved the designated minimum standards set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. A student may enroll only in those workforce education dual credit courses for which he or she has demonstrated eligibility.

Students may not enroll in more than two dual credit courses per semester. A student may be exempt from this requirement only through approval by the Head of School and the Chief Academic Officer of the participating college if the student demonstrates outstanding academic performance and capability. The maximum number of dual credit courses that can be taken per semester is **FOUR**. If more than four dual credit courses are taken during a semester, only the four dual credit courses approved on the Orenda Dual Credit Agreement will be calculated into weighted GPA for that semester.

Students may not enroll in a dual credit course needed for graduation in the same semester they are scheduled to take that same AP course on campus needed for graduation. For example, a student can't register to take dual credit government in the fall of their senior year if AP Government is taught on campus during that same semester. Students taking dual credit courses needed for graduation must complete those courses through dual enrollment prior to the semester the AP course is offered on campus.

All in-person dual credit courses should be taken outside of school hours, unless approved by the Head of School. Students taking dual credit must still attend at least 4 hours of instruction each day which can include time spent receiving direct instruction (not online) on a college campus.

Students and parents are responsible for any fees for dual credit courses.

For dual credit where letter grades are awarded, the letter grade shall correlate to the highest numeric grade for the corresponding letter grade according the chart below. The numeric grade will appear on the student’s transcript.

A=100  
 B=89  
 C=79  
 D=74  
 F=69

**On-Campus Online Learning**

Students may take online courses for credit recovery or original credit through platforms offered by the district such as Edgenuity. Students are not eligible to take an online course for original credit that is direct taught during the same semester unless the direct taught course does not fit in the student’s schedule. Students enrolled in an online course will be monitored by a staff member. For non-CTE online courses, lessons and assignments may be completed at school or home, but all tests and quizzes including pre- and post-tests MUST be completed at school in a proctored session with a staff member. All work for online CTE courses can only be completed during the assigned period at school. Students must complete their own work which includes not sharing login information or requesting or allowing another person to work on student courses. Student may not use any unauthorized resources to complete tests including any internet resources or websites. Students planning on participating in NCAA after high school must complete all instruction without testing out of any lessons.

**Distance Learning**

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

The Texas Virtual School Network (“TxVSN”) has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation. If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the Head of School. Unless an exception is made by the Superintendent, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the School offers the same or a similar course.

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

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

Orenda Charter School offers several CTE pathways with a coherent sequence of three or more courses. Students may enroll in individual CTE courses for elective credit or may pursue one of the approved coherent sequences of courses below.

	Program of Study	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4
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<b>Career Cluster: ARTS, AUDIO/VIDEO TECHNOLOGY &amp; COMMUNICATION (ARTS)</b>					
<i>Business and Industry</i>	<i>Digital Communications</i>	Professional Communication <b>OR</b> Principles of Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communication (DI)	Audio Video I (DI)	Audio Video 2 (DI)	Practicum in Audio/Video (DI) <b>OR</b> Career Preparation for Program of Study (DI)
<b>Career Cluster: BUSINESS, FINANCE, &amp; MARKETING (BUS)</b>					
<i>Business and Industry</i>	<i>Business Management</i>	Principles of Business, Marketing, and Finance (E) <b>OR</b> Business Information Management I (E, DC)	Business Law (E, DC)	Global Business (E, DC)	Career Preparation for Program of Study (DI)
	<i>Marketing and Sales</i>	Principles of Business, Marketing, and Finance (E)	Sports and Entertainment Marketing (E)	Advertising (E) and Social Media Marketing (E)	Career Preparation for Program of Study (DI)
<b>Career Cluster: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)</b>					
<i>Business and Industry</i> <b>OR STEM</b>	<i>Programming and Software Development</i>	Fundamentals of Computer Science (E, DI, DC)	Computer Science I (E, DI, DC) <b>OR</b> AP Computer Science Principles (E, DI)	Computer Science II (DI, DC)	Career Preparation for Program of Study (DI) <b>OR</b> Computer Science III (DC)
<b>Career Cluster: LAW &amp; PUBLIC SERVICE</b>					
<i>Public Service</i>	<i>Law Enforcement</i>	Principles of Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security (E, DC)	Law Enforcement I (DC)	Correctional Services (DC)	Career Preparation for Program of Study (DI)
<i>Health Services</i>	<i>Exercise Science, Wellness, and Restoration</i> <b>OR</b> <i>Diagnostic and Therapeutic Services</i> <b>OR</b> <i>Nursing Science</i> <b>OR</b> <i>Biomedical Science</i>	Principles of Health Science (E, DI)	Medical Terminology (E, DC)	Anatomy and Physiology (DI, DC)	Career Preparation for Program of Study (DI)

**E=Edgenuity, DI=Direct Instruction, DC=Dual Credit**

### **College Days**

High school students who meet the following criteria will be allowed to have two excused days of absence for a college visit during their junior year and two excused days of absence for a college visit during their senior year:

- The student must have passed the required parts of the STAAR/equivalent state assessment for the previous year.
- The student must be on track to graduate on time.
- The student must be classified as a junior or senior based upon credits earned.

- The student must be passing all course work.
- The student must have no truancy or other attendance problems.

Students must submit a written request to the School office at least two days prior to the day requested for a college visit so that eligibility criteria for an excused day of absence can be verified and approval granted prior to the student participating in a college visit. Approval will not be granted for a college visit on a day when major exams are scheduled, and no partial days will be approved.

### **Computer Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, Gateway has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher’s supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use Policy found in this Handbook.

### **Counseling**

#### **Academic Counseling**

Students and parents are encouraged to talk with the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness to learn about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in 8th–12th grade will be provided with information on anticipated course offerings for the next year and other information that will help to make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, including attendance at a college, university, or training school or pursuing some other type of advanced education, students should work closely with the school counselor to take the courses that best prepare them for the future. The Dean of Admissions and College Readiness can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

#### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including social, family, or emotional issues, and substance abuse. The school counselor may also provide information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should complete a request form available outside the counselor’s office.

Please note: The School will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent’s written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

### **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations**

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students. Participation, however, is a privilege and not a right. Eligibility for participation in many school-related activities is governed by state law and rules of the University Interscholastic League (“UIL”), a statewide association overseeing interscholastic competition between public schools. Additional information regarding extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations may be obtained from the Head of School. Students who have not paid specific fees or obligations will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and other organizations.

#### **No Pass, No Play**

Gateway students need to meet the following to be eligible for participation under UIL No Pass, No Play:

- Maintain at least 90% attendance for all class periods
- Maintain at least a grade of 70% in all classes

In addition, any students taking self-paced courses need to make at least the minimum progress in each core class which is defined as 25% completion in each course every 3 weeks (15 class days)

Gateway approved courses and policy for the “UIL No Pass, No Play Waiver” are found [here](#). Only students who do not pass a course on the approved course list may be granted a waiver.

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

**Please note:** Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the choir, dance, and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior – that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation of organization rules is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization.

All students must have written parent permission prior to participation in school-sponsored extracurricular clubs and activities.

## **Physical Education**

### **Physical Education Requirements**

All students in grades K–5 will engage in at least 135 minutes of physical activity each week as part of the physical education curriculum. Students in grades 6–8 will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day or at least 225 minutes during each period over two weeks.

TAC §74, Subchapters (B) and (G), state that students must earn 1.0 PE credit to satisfy graduation requirements. The course for PE credit needs to meet the requirement of 100 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per five-day school week.

