Harris County Department of Education

2026 2027

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

AND STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

SCHOOLS DIVISION

Providing alternative pathways for student success ages 5-22 in grades K-12

Harris County
Department of
Education

Harris County Department of Education

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7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

** Campus Behavior Coordinator

"**One** source for **all** learners"

Please complete and return the following forms to the student's campus.

Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution

Academic and Behavior Schools
Highpoint East School
Fortis Academy

Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy of or to electronically access at {https://hcde-texas.org} the Harris County Department of Education Schools Division Parent/Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct for 2026-2027 school year.

I accept responsibility for accessing the Parent/Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, by visiting the web address listed above.

I understand that if I wish to receive a paper copy of the handbook and Student Code of Conduct, I must request a copy from the school's main office.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year. I also understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this Parent/Student Handbook or the Student Code of Conduct, I will direct those questions to the principal at the campus.

Printed Name of Student: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Printed Name of Parent: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Date _____

Note: This form can also be accessed in the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

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

(Applicable to secondary grade levels only)

Dear Parent:

Federal law requires that the district, upon request, release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless a student's parent's or eligible student objects in writing. **(See Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education** on page 7 for more information.)

Parent: Please complete the following and return this form to the school only if you **do not** want your child's information released to a military recruiter or institution of higher education without your written consent.

I, parent of_____(student's name), request that the district **not** release my child's name, address, and telephone number to a military recruiter or institution of higher education without my prior written consent.

Printed Name: _____

Parent Signature:_____ Date _____

Note: If this form is not returned, the district will assume that permission has been granted for the release of this information. This form can also be accessed in the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

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Philosophy of Academic and Behavior Schools

Academic and Behavior Schools (ABS) of Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) provide an educational environment for those students identified as having severe behavioral difficulties, emotional difficulties, and/or developmental disabilities. The classes are specifically designed to assist special education students to function successfully. Staff members at the Academic and Behavior Schools use **data driven** behavior management techniques emphasizing positive reinforcement. The philosophy of the ABS program revolves around the premise that significant learning and behavioral changes may be achieved through their Individualized Education Plan, with the following:

- Appropriate educational tasks.
- Reinforcement that is meaningful to the student; and
- Student knowledge of socially acceptable, responsible behaviors.

Goals of Academic and Behavior Schools

1. To teach students to control their behaviors and handle life situations appropriately.
2. To enable students to return to a less restrictive environment as quickly as possible.
3. To plan and execute educational programming that provides students with the academic and vocational skills necessary to experience a productive future.

Philosophy of Highpoint East School

Highpoint School exists to provide an educational experience that fosters the enhancement of meaningful learning and improved behavioral development. This is achieved by:

- Providing standards-based instruction and academic supports
- Teaching appropriate replacement behaviors and coping strategies.
- Exposure to college and career readiness
- Social Skills instruction
- Conflict resolution/Restorative practices
- Social-emotional development

Highpoint School uses a behavior management philosophy based upon structured discipline and positive reinforcement. This philosophy is designed to provide students with the skills needed to succeed in academic and social settings.

Goals of Highpoint Schools

1. Quality Safety · To Provide and maintain a safe and secure learning environment.
2. Quality Instruction · To ensure high-quality instruction in every classroom.
3. Quality Service · To maintain a commitment to excellence.
4. Quality Culture & Climate · To protect the work and one another with integrity, compassion, support, and dedication

Philosophy of Fortis Academy

The Philosophy at Fortis is to move from a mentality of punishing students to helping them. Our mission is to provide a supportive and sober learning environment to meet the individual educational, social, and emotional needs of adolescents in recovery.

Administration

The Academic and Behavior Schools, Fortis Academy, and Highpoint School are administered by the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) under the direction of the County School Superintendent and the Board of Trustees. Questions and concerns may be directed to the campus principal or senior director of Schools.

Preface Parents and Students

Welcome to the new school year!

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

The Harris County Department of Education Parent/Student Handbook is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the Harris County Department of Education Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district's website at hcde-texas.org. State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

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

Although the Parent/Student Handbook may refer to rights established through law or district policy, it does not create additional rights for parents and students. It does not,

nor is it intended to, represent a contract between any parent or student and the district.

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

Note: References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district's official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at hcde-texas.org (Instructional Program then select Special Schools).

The policy manual includes:

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

- Board-adopted (LOCAL) policies that articulate the board's choices and values regarding district practices.

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

Dr. Margaret C. Patton, Director of Curriculum and Special Services
6300 Irvington, Houston, TX 77022
Email: margaret.patton@hcde-texas.org

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

1. Acknowledgment Form or Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook
2. Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities)
3. Consent/Opt-Out Form for participation in third-party surveys
4. Highpoint and Fortis Academy Schools: Drug and Alcohol Test Procedures
5. Media Release form

[See **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey** on page 8 for more information]

Accessibility

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

JoAnn Galindo General Office Clerk | 6300 Irvington, Houston, TX 77022
Email: jgalindo@hcde-texas.org | *Phone: (713) 696-8218*

Section I: Parental Rights and Responsibilities

This section of the Harris County Department of Education Student Handbook includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

Both experience and research tell us that a child's education succeeds best when there is good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. Your involvement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child daily to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the department.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact the school principal.]
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of education goals and plans to improve student achievement.
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school official if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about department operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

For more information on Family and Community Engagement Contact:

Catalina Ramos | 6300 Irvington, Houston, TX 77022
Email: Catalina.ramos@hcde-texas.org | Phone: (713) 696-8218

PARENTAL RIGHTS

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

Note: An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports. All evaluations related to special education are conducted by the child's home district. Any evaluation request will be immediately referred to the students' home district.

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

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

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

The student's parents and home district will be notified immediately when the campus counselor learns that a student may need intervention.

The Schools Division has established procedures for staff to notify the Director of Curriculum and Special Services regarding a student who may need intervention.

Please contact the campus counselor for and can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as educational materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus. See page 23 for a list of campus counselors and their contact information.

For further information, see **Mental Health Support** on page 75.

Consent to Display a Student's Original Works and Personal Information
Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information.

Student work includes:
- Artwork,
- Special projects,
- Photographs,
- Original videos or voice recordings, and
- Other original works.

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

Consent to Video or Audio Record a student when Not Already Permitted by Law
State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:
- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

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

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

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment
HCDE Schools Division prohibits the use of Corporal Punishment.

Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees
The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by Department guidelines.

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

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

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

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a department employee should contact the campus principal. [See **Notice Regarding Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information**, included in the forms packet.]

Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)
Unless a parent has advised the district not to release his or her student's information, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests from military recruiters or institutions of higher education for the student's:

- Name,
- Address, and
- Telephone listing.

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

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

Participation in Third-Party Surveys
Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) provides parents certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams.

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

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent; or

- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility for a program.

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

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

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

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

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

A parent may inspect:

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

The ED provides extensive information about the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment including a PPRA Compliant Form.

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

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

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

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

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that his or her child be excused,
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL) for more information.]

Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags
A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing. State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 87 and policy EC (LEGAL) for more information.]

Religious or Moral Beliefs
A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs.

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

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

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

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

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

Under state law, students with grades below 70 for a reporting period are required to attend tutorial services –if the Department offers these services.

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, contact the student's teacher and see policies EC and EHBC. See **Standardized Testing** on page 96 for information regarding required accelerated instruction after a student fails to perform satisfactorily on certain state-mandated tests.] Required accelerated instruction is the responsibility of the student's home district.

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

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

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

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

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent

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

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

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

District Partnership

The HCDE model works well due to the collaborative partnership it builds with its surrounding districts. It prioritizes providing school districts and charter schools the opportunity to expand the diversity of school options when meeting the needs of their students. In this partnership, HCDE provides expertise and implementation of evidenced-based best practices in behavior modification, specialized learning, and turnaround support. Most importantly, these effective partnerships give targeted students access to safe and secure great schools with restorative and enduring behavioral supports aligned with standards-based teaching and learning to support student growth and consistent improvement.

Student placement priority is given to districts who renew annual contracts prior to the start of the academic year. Placement decisions at the HCDE schools are based on the ability to meet the student's needs and the availability of seats. Each school aims to provide engaging standards-based, small-group instruction while preparing students to return to their home schools.

The Pre-Enrollment Process

Prior to a student enrolling and attending any of the HCDE schools, districts must ensure:

1. **Student Staffing:** At least one member of the HCDE School staff (transition specialist, campus administrator or designated representative) must be invited to participate in a student-centered staffing to review the full and specific student needs and whether the HCDE program can meet those academic and behavioral needs. If the student's needs can be met, the HCDE representative must be invited to the placement meeting where decisions are made including the MTSS, ARD or 504 meeting. A scheduled student observation may be requested.
2. **ARD/504 MEETING:** For any student receiving special education or 504 services, the HCDE transition specialist or designated representative must be invited to attend the placement ARD/504 meeting to confirm each HCDE school's responsibilities, supports, resources, calendar, schedules, and courses. All ARD or 504 documents must delineate the scope of services that will be provided by the HCDE School and which services will be provided by the student's home district.
3. **DOCUMENTATION:** The most recently updated Full and Individualized Evaluation (FIE), ARD/504 documents, IEPs, schedule of services (aligned with HCDE school course offerings and course minutes), transition plan, return criteria, and the health/safety plan must be received by the HCDE school before starting the enrollment process. Upon verification of all necessary documents, a 5-day window is necessary to prepare for the student's arrival. The student's start date is contingent upon 1) receipt of all necessary documents, 2) parent/ student attendance at the campus orientation, and 3) completion of the electronic enrollment process in PowerSchool Enrollment Express.
4. **ORIENTATION:** Both the parent and student must participate in the school's new student orientation. The earliest available orientation date will be provided during the student staffing and/ or placement meeting. Orientations are held weekly.

Enrollment

HCDE utilizes the PowerSchool Enrollment Express platform for student enrollment. Parents must complete a parent portal request and the online student enrollment process. Campus staff is available to assist parents through this process, if needed.

Electronic Reporting

Once the parent(s) is a registered user of the PowerSchool Parent Portal, they will receive electronic documentation including:

- progress reports (grades, IEP and behavior progress monitoring),
- report cards,
- incident reports,
- discipline reports,
- restraint documentation, and
- other relative reports.

Designated representatives of each home district will receive weekly attendance reports and other electronic reports. Beyond the typical weekly reports, we require a two-day window to respond to all other requests.

Individualized Education Program Development
The HCDE Schools use the SuccessEd program (compliance platform) to assist teachers with tracking compliance and services provided to students in special education and Section 504. The staff uses actionable data that enables continuous review of the effectiveness of implemented goals, strategies, accommodations, and methodologies, thereby creating opportunities for every student to be successful.

When preparing for student meetings, student case managers will provide updated and requested PDF documents including IEP goals, updated behavior goals, PLAAFPs, progress monitoring data, etc. Individual school districts are responsible for uploading the PDF documents into their chosen compliance platform.

Please note, the HCDE staff is not able to log in and manipulate data in the various compliance platforms utilized by each school district. HCDE can only provide PDF versions of documents that are created in the HCDE Success Ed program.

Curriculum and Instruction
In each of the HCDE schools, teachers create and implement instruction based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and/ or alternate academic achievement standards. In addition, HCDE schools use various programs to support student needs. Some of those programs are:

- N2Y Unique Learning System
- **Newsela**
- Imagine Learning Edgenuity
- I-Ready and/or IXL

Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System
Each school has implemented a unique Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System. Their schoolwide systems approach aims to establish a positive and safe student culture and individualized behavior support necessary to create an effective learning environment for all students.

The Academic and Behavior Schools incorporate the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System with a schoolwide economy system. The instructional staff on these campuses are trained in the components of the Functional Behavior Analysis and implementation of the Behavior Intervention Plans. Student behavior is progress monitored using the N2Y Positivity software.

100% of the schools' staff is trained in the Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Protocol, including prohibiting aversive techniques. This model equips all staff with the skills to prevent and de-escalate medium to high-risk behavior using both

restrictive and non-restrictive methods. Using both restrictive and non-restrictive methods.

State Assessment
The HCDE District Testing Coordinator attends all Texas Education Agency and Region IV required testing coordinator trainings, then trains all Campus Testing Coordinators (CTC). Each CTC trains its campus staff. The HCDE staff administers the STAAR, STAAR Alternate 2, TELPAS, and TELPAS Alternate assessments in a secure setting.

It is the responsibility of the home district to confirm which state test and relative accommodations each student is required to access. This information must be communicated to the HCDE campus during the placement meeting. The HCDE Schools' staff are the test administrators, only. The home district is responsible for inputting all data into the Texas Testing Information and Distribution Engine (TIDE) and Secure File Center.

Available Courses
All HCDE campuses offer a seven-period daily schedule. Elementary and middle school students receive instruction in all core subjects. HCDE provides the following high school course options:

HIGH SCHOOL COURSES

MATH	ELAR	HISTORY	ELECTIVES
Algebra I Geometry Algebra II* Pre-Cal*	English I English II English III English IV	World History* US History **SCIENCE** Biology	Spanish I * Spanish II * Health PE

*In-person courses are offered at High Point East and Fortis Academy only.

Expanded Course Options

Edgenuity

Edgenuity is utilized at all four campuses to assist with credit recovery and initial credit classes. Students are offered a host of support while enrolled within the online program to ensure learning gains are made.

Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, student grades will not be recorded on the report card for Edgenuity courses. Instead, course completion certificates with grades will be provided to students and home districts once the course is completed.

N2Y Unique Learning System (ULS)
The N2Y Unique Learning System is utilized at the ABS campuses for eligible students with the most significant disabilities who are 1) receiving special education services and 2) who are assessed on alternate academic achievement standards. ULS provides standard-based content, teaching resources, and supplemental tools.

STUDENT RECORDS

Accessing Student Records

A parent may review his or her child's records. Many of the student's records can be accessed in the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Classroom Test scores,
- Grades,

Other records that can be emailed to parents include:

- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term "intervention strategy" is defined by law,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child's classroom.

Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records

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

For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here are the right to:

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

For more information about how to file a complaint, see mail https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-compliant.

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

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

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

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

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student:

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

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.
FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records.

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- Working with the student;
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
- Compiling statistical data;
- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs.

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);

- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist**, school resource officer**, or volunteer);
- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district's safe and supportive school program;
- A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

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

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, district/system, or postsecondary educational institution to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which the student already is enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.

Release of personally identifiable information to any other person or agency— such as a prospective employer or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate.

The Senior Director is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Senior Director is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

A parent or eligible student who wants to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the campus principal identifying the records he or she wants to inspect.

Records may be reviewed in person during regular school hours. The campus principal will be available to explain the record and to answer questions.

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

You may contact the campus principal or the custodian of records for currently enrolled students and students who have withdrawn or graduated at:

Dr. Charles Ned, Senior Director of Schools
Harris County Department of Education—Schools Division
6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas 77022
Email: cned@hcde-texas.org | Telephone: (713) 696-8218

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.
Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the departments grading guidelines. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 89. **Complaints and Concerns** on page 44, and Finality of Grades at policy FNG(LEGAL).]

The department's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available on the division's website at https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/578.

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

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

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

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

A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances Children of Military Families
The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Safety Transfers/Assignments
The board or its designee will honor a parent's request to transfer his or her child to another classroom or campus if the Department has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832. The home district will be notified of reported bullying.

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom. The board will consult with the parent of a child who has engaged in bullying before deciding to transfer the child to another campus. The child's home district will be informed of any request that may result in a change in campus.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. Please contact the home district's superintendent or principal for more information.

[See **Bullying** on page 34, and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

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

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

Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal

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

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

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

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

The home district will grant partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course.

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

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

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

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

[See **Course Credit** on page 50, and **Students in Foster Care** on pages 99.]

A Student Who is Homeless

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

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

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

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

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

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 50, **Course Credit** on page 49, and **Students who are Homeless** on page 99.]

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

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

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the home district Special Education Department to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

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

Special Education Referrals

If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services to the home district's director of special education services or to an administrative employee of the Department the **home** district must respond no later than **15 school days** after receiving the request. **If the request is received at a HCDE school, the request will be emailed to the district contact within 24 hours.** At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards*. If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

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

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

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If the district receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last

instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30 due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

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

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

Contact Person for Special Education and 504 Referrals
The designated contact person regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is the campus counselor at each campus (see list below). The counselor will notify the home district of all requests for testing within 24 hours of receipt.

Campus	Email	Counselor's Name
ABS East	clara.vidacovich@hcde-texas.org	Clara Vidacovich
ABS East	ebony.adams@hcde-texas.org	Ebony Adams
ABS West	jessica.sharp@hcde-texas.org	Jessica Sharp
HSE	awolf@hcde-texas.org	Andrea Sneed Wolf
HSE	Lshortis@hcde-texas.org	Lori Shortis
Fortis	nlfrancis@hcde-texas.org	Nakia Lee Francis

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 24.]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:
- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered SpecialEducation Process
- Partners Resource Network
- Special Education InformationCenter
- Texas Project First

Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education
In accordance with state law, the Department will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

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

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

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the Department is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household. The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home.

A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English

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

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) at the student's home campus, will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state- mandated assessments [See **English Learners** on page 24 and **Special Programs** on page 96.]

A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

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

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

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

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 22 and policy FB for more information.]

SECTION II: OTHER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

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

It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.
Parents and students should take a moment to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact the campus principal.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

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

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

At any time, parents can see their student's attendance information by logging in to the PowerSchool Parent Portal.

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

Ages 6-18
State law requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19th birthday, shall attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended-year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

State law requires a student in kindergarten-grade 2 to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated instruction program based on a diagnostic reading instrument.