TAC §74.12(b)(6)(F) and §74.73(b)(6)(E) limits the total number of PE credits that can be earned at 4.0 credits. Although only 1.0 PE credit is required for graduation, additional state elective credits may be earned by taking any combination of the approved TEKS-based PE courses or participation in approved substitution activities.

### **Off-Campus Physical Education**

The State of Texas provides opportunities for high school students enrolled in grades 9-12 to attain physical education credit towards their state graduation credits in approved off-campus PE programs (19 TAC Chapter 74).

To meet the graduation requirements, Gateway students must complete 1 credits in physical education. The waiver process at Gateway serves the purpose of allowing substitution for Category 1 programs (Olympic level) or Category 2 programs (approved by the Board of Directors or designee).

### **Guidelines for Category 1**

- The training facility, instructors, and activities are certified by the superintendent to be of exceptional quality.

- The program must include a minimum of fifteen (15) hours per week of highly intensive, supervised professional training.
- Students who participate in the program may receive a maximum of one-half credits per semester up to a maximum of one credit per year and four credits in high school.
- Students who discontinue the program during the semester will be enrolled in the regular PE class to finish credit for that semester.
- The location of the program must be within reasonable driving distance from the campus.
- Students participating in this program are dismissed from school for no more than one period per day.
- Students may not miss any other class other than physical education.

### **Guidelines for Category 2**

- The program must be a private or commercially sponsored physical activity that is approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- The program must be high quality, well supervised and include a minimum of five (5) hours per week.
- Students who participate in the program may receive a maximum of one-half credits per semester up to a maximum of one credit per year and four credits in high school.
- Students who discontinue the program during the semester will be enrolled in the regular PE class to finish credit for that semester.
- A waiver will NOT be considered for participation in a sport for which Gateway CPS fields a UIL team and/or offers the sport through the Gateway Physical Education or Athletic Department.
- Credit may be given to non-UIL activities in the case that the school sanctions a club in that activity.
- Off campus dance-related activities will NOT be approved for the Physical Education waiver at the high school level.
- The location of the program must be within reasonable driving distance from the campus.
- Students are not permitted to miss any part of the school day to participate in the program.

Applications for High School Off-Campus PE are available on the campus website or front office.

### **Middle School PE Exemption**

The State of Texas provides opportunities for middle school students enrolled in grades 6-8 to be exempt from on-campus PE during the school day if the student is participating in an extra-curricular activity sponsored by the school, a private league, or club that meets the requirements listed below (19 TAC Chapter 103).

### **Middle School Physical Education Exemption Requirement**

- The program must be organized and monitored by school personnel OR by appropriately trained instructors in a private league or club physical activity that is certified by the charter school board and approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- The program must be high quality, well-supervised and include a minimum 135 minutes per week or 225 minutes over two weeks of moderate to vigorous structured physical activity.
- The activity must be based on grade appropriate movement, physical activity and health, and social development strands of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Physical Education.
- Students must provide proof of participation in the activity for the minimum number of minutes at the end of each nine-week grading period.
- Students who discontinue the program during the semester or fails to provide the school with documentation of participation in the extra-curricular PE activity will be enrolled in the regular PE class for that semester.
- An application will NOT be considered for participation in a sport for which Gateway fields a UIL

- team and/or offers the sport through the Gateway Physical Education or Athletic Department.
- The location of the program must be within reasonable driving distance from the campus.
  - Students are not permitted to miss any part of the school day to participate in the program except as permitted below.
  - Students who participate in a minimum of fifteen (15) hours per week of highly intensive, supervised professional training which can include competitions are eligible to be dismissed from school for no more than one scheduled period provided the student is in good academic standing and approved by the principal. For campuses with block scheduling, students can only be dismissed from one period either A OR B day, not one period each day. Students may not miss any class other than physical education period.

Applications for Middle School PE Exemption are available on the campus website or from the Dean of Admissions and College Readiness.

### **Physical Education Exemption**

Short-term exemptions from physical education is possible for students who have physical handicaps, illnesses, or other incapacities that a physician deems severe enough to warrant exemption or severe enough to warrant modified activity in such classes. Each case is handled on an individual basis as follows:

1. Each request for exemption or for modified activity must be accompanied by a physician's certificate. Such certificates are honored, but must be renewed each year.
2. When the certificate will allow modified activities in class, the student should remain in physical education class. The teachers adjust the activities of the student to the disability.
3. An exempted student may be admitted to regular physical education activities only upon presentation of a written statement from the same physician who signed the original exemption.

### **Physical Education Substitution**

TEC §28.025(b-11) allows a student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to disability or illness to substitute 1.0 credit in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or 1.0 academic elective credit for the PE graduation requirement. The PE substitution credit allowed through an academic subject or elective may not be used to satisfy a graduation requirement other than for the completion of the PE credit. The rules must provide that the determination regarding a student's ability to participate in physical activity will be made by:

1. if the student receives special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee;
2. if the student does not receive special education services under Subchapter A, Chapter 29, but is covered by Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Section 794), the committee established for the student under that Act; or
3. if each of the committees described by Subdivisions (1) and (2) is inapplicable, a committee established by the school district of persons with appropriate knowledge regarding the student.

### **Community-Based Fine Arts**

TAC §74.1030 allows a student to complete the one-credit fine arts graduation requirement by participating in a community-based fine arts program not provided by the district or charter school in which the student is enrolled. To meet the graduation requirements, Orenda Charter School students must complete 1 credit in fine arts. Students participating in a community-based fine arts program that meets the requirements below can earn a maximum of one-half credit each semester.

### **Program Requirements**

- The program must be a community-based fine arts activity that is approved by the Superintendent and applied for approval to the commissioner of education.
- The fine arts course may not already be provided through direct instruction at the Orenda campus where the student is enrolled.
- The program must provide instruction in all the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for the high school fine arts course.
- The program must be high quality, organized and monitored by appropriately trained staff, and include a minimum of 225 minutes per week.
- Students who participate in the program may receive a maximum of one-half credit per semester up to a maximum of one-credit per year and four credits total in high school.
- Students who discontinue the program during the semester will be enrolled in a fine arts course at the campus to finish credit for that semester.
- The location of the program must be within reasonable driving distance from the campus.
- Students are not permitted to miss any part of the school day to participate in the program.
- Attendance and grade documentation is required to be submitted at the end of each nine-week grading period.

Applications for Community-Based Fine Arts are available on the campus website or from the Principal.

## **Special Programs**

### **ESL Services**

Gateway offers English as a Second Language (“ESL”) services for English language learners who are limited to their English proficiency. The program is designed to assist students identified as having Limited English Proficiency with development in language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of this program is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Test to qualify for placement in the program. If the test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student (with parent approval) is provided additional English language support.

### **Special Education Services**

Gateway has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5 to 21 years of age and who fall within the school’s jurisdiction. If you know or suspect that your student has a disability, please contact Misty Granderson, Director of Special Education, at (512) 869-3020 for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), which is developed by the student’s ARD Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student’s disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination or both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers, as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.

The *Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*, can be obtained from a campus administrator or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website: [http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum\\_and\\_Instructional\\_Programs/Special\\_Education/](http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/Special_Education/).

## **Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services**

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The implementation of MTSS has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individual(s) 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 if 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 an administrative employee of the school district or open enrollment charter school, the district or charter school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the district or charter school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the school district or charter school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

Please note that a request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally and does not need to be in writing. Districts and charter schools must still comply with all federal prior written notice and procedural safeguard requirements and the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of being a child with a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district or charter school to respond within the 15-school-day timeline.

If the district or charter school 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 to evaluate the student. 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 a district or charter school 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 30th 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 or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

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

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Misty Granderson, Director of Special Education  
Phone Number: 512-869-3020

Section 504 Referrals:

Each school district or charter school must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's or charter school's Section 504 program. Districts and charter schools 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:

Contact Person: Misty Granderson, Director of Special Education  
Phone Number: 512-869-3020

Additional Information:

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

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

**Section 504 Services**

Gateway provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student's disability. A "student with a disability" is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities, has a record of having such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. A student with a disability is "qualified" if he or she is between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive.

An appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related services that are (1) designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students who do not have disabilities are met; and (2) based on adherence to procedures that satisfy federal requirements for educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment unless Gateway demonstrates that education in the regular environment, with the use of supplemental aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, Gateway will comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and

activities, Gateway will ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a “physical or mental impairment” that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents or teachers should contact the Head of School for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services.

## **SECTION 4: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Purpose of the Student Code of Conduct**

To function properly, education must provide an equal learning opportunity for all students by recognizing, valuing, and addressing the individual needs of every student. In addition to the regular curriculum, principles and practices of good citizenship must also be taught and modeled by school staff. To foster an orderly and distraction-free environment, Orenda Charter School has established this Student Code of Conduct (“the Code”) in accordance with state law and the Orenda open-enrollment charter. The Code has been adopted by the Board of Directors, and provides information to parents and students regarding expectations for behavior, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline.

In accordance with state law, the Code will be posted at each Orenda campus and/or will be available for review at the Principal/Head of School’s office. Parents will be notified of any violation that may result in a student being suspended or expelled from Orenda Charter School. Students must be familiar with the standards set forth in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

The Code does not define all types and aspects of student behavior, as Orenda Charter School may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code. When students participate in student activities, they will also be expected to follow the guidelines and constitutions that further specify the organization’s expectations, student behavior and consequences.

### **Authority and Jurisdiction**

Orenda Charter School has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school on Orenda transportation;
2. During lunch periods in which a student is allowed to leave campus;
3. While the student is in attendance at any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
4. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
5. For any expulsion offense committed while on Orenda property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of Orenda or another school in Texas;
6. While the student is in transit to or from school or to or from school-related activities or events;
7. When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
8. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Texas Education Code §§ 37.006 or 37.0081; and
9. When criminal mischief is committed on or off Orenda property or at a school-related event.

## **Reporting Crimes**

In addition to disciplinary consequences, misdemeanor and felony offenses committed on campus or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities will be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

## **Standards for Student Conduct**

Each student is expected to:

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

## **Discipline Management Techniques**

Disciplinary techniques are designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

Because of these factors, discipline for a particular offense, unless otherwise specified by law, may bring into consideration varying techniques and responses.

## **Techniques**

The following discipline management techniques may be used—alone or in combination—for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules:

- Assignment of school duties such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Cooling-off time or "time-out."
- Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Rewards for positive behavior.
- Demerits.
- Detention.
- Expulsion from Orenda Charter School campuses, as specified in the expulsion section of the Code.
- Grade reductions for cheating, academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- Loss of opportunities for exam exemptions.
- In-school suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in the suspension section of the Code.
- Parent-teacher conferences.

- Penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution, in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by Orenda.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation (final warning contracts).
- Seating changes within the classroom.
- Sending the student to the office or other assigned area.
- Techniques or penalties identified in individual student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, field trips, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Withdrawal or restriction of bus privileges.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

### **Corporal Punishment**

Orenda Charter School will NOT administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

### **Student Code of Conduct Offenses**

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school and all school-related activities.

#### **Level I Offenses:**

1. Causing an individual to act through the use of threat or coercion.
2. Cheating or copying the work of another. Or, intentionally sharing work with the intent to cheat or copy.
3. Academic Dishonesty through the use of AI.
4. Directing profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures toward another student or school employee.
5. Discharging a fire extinguisher without valid cause.
6. Disobeying conduct rules regarding school transportation.
7. Engaging in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
8. Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
9. Engaging in verbal or nonverbal exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
10. Failing to comply with directives given by school personnel (insubordination).
11. Falsifying records, passes, or other school-related documents.
12. Gambling.
13. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of a student's private body parts (depending on nature, severity and circumstances, this offense may also rise to a Level II offense). See glossary.
14. Leaving school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
15. Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety.
16. Possessing pornographic material.
17. Possessing published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
18. Unauthorized use of telecommunication devices, including a cellular telephone, or other electronic devices while on school property during the school day.

19. Recording the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individual(s) being recorded, or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.
20. Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher, Section Heads, or Head of School.
21. Repeated tardiness as communicated in the Student Handbook.
22. Repeatedly violating communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.
23. Throwing objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
24. Violating dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Student Handbook.
25. Loitering in and or around cars during the school day from 7:45am until 3:35pm.
26. Excessive speed in the parking lot while driving on campus.
27. Playing music in your car in a manner that distracts the learning environment.

Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)

1. Before school, after school, or lunch detention
2. Application of one or more Discipline Management Techniques listed above
3. Confiscation of cell phones or other electronic devices
4. Grade reductions for academic dishonesty
5. Behavioral contracts
6. In-school suspension
7. Out-of-school suspension
8. Removal from the classroom and/or placement in another classroom
9. Restitution/restoration, if applicable
10. School-assessed and school-administered probation
11. Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
12. Verbal correction
13. Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, parking permits, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs or organizations

## **Level II Offenses**

1. Abusing over-the-counter drugs. (See glossary for “abuse.”)
2. Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public school fraternity, sorority, gang or secret society or organization as defined by Texas Education Code § 37.121.
3. Being under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that cause impairment of physical or mental faculties. (See glossary for “under the influence.”)
4. Committing extortion or blackmail, meaning obtaining money or an object of value from an unwilling person.
5. Creating or participating in the creation of a “hit list.” (See glossary.)
6. Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others, including but not limited to school property or facilities, property of Orenda employees, or property of other students.
7. Defacing or damaging Orenda property—including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and other equipment—or property of any other person, with graffiti or by any other means.
8. Engaging in conduct that constitutes dating violence, including the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship.
9. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, nonverbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including an Orenda student, employee, or volunteer.

10. False accusation of conduct that would constitute a misdemeanor or felony.
11. Fighting or arranging a fight. School is not a place to arrange fights, whether those fights take place on or off school grounds. Fighting is an instance of physical contact in anger, regardless of whether fists or weapons are used. Students who involve themselves in fighting or arranging a fight will, at a minimum, be suspended for the remainder of the day.
12. Forgery of school documents at school or otherwise.
13. Gang-related activity of any kind or nature (behavior that is deemed serious gang-related activity may be elevated or addressed as a Level III Offense).
14. Non-Title 5 felony; school is notified by police.
15. Participating in “hazing.” (See glossary.)
16. Possessing or selling look-alike drugs, or attempting to pass items off as drugs or contraband.
17. Possessing or selling seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
18. Possessing, smoking, or using tobacco products and/or e-cigarettes at school or at a school-related or school-sanctioned activity on or off school property. (See glossary.)
19. Possession of stolen property.
20. Possessing, using, giving, or selling paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance (illegal, prescription, and over-the-counter drug). (See glossary for “paraphernalia.”)
21. Possession or use Prohibited Items, including but not limited to:
  - a. Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
  - b. A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
  - c. A “look-alike” weapon;
  - d. An air gun or BB gun;
  - e. Ammunition;
  - f. A stun gun;
  - g. A pocketknife or any other small knife with a blade less than 1.5” in length;
  - h. Mace or pepper spray;
  - i. Matches or a lighter;
  - j. A laser pointed for other than an approved use; or
  - k. Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the Head of School or designee determines that a danger exists.
22. Any repetitive Level I Offenses – *i.e.*, two or more Level I offenses within a semester, whether the same or any combination.
23. Threatening or bullying a student, employee, or volunteer of Orenda, whether on or off school property. If the conduct causes a substantial disruption of the educational environment, it may be elevated to a Level III Offense depending on circumstances as determined by Orenda.
24. Violating the Orenda medication policy.

*Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)*

1. Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence or Discipline Management Technique listed above, including multiple consequences as deemed appropriate by Orenda.
2. Out-of-school suspension for up to five days.

**Level III Offenses**

1. Abusing a student’s own prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person’s prescription drug while on school property or at a school-related event. (See glossary for “abuse.”)
2. Aggravated assault.
3. Aggravated kidnapping.

4. Aggravated robbery.
5. Aggravated sexual assault
6. Any offense listed in Sections 37.006(a) or 37.007 (a), (b), and (d) of the Texas Education Code, no matter when or where the offense takes place.
7. Arson.
8. Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus.
9. Capital murder.
10. Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code.
11. Commission of a felony offense listed under Title 5, Texas Penal Code. (See glossary.)
12. Committing the following offenses on school property or within 1,000 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
  - a. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony.
  - b. Committing an assault (see glossary) under Texas Penal Code 22.01(a)(1).
  - c. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug in an amount not constituting a felony offense. (See glossary for "under the influence.")
  - d. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person an alcoholic beverage; committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony offense.
  - e. Behaving in a manner that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
  - f. Behaving in a manner that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure.
13. Conduct endangering the health and safety of others.
14. Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
15. Criminally negligent homicide.
16. Deliberate destruction or tampering with school computer data or networks.
17. Engaging in "bullying" and/or cyberbullying. (See glossary.)
18. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony.
19. Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school. (See glossary.)
20. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony listed under Title 5 (see glossary) of the Texas Penal Code when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and:
  - a. The student receives deferred prosecution (see glossary);
  - b. A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct (see glossary); or
  - c. The Head of School or designee has reasonable belief (see glossary) that the student engaged in the conduct.
21. Engaging in conduct that constitutes discrimination or harassment, including conduct motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or age and directed toward another student or Orenda employee. (See glossary.)
22. Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct directed toward another person, including an Orenda student, employee, or volunteer.
23. Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of retaliation against any Orenda employee or volunteer, whether on or off of school property.
24. Engaging in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
25. Felony criminal mischief against school property, another student, or school staff.

26. Gang activity (violent or likely to cause harm to another or disrupt the educational environment in any way).
27. Inappropriate sexual conduct.
28. Indecency with a child.
29. Issuing a false fire alarm.
30. Manslaughter.
31. Murder.
32. Persistent Level I offenses (four or more Level I offenses committed in any one school year).
33. Persistent Level II offenses (two or more Level II offenses committed in any one school year).
34. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of inhalants.
35. Possessing, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of a simulated controlled substance.
36. Possession, use, transfer or exhibition of any firearm, illegal knife, club, or any other prohibited weapon or harmful object (as determined by Orenda).
37. Public lewdness.
38. Required registration as a sex offender.
39. Setting or attempting to set fire on school property (not arson).
40. Sexual abuse of a young child or children.
41. Sexual assault.
42. Stealing from students, staff, or Orenda.
43. Targeting another individual for bodily harm.
44. Use, exhibition, or possession of a knife with a blade more than 1.5” in length, including but not limited to switchblade knives or any other knife not defined as an illegal knife.
45. Taking inappropriate pictures of students or staff and/or sharing (including showing on an electronic device) those photos with others
46. Violating computer use policies, rules, or agreements of Orenda, such as the Student Acceptable Use policy, including but not limited to:
  - a. Attempting to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of Orenda or its students or employees, and uploading or creating computer viruses, including such conduct off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - b. Attempting to alter, destroy, or disable Orenda computer equipment, Orenda data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the Orenda system, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption of the educational environment.
  - c. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten Orenda students, employees, or volunteers, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - d. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another’s reputation, or illegal, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - e. Using email or web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.
47. Any discretionary or mandatory expulsion violation under Texas Education Code, Chapter 37.

Disciplinary Consequences (may not necessarily be followed in order and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)

1. Out of school suspension for five–ten days
2. Expulsion

## **Student Code of Conduct Consequences**

### **Detention**

Detention may be held on each day during school before or after school or during lunch. Students who serve detention must make transportation arrangements to come early or stay late. Parents may request, in person, a delay of the detention; no phone calls or notes will be accepted.

The following rules apply to students assigned to school detention:

1. Students will work on academic or teacher assigned work during detention.
2. Sleeping is not permitted.
3. Students will follow all rules concerning classroom behavior. Failure to comply will mean suspension from school.
4. Any student assigned to detention must stay the entire time. Students refusing or upon the direction of parent refusing to complete their time will be suspended from school.

### **Suspension**

Orenda utilizes two kinds of suspension: in-school suspension and out of school suspension.

#### ***In-School Suspension***

The following rules and regulations apply to all students assigned to in-school suspension (“ISS”):

1. Students will work on academic or teacher assigned work during ISS.
2. Sleeping is not permitted.
3. No disruptive behavior will be allowed.
4. Unexcused absences from suspension will be referred to the Head of School.
5. Students must abide by the Orenda policies and behavioral standards during their suspension period.
6. A student who misses a scheduled ISS session without a confirmed excuse will be assigned one day out of school suspension. If a student misses more than one scheduled ISS session without a confirmed excuse, he or she may be subject to expulsion.

Failure to follow these guidelines will be reported to the Head of School for further action, which may include up to three days of out of school suspension or any other Level I consequence.

#### ***Out of School Suspension***

The Head of School or designee will give notice of suspension and the reasons for the suspension to the student. In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the administrator may take into consideration factors including self-defense, prior discipline history, intent or lack of intent and other appropriate or mitigating factors determined by the administrator.

### **Removal from School Transportation**

A student being transported by Orenda transportation to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity may be removed from a school vehicle for conduct violating the school’s established standards for conduct in a school vehicle.

### **Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals**

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by applicable state and federal law, and Orenda policy.

### **Process for Suspensions Lasting Up to Five Days**

In addition to the above list of Code of Conduct violations, the Head of School has authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five school days for any of the following additional reasons:

1. The need to further investigate an incident,
2. A recommendation to expel the student, or
3. An emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety.

### **Prerequisites to Suspension**

Prior to suspending a student for up to five days, the Head of School or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to:

1. Notify the student of the accusations against him/her,
2. Allow the student to relate his or her version of the incident, and
3. Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

### **Notification to Parents/Guardians**

If the Head of School or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day for up to five days, the Head of School or designee will make reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home. The Head of School or designee will notify a suspended student's parent(s) of the period of suspension and the grounds for the suspension.

### **Credit During Suspension**

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed during the period of suspension. Assignments with an electronic submission are still due on the published due date during the period of suspension and are subject to the late work policy. Upon return to school, in-class assignments and assessments missed during the period of suspension must be made up within 3 school days.

### **Process for Out-of-School Suspensions Over Five Days (extended suspension) and Expulsion**

#### **Notice**

When the Head of School determines that a student's conduct warrants suspension for more than five days (extended suspension) or expulsion, but prior to taking any such action, the Head of School or designee will provide the student's parent(s) with written notice of:

1. The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action; and
2. The date and location for a hearing before the Head of School, within five school days from the date of the disciplinary action.

The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:

1. May be present;
2. Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
3. Shall be apprised and informed of Orenda's evidence;
4. May be accompanied by his or her parent(s); and
5. May be represented by an attorney.

### **Hearing Before the Superintendent**

Orenda Charter School shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and Orenda Charter School shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. Gateway may audio record the hearing.

Immediately following the hearing, the Superintendent will notify the student and the student's parent(s) orally or in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

1. The length of the extended suspension or expulsion, if any;
2. When or if the expulsion is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the expulsion period if at all; and
3. The right to appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board of Directors.

The notice shall also state that failure to timely request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter.

### **Appeal to the Board of Directors**

The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the extended suspension or expulsion decision to the Orenda Charter School Board of Directors by notifying the Superintendent in writing within five calendar days of the date of receipt of the Superintendent's decision. The Board will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the Superintendent at a regular or specially called meeting in closed session. The Board will notify the student and his or her parent(s) of its decision within five calendar days of the hearing. The decision of the Board is final and may not be appealed.

Please note that discipline consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an extended suspension or expulsion to the Board.

### **No Credit Earned**

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

### **Emergency Placement and Expulsion**

If the Head of School or designee reasonably believes a student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in a class, with the ability of a student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of Orenda or a school-sponsored activity, the Head of School or designee may order immediate removal of the student. The Head of School or designee may impose immediate suspension if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from eminent harm. At the time of such an emergency removal, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action and appropriate hearings will be scheduled within a reasonable time after the emergency removal.

### **Placement of Students with Disabilities**

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities (504 or special education under the IDEA) shall be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

### **Suspension/Expulsion Requirement**

A student with a disability shall not be removed from his or her current placement for disciplinary reasons and/or pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without ARD Committee action to determine appropriate services in the interim and otherwise in accordance with applicable law. If a special education due process appeal to a TEA special education hearing officer is made, the student with a

disability shall remain in the then current education setting in place at the time such appeal is noticed to Orenda, unless Orenda Charter School and the student's parents agree otherwise.

### **Gun-Free Schools Act**

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, Orenda Charter School shall expel, from the student's regular program for a period of one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. The Head of School may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's expulsion from the regular school program on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with legal requirements.

For the purposes of this section, "firearm" means:

1. Any weapon – including a starter gun – which will, or is designed to, or which may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive from the frame or receiver of any such weapon;
2. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;
3. Any destructive device. "Destructive device" means any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the preceding described devices. It also means any type of weapon – other than a shotgun shell or a shotgun that is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes – by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than 1/2 inch in diameter; and any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as described, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

### **Glossary**

The glossary provides legal definitions and locally established definitions and is intended to assist in understanding terms related to the Student Code of Conduct.

**Abuse** is improper or excessive use.

**Abusable Volatile Chemical Offense**, as defined by Health and Safety Code § 485.001 and 485.031. No student shall inhale, ingest, apply, use, or possess an abusable volatile chemical with intent to inhale, ingest, apply or use any of these in a manner:

1. Contrary to the directions for use, cautions, or warnings appearing on a label of a container of the chemical; and
2. Designed to affect the central nervous system, create or induce a condition of intoxication, hallucination, or elation, or change, distort, or disturb the person's eyesight, thinking process, balance, or coordination.

No student shall knowingly deliver to a person younger than 18 an abusable volatile chemical. Health and Safety Code § 485.032

No student shall knowingly use or possess with intent to use inhalant paraphernalia to inhale, ingest, or otherwise introduce into the human body an abusable volatile chemical. No student shall knowingly deliver, sell, or possess with intent to deliver or sell inhalant paraphernalia knowing that the person who

receives it intends to use it to inhale, ingest, apply, use, or otherwise introduce into the human body an abusable volatile chemical. Health and Safety Code § 485.033

**Armor-piercing ammunition** is handgun ammunition used principally in pistols and revolvers and that is designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

**Arson** is defined by Texas Penal Code § 28.02 and occurs when a person starts a fire, regardless of whether the fire continues after ignition, or causes an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:

- Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
- Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
  - Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
  - Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
  - Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
  - Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
  - Knowing that it has located within it property belonging to another, or
  - When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.

Arson also occurs when a person:

- Recklessly starts a fire or causes an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance and the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or
- Intentionally starts a fire or causes an explosion and in so doing recklessly damages or destroys a building belonging to another, or recklessly causes another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

**Assault** is defined in part by Texas Penal Code § 22.01 as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

**Bullying** is defined by Texas Education Code § 37.0832(a)-(b) to mean engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored event, or school related activity, or in a vehicle operated by Orenda and that: has the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student or damage to the student's property; or is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student. The conduct described above is also considered bullying if that conduct exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression and physical conduct, and interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of Orenda. "Cyber-bullying" means the use of any electronic communication device to engage in bullying or intimidation.

**Chemical dispensing device** is a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of dispensing a substance capable of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being.

**Club** is an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death, including but not limited to a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

**Controlled substances or dangerous drugs** include but are not limited to marijuana; any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, barbiturate; anabolic steroid; or prescription medicine

provided to any person other than the person for whom the prescription was written. The term also includes all controlled substances listed in Chapters 481 and 483 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

**Criminal street gang** means three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

**Dating violence** is the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse by a person to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship, as defined by Texas Family Code § 71.0021.

**Deadly conduct** occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, and includes but is not limited to knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

**Deferred adjudication** is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Deferred prosecution** may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Delinquent conduct** is conduct that:

- Violates either state or federal law, other than a traffic offense, and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail;
- Violates a lawful order of a court under circumstances that would constitute contempt of that court in a justice or municipal court, or a county court for conduct punishable only by a fine;
- Constitutes an intoxication and alcoholic beverage offense under Chapter 49 of the Texas Penal Code; or
- Violates Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code § 106.041 relating to driving under the influence of alcohol by a minor (third or subsequent offense).

**Discretionary** means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

**E-Cigarette** means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device. The term does not include a prescription medical device unrelated to the cessation of smoking.

**Explosive weapon** is any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror, and includes a device designed, made, or adapted for delivery or shooting an explosive weapon.

**False Alarm or Report** occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

- Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**Firearm silencer** means any device designed, made, or adapted to muffle the report of a firearm.

**Graffiti** means making marks with paint, an indelible pen or marker, or an etching or engraving device on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

**Harassment** is:

- Conduct that meets the definition established in Orenda Charter School Board policy and/or the Student Handbook; or
- Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, is sexually intimidating or obscene, causes physical damage to the property of another student, subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety.

**Hazing** is an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, that is directed against a student and endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.

**Hit list** is a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

**Illegal Knife** means a knife with a blade over 5-1/2"; hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown; dagger, including but not limited to a dirk, stiletto, and poniard; Bowie knife; sword; spear; or as otherwise defined by Board policy.

**Indecent Exposure** means exposing one's anus or genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person while being reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Knuckles** means any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

**Machine gun** is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

**Mandatory** means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

**Online Impersonation** occurs when a person, without obtaining the consent of another person and with the intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten any persons, uses the name or persona of another person to:

- Create a web page on a commercial social networking site or other Internet website; or
- Post or send one or more messages on or through a commercial social networking site or other Internet website, other than on or through an electronic mail program or message board program.

Online impersonation also occurs when a person sends an electronic mail, instant message, text message, or similar communication that reference a name, domain address, phone number, or other item of identifying information belonging to any person:

- Without obtaining the other person's consent;
- With the intent to cause a recipient of the communication to reasonably believe that the other person authorized or transmitted the communication; and
- With the intent to harm or defraud any person.

**Paraphernalia** are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body. It also includes equipment, products, or materials used or intended for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, or concealing a controlled substance.

**Possession** means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including but not limited to clothing, purse, or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including but not limited to an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or any other school property used by the student, including but not limited to a locker or desk.

**Prohibited Weapon** means an explosive weapon; a machine gun; a short-barrel firearm; a firearm silencer; knuckles; armor-piercing ammunition; a chemical dispensing device; a zip gun; or a tire deflation device.

**Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang** means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student.

**Reasonable belief** is a determination made by the superintendent or designee using all available information, including the information furnished under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

**Self-defense** is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

**Short-barrel firearm** is a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

**Switchblade Knife** is any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or by the force of gravity or by the application of centrifugal force. The term does not include a knife that has a spring, detent, or other mechanism designed to create a bias toward closure and that requires exertion applied to the blade by hand, wrist, or arm to overcome the bias toward closure and open the knife.

**Terroristic threat** is a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

- Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;

- Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or another public place;
- Cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service;
- Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
- Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state, or a public charter school (including Orenda Charter School).

**Title 5 offenses** are those that involve injury to a person and include murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; trafficking in persons; unlawful transport; kidnapping; assault (on a public servant); aggravated assault; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; unlawful restraint; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; harassment of a public servant; improper photography; smuggling persons; and tampering with a consumer product.

**Under the influence** means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person’s physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student “under the influence” need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

**Use** means voluntarily introducing into one’s body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

**Zip gun** is a device or combination of devices, not originally a firearm, but adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

## **SECTION 5: ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS**

### **Parent Contact Information**

Parents are responsible for notifying Gateway of any changes in their address so that we can update our records accordingly. You are not able to change your address information in Frontline due to zoning requirements. We will require proof of residency in order to change your address in the Frontline system. You should update your telephone numbers, email addresses, and approved contacts in Frontline as you have control over these items and we will not change them for you. Parents are encouraged to check the campus website, Gateway Mobile App, and Learning Management System (“LMS”) on a regular basis as it is our primary means of communication. It is important for parent communication that Gateway has a valid, working parent email address.

### **Student Records**

Educational and special education eligibility records are confidential and are available only to professionals within the school with a legitimate educational interest. All other parties need written consent from parents before reading or copying any information. Current educational and special education records are housed on the campus. Official special education records for current and previous years are archived at the Orenda Charter Schools office, which is located at 2951 Williams Drive, Georgetown, Texas 78628.

No fee is charged to search for or to retrieve the educational and special education records of a student. Copies of student records made for parents/guardians are available at a cost unless that fee effectively

prevents a parent from exercising his or her their right to inspect and review those records. A waiver of fee should be requested in writing.

- Standard-size paper copy \$0.10 per page
- Personnel charge \$15.00 per hour
- Postage and shipping charge Actual cost
- Fax charge
  - Local \$0.10 per page
  - Long distance \$0.50 per page
- Miscellaneous supplies Actual cost

A complete copy of the policies concerning parent rights and confidentiality of records may be obtained upon request from the Orenda Charter School Administrative Office, 2951 Williams Drive, Georgetown, Texas 78628.

By law, both parents, whether married, separated, or divorced, have access to the records of a student who is under 18 or a dependent for tax purposes. A parent whose rights have been legally terminated will be denied access to the records if the School is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights. Unless prior arrangements are made, the School will mail all communications to the address provided at the time the student is registered. Student records are the property of the School and must be reviewed in the presence of a member of the school staff.

### **Access to Records (Special Education Records)**

A record of access will be maintained as long as Gateway maintains the student's special education file. It is available only to parents/guardians, school officials responsible for custody of records, and those state and federal officials authorized to audit the operation of the system.

Records may be reviewed during regular school hours upon request to the record custodian. The record custodian or designee shall be present to explain the record and to answer questions. The confidential nature of the student's records shall be maintained at all times, and the records shall be restricted to use only in the offices of special education.

The campus leadership is custodian of all campus special education records. A current listing of the name and positions of employees within Gateway who may have access to personally identifiable information contained in the students' cumulative folders is posted on the file cabinets that house special education records.

### **District and Campus Parent and Family Engagement Policy**

A child's education succeeds best when there is a strong partnership between home and school, a partnership that thrives on communication. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

1. Encouraging your student to put a high priority on education and working with your student on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the School provides. Be sure your child comes to school each day prepared, rested, in appropriate attire, and ready to learn.
2. Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered by Gateway. Discuss with the Head of School or designee any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
3. Monitoring your student's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
4. Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. One parent-teacher conference day is planned each year in the academic calendar, typically in October. To

schedule a conference with a teacher other than the designated parent-teacher conference day, please call or email the teacher directly. A teacher will usually return your call or meet with you at a mutually convenient time during the teacher's planning time or after school. To schedule a conference with the Head of School, please call the school office for an appointment. Please contact teachers first with concerns before scheduling a conference with administration.

5. Becoming a school volunteer. For further information, contact the Head of School. All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application and criminal background check prior to volunteering.
6. Offering to serve as a parent representative on a planning committee to assist in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, contact the Head of School.
7. Participation in Parent Teacher Organization ("PTO") events.
8. Parent education workshops.
9. Parent involvement bulletin boards.
10. Checking the Gateway website, Gateway Mobile App, Learning Management System ("LMS"), the weekly K-4 take-home folders, and Gator Tracks (PTO) newsletter.
11. Completing parent surveys.
12. Attending Board meetings to learn more about Gateway's operations.
13. Parents and guests must remain respectful at all time while on school grounds or they could be subject to being issued a Criminal Trespassing Warning if their behavior exhibits any of the following:
  - i. Yelling at teachers or staff members
  - ii. Using profanity towards teachers or staff members
  - iii. Mistreating teachers or staff members in any way
  - iv. Displaying extreme disrespectful behavior (in words or actions) towards teachers of staff members

### **Translation Procedure**

If at least 10% of the student population at the campus has either the same home or student language other than English as marked on the Home Language Survey and recorded in the Student Information System (e.g. 10% of the student population has student or home language marked as Spanish), Orenda will provide a written translation of essential campus documents such as the parent and family engagement policy, school parent compact, and campus improvement plan into that language. For campus documents not provided as a written translation, parents may call the campus office to request oral translation. If less than 10% of the student population across the campus has the same home or student language other than English, oral translation of written documents is available upon request by contacting the campus office.

### **Surveys and Activities**

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

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has close family relationship;
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians and ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or

8. Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

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

### **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

Parents have the right to receive notice of and deny permission for their student's participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding;
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from their student for the purpose of marketing or selling that information;
3. A non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the School in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student (exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam of screening permitted or required under state law.)

### **Notice of Teacher Qualifications**

At the beginning of each school year, Gateway will notify the parent of each student attending with information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers through the district Learning Management System. Gateway will also provide this information upon request from a parent. The notification will include, at a minimum:

1. Whether your child's teacher(s) have met state qualification and licensing criteria for their grade levels and subject areas.
2. Whether your child's teacher(s) are serving under emergency or other provisional status that is less than full state certification.
3. The bachelor's degree major of your child's teacher(s) and any graduate degrees held, and the field of certification or degree.
4. Whether your child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Please contact Carla Silber, Superintendent, to request this information.

### **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

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

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

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

## **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns**

Gateway values the opinions of its students and parents, and the public it serves. Parents and students have the right to express their views through appropriate informal and formal processes. The purpose of this grievance policy is to resolve conflicts in an efficient, expeditious, and just manner.

The Board of Directors encourages parents and the public to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal meetings with the Head of School. Concerns and complaints should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Neither the Board of Directors nor any School employee shall unlawfully retaliate against a parent or student for voicing a concern or complaint.

The Superintendent may develop more detailed grievance procedures. The Superintendent shall ensure that the School's grievance procedures are provided to all parents and students. The formal grievance procedure shall provide for any grievance to ultimately be considered or heard by the Board of Directors in accordance with Commissioner of Education rules.

For purposes of this policy, "days" shall mean school days, and announcement of a decision in the student's or parent's presence shall constitute communication of the decision.

### **Informal Conferences**

A parent or student may request an informal conference with the Head of School, teacher, or other campus administrator within seven school days of the time the parent or student knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. If the person is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, he or she may submit a written grievance to the Head of School.

### **Formal Grievance Process**

The formal grievance process provides all persons with an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management if they are dissatisfied with an administrative response. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, a person can bring concerns or complaints to the Board, as outlined below.

A grievance must specify the harm alleged by the parent and/or student, and the remedy sought. A parent or student should not submit separate or serial grievances regarding the same event or action. Multiple grievances may be consolidated at the School's discretion. All time limits shall be strictly complied with; however, if an administrator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or to issue a response, the administrator shall inform the parent or student in writing of the need to extend the response time and provide a specific date by which the response will be issued. Costs of any grievance shall be paid by the grievant.

#### ***Level One Complaint – Head of School Review***

A parent or student shall submit a written Level One Grievance to the Head of School within the later of (1) fifteen school days from the time the event(s) causing the complaint were or should have been known, or (2) within five school days following an informal conference with the Head of School. The School reserves the right to require the grievant to begin the grievance process at Level Two. The grievance should be specific with examples and evidence and where possible, suggest a resolution.

The Level One Decision must be issued within fifteen school days of the Head of School's receipt of the complaint.

### ***Level Two Complaint – Superintendent Review***

If the parent or student is not satisfied with the Level One Decision, or if no Decision is provided, the parent or student may file a written appeal to the Superintendent of Orenda Charter School. The appeal must include a signed statement of the complaint, any evidence supporting the complaint, and a copy of the written complaint to the Head of School and a copy of the Level One Decision, if issued. The appeal shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated to the original complaint. The appeal must be filed within ten school days of the Level One Decision or the response deadline if no Decision is made. The Level Two Decision must be issued within fifteen school days of the written appeal.

### ***Level Three – Board of Directors Review***

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Two Decision, or if no decision is provided, the parent or student may submit to the Superintendent or designee a written appeal to the Board of Directors. The appeal must include a signed statement of the complaint, any evidence supporting the complaint, and a copy of the written complaint to the Level One and Two Complaints and Decisions, if issued. The appeal shall not include any new issues or complaints unrelated to the original complaint. The request must be filed within ten school days of the Level Two Decision or the response deadline if no Decision is made. The hearing will take place at the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The student or parent shall be informed of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

The Board of Directors shall hear the student or parent complaint, and may set a reasonable time limit for presenting the complaint. Only written documentation and issues previously submitted and presented by the student or parent and Gateway will be considered. An audiotape recording of the hearing may be made.

The Board of Directors shall communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the decision being appealed shall be upheld. The Board may not delegate its authority to issue a decision, and any decision by the Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed.

If the complaint involves concerns or charges regarding a student or Gateway employee, it shall be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the student or employee to whom the complaint pertains requests that it be heard in public.

### **Additional Complaint Procedures**

This Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances process does not apply to all complaints:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, religion, or any other characteristic protected by law shall be submitted as described in “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation,” page 32 of this Handbook.
2. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted as described in “Reporting Procedures,” page 34 of this Handbook.
3. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted as described in “Freedom from Bullying and Cyber-Bullying,” page 35 of this Handbook.
4. For complaints concerning loss of credit on the basis of attendance.
5. For complaints concerning disciplinary long-term suspensions and/or expulsions.
6. Complaints concerning the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted as described in “Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns” above, except that the deadline for filing an initial Level One grievance shall be 30 calendar days and the procedural safeguards handbook.
7. Complaints concerning the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall

be submitted in accordance with applicable Board policy and the procedural safeguards provided to parents of all students referred to special education.

8. Complaints regarding the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the School is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, political beliefs, age, disability, national origin, or limited English proficiency. (Not all bases apply to all programs.) Reprisal is prohibited based on prior civil rights activity. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which is available online at the following website: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usada.gov](mailto:program.intake@usada.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339, or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## **SECTION 6: IMPORTANT NOTICES**

### **Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)**

The term “education records” means those records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by Orenda Charter School or by a person acting for Orenda Charter School.

The term “education records” does not include:

1. Records that are created or received by Orenda Charter School after an individual is no longer a student in attendance, and that are not directly related to the individual’s attendance as a student.
2. Records made by Orenda Charter School personnel that are kept in the sole possession of the maker, are used only as a personal memory aid, and are not accessible or revealed to anyone other than a temporary substitute for the maker of the record.
3. Records maintained by a law enforcement unit of Orenda Charter School that were created by that law enforcement unit for the purpose of law enforcement.
4. Records on a student who is eighteen years of age or older, or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education, that are:
  - a. Made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in his or her professional capacity or assisting in a paraprofessional capacity;
  - b. Made, maintained, or used only in connection with treatment of the student; and
  - c. Disclosed only to individuals providing the treatment. For the purpose of this definition, “treatment” does not include remedial educational activities or activities that are part of the program of instruction at the agency or institution.
5. Grades on peer-graded papers before they are collected and recorded by a teacher.

State and federal law safeguard educational records from unauthorized inspection or use. All information relating to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records are considered confidential educational records. Release of those records are restricted to parents or guardians; school staff members with a legitimate educational interest; various governmental agencies or in response to a

subpoena or court order; or a school to which the student transfers or subsequently enrolls. Release to any other person or agency will occur only with prior written consent of the parent or guardian.

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights include the following:

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights include the following:

### **The Right to Inspect and Review**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the school receives an access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Head of School or designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. Gateway will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student for the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records, Gateway shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested to make arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the requested records.

If the student’s educational records contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

### **The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student’s Educational Records**

Parents or eligible students may ask Gateway to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Head of School or designee a written request that clearly identifies the part of the record they want changed, and specifies why it is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights. Gateway will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receiving the request. If Gateway decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent of eligible student, the School will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing to challenge the content of the student’s education records on the grounds that the information contained in the educational records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights. After receiving the decision and right of a hearing, parents or eligible student can submit a written request to the principal for a hearing. Gateway will respond within five business days of a request for a hearing with the date, time, and location of the hearing.

If, as a result of the hearing, Gateway decides that the information in the educational record is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights, it shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of Gateway. If the School places an amended statement in the student’s educational records, Gateway is obligated to maintain the amended statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

### **The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with a legitimate educational interest. A "school official" is a person employed by Gateway as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the Board of Directors; a person or company with whom Gateway has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

Parental consent is not needed prior to sharing student name and email address with online learning platform providers to set up accounts for school related purposes only. Student information stored in online learning platforms is maintained by the district and protected under FERPA. This information will not be shared with third parties without prior consent from the parent or eligible student.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, Gateway discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled, so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

### **The Right to File a Complaint**

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education ("Office") concerning alleged failures by Gateway to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These complaints should be addressed as follow:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

### **Access to Medical Records**

Parents are entitled to access their student's medical records.

### **Destruction of Records**

Orenda Charter School will post the notice of destruction of records on the Orenda Education website homepage along with each campus website. The notice will include the records to be destroyed, when they will be destroyed, and who to contact to request records be maintained.

### **Notice for Directory Information**

Under FERPA, Gateway must, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, Gateway may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless a parent or eligible student has advised Gateway, in writing, to the contrary. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow the School to include this type of information from a student's education records in certain school publications.

Gateway has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure relating to school-related purposes:

- Student name;
- 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.

School-related purposes are those events/activities that Gateway conducts and/or sponsors to support the School's educational mission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Extracurricular programs or events (school plays, concerns, athletic events, graduation ceremony, etc.).
- Publications (newsletters, yearbook, etc.).
- Honor roll and other student recognition lists.
- Marketing materials of Gateway (print media, website, videos, newspaper, etc.).

Gateway has designated the following categories of information as directory information for purposes of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students:

- Student's name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number.

Gateway shall not release directory information except for the purposes indicated above, namely, disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes or for the purposes of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education for secondary students.

A PARENT OR ELIGIBLE STUDENT MAY OPT OUT OF THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION FOR EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE PURPOSES BY SUBMITTING A WRITTEN OBJECTION TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITHIN 15 DAYS AFTER RECEIVING THIS "NOTICE OF PARENT AND STUDENT RIGHTS (ANNUAL FERPA CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE)."

### **Student Acceptable Use Policy**

#### **Computer Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, Gateway has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of those resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students with access to Gateway computers and their parents agree to follow the following user agreement regarding use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of computer privileges and other disciplinary action. Electronic communications, such as email using Gateway computers, are not private and may be monitored by school staff.

#### **Technology Mission Statement**

Gateway is committed to utilizing the maximum potential of technology to enhance student learning and increase teacher effectiveness by providing students with technology-related experiences. Recognizing the ever-changing influences of technology on all aspects of our lives, Gateway is dedicated to providing

an integrated technological curriculum for all students and staff. Students will have access to the technology necessary to produce, manage, communicate, and retrieve information in an efficient manner for educational use. In the attainment of both present and future goals, Gateway will provide a continually evolving staff development program oriented toward the integration of technology in areas of curriculum.

### **Instructional Resource**

Gateway is proud to bring network and Internet access to school staff and students. Gateway believes the Internet offers many diverse and unique resources to both student and staff. Gateway's goal in providing these services to staff and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing innovative teaching, and communication skills.

Students and staff have access to numerous research oriented and instructional resources via the Internet. Online encyclopedias, professional journals, and databases filled with timely information on thousands of topics are just a few of the resources provided. School computers have the technology necessary to support student research and to promote academic achievement.

### **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Responsible Use**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems that are taught to automate tasks normally requiring human intelligence. "Generative AI" refers to tools, such as Bing Chat, ChatGPT, Gemini, Midjourney, and DALL-E, that can produce new content, such as text, images, or music, based on patterns they've learned from their training data. This is made possible through "machine learning," a subset of AI where computers learn from data without being explicitly programmed for a specific task. While generative AI tools show great promise and often make useful suggestions, they are designed to predict what is right, which isn't always right. As a result, their output can be inaccurate, misleading, or incomplete.

All AI tools should be used to promote positive educational outcomes without causing harm or disadvantage to any student or group and aligns with the Orenda Charter School Acceptable Use Policy. Orenda Charter School users will follow the **AI Responsible Use** expectations below to use AI tools ethically, transparently, appropriately, and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including district and campus rules.

Student users will:

1. Use AI tools responsibly and not use AI in a way that could harm themselves or others.
2. Not share personal or confidential information with an AI tool.
3. Only use AI to support learning and in alignment with the school's rules and teacher's instructions on when and how to use AI on an assignment.
4. Be honest about when AI was used to help with assignments and not turn in work that is fully created by an AI as their own.
5. Review AI's work for mistakes and accuracy.
6. Check with the teacher when unsure about what is an acceptable use of AI.

### **Student Safety**

Gateway is aware that resources which are inappropriate or not designed for use in the educational setting may be accessed on the Internet. To protect students and staff from such inappropriate material, the School's Internet access is filtered with one of the highest rated Internet filtering systems available. However, users must recognize that it is impossible for Gateway to restrict access to all controversial material and individuals must be responsible for their own actions in navigating the network.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school-level compliance with all procedures and regulations regarding the local area network and Internet usage. All students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school staff who obtain their Internet access through the School are expected to use these services appropriately.

### **User Responsibilities**

The use of the Internet is a privilege. Abusive conduct will lead to the privilege being revoked. Gateway is providing Internet resources for educational purposes only. Student/staff use of Internet resources must be related to an expressed educational and/or administrative goal or objective.

1. The use of the School's Internet and computer network must be in support of educational goals, research, and class assignments, and be consistent with the educational objectives of Gateway.
2. Users must have a valid, authorized account to access the network, and use only those computer resources that are authorized. Accounts may be used only in accordance with authorized purposes.
3. Individual accounts may be used only by the owner of the account, except where specifically authorized by administrators. In the case of class accounts, all use must be under the supervision of the sponsoring teacher/supervisor.
4. The user is responsible for safeguarding the computer account. Users are expected to protect access to accounts by periodically changing their password and keeping it confidential. They must respect the privacy of others by not tampering with their files, passwords, or accounts.

### **Policy Terms and Conditions**

#### Acceptable Use

Users are to properly use Gateway network resources for educational and/or administrative purposes. Respectful and responsible network etiquette and behavior should be in keeping with the School's mission statement. Students and staff are expressly prohibited from accessing obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic sites or materials.

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, students involved in "sexting" or the sharing of inappropriate images or other content may also be disciplined for violating the School's anti-harassment and bullying policies.

#### Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated Gateway staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Only the School's authorized IT Manager may read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users.

#### Vandalism

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt or destroy data of another user of Gateway's network or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Any of these actions may be viewed

as violations of School policy, administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Users must respect the privacy of other users, and will not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify any file, data, or password belonging to another user, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance and/or degrade, disrupt or bypass system security, such as VPN, are violations of School policy and administrative regulations, and may constitute criminal activity under applicable laws.

Any prohibited behavior under this policy will result in the cancellation of technology privileges. Gateway will, in accordance with School policy, cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the School's network.

### Network Etiquette

Each network user is expected to:

- Be polite (*i.e.*, an all-caps message implies shouting);
- Use appropriate language;
- Refrain from any activity that may be considered "cyber-bullying," including but not limited to threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing messages, harassment, stalking, child pornography, and sexual exploitation;
- Maintain confidentiality of the user, colleagues, and students;
- Respect copyright laws; and
- Be respectful in all aspects of network use.

### **Consequences**

Violation of Gateway policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of School policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

- Loss of computer privileges/Internet access, with length of time to be determined by campus administration.
- Any disciplinary consequence, including suspension or expulsion, as deemed appropriate by the administration.
- Suspension may be considered for flagrant violations or violations that corrupt the educational value of the computers or the Internet.
- Expulsion may be considered in instances where students have used the School's Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief, and/or have deliberately attempted to bypass installed security software or copy/modify another student's work files.

Violations of law may also result in criminal prosecution, as well as disciplinary action by the School.