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

Age 19 and Older

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

Compulsory Attendance-Exemptions

All Grade Levels

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

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services, if the student returns to school on the same day of the appointment and brings a note from the healthcare provider;
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician;
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
    - An activity under a court-ordered service plan; or
    - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excluded for a student to visit a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments. [See **Children of Military Families** on page 19 for more information.]

Secondary Grade Levels

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

- The board has authorized such excused absences policy
- The principal has approved the student's absence; and
- The student follows campus procedures to verify the visit; and
- Makes up any work missed.

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S.

armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

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

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

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

Compulsory Attendance - Failure to Comply
All Grade Levels
School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law.

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

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

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

The notice will:

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

The truancy prevention facilitator for the Department is:

Michelle Rayson, Compliance and Technical Support Officer
6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas, 77002
Email: mrayson@hcde-texas.org | Telephone: (713) 696-2110

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

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

If a student aged 12–18 incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the Department, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court. [See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

Age 19 and Older
After a student aged 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district is required by law to send the student a letter explaining that the Department may revoke the student's enrollment for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student's enrollment, the Department may implement a behavior improvement plan.

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (*All Grade Levels*)
To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

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

With the exception of absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, all absences, excused or unexcused, may be held against a student's attendance requirement.
To determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for any absences, the committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences listed under Compulsory Attendance-Exemptions on page 19 will be considered extenuating circumstances.

- A transfer or migrant student incurs absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the student or student's parent had any control over the absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and discuss ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)
The department must submit attendance of its students to our client districts who report it to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day.
Official attendance is taken every day at 9:00 a.m. A student absent for any portion of the day should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

Documentation after an Absence (All Grades Levels)
A parent must provide an explanation for any absence upon the student's arrival or return to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent. The campus may accept a phone call from the parent but reserves the right to require a written note.

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

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

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

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)
Within three days of returning to school, a student absent for more than three consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence. Otherwise, the

absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of the compulsory attendance laws.

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

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

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

Further information may be found on the Texas Department of Public Safety website: https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license.

Attendance of Special Education Students After Graduation
According to the law, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) is required to offer free, special services to students ages 3-21 with designated disabilities. Special services are usually divided into two different types of learning environments, depending on the individual student's needs. Students may attend an Adult Transition program if specified in the ARD process through the Individualized Education Program.

At HCDE, students may participate in three non-graded courses:
- Employment Training and Practicum
- Post-Secondary Education/Training
- Independent

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

Contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parent information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see policies at EIF.]

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity refers to the commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic work. It means producing your own work, giving proper credit to others, and upholding ethical standards in all learning environments. Academic integrity fosters a culture of trust and respect in the classroom. It ensures that grades reflect true understanding and effort, and it prepares students for ethical behavior in their future careers. Integrity is equally vital in virtual settings. With increased independence, students must take greater responsibility for their learning. Upholding academic honesty online builds self-discipline and ensures the credibility of online education.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes any form of cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation in academic work. Examples include:

- Copying from another student or source without citation
- Submitting someone else's work as your own
- Using unauthorized materials during an exam
- Collaborating on assignments without permission
- Falsifying data or information
- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to complete assignments, write essays, or answer test questions

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty

Violations of academic integrity may result in:

- Parent and home district communication
- A failing grade on the assignment or exam
- A failing grade in the course
- Disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion
- A permanent mark on the student's academic record
- A reset/restart of on-line course (Edgenuity)

Each case is reviewed individually, and consequences are determined based on the severity and frequency of the offense.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES - ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

Admission to the Academic and Behavior Schools (ABS) are made through an Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting conducted by the student's home school district. A placement at ABS may be recommended for student's ages 5-21, who exhibit identified characteristics over an extended period and to a marked

degree that adversely affect their educational performance in their current setting. An ABS representative participates as a member of the ARD committee. The sending home district is responsible for conducting an on-site visit to ensure the needs of the individual student can be met and that the placement is the least restrictive environment for the student. When placement at an ABS is considered, parents are afforded an opportunity to tour the facility prior to a placement decision being made. The pre-enrollment, enrollment, and orientation must take place prior to a student attending either of the Academic and Behavior Schools.

The PRE-ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Prior to a student enrolling and attending any of the HCDE schools, districts must ensure:

- **Student Staffing:** At least one member of the HCDE School staff (transition specialist, campus administrator or designated representative) must be invited to participate in a student-centered staffing to review the full and specific student needs and whether the HCDE program can meet those academic and behavioral needs. If the student's needs can be met, the HCDE representative must be invited to the placement meeting where decisions are made including the MTSS, ARD or 504 meeting. A scheduled student observation may be requested.
- **ARD/504 MEETING:** For any student receiving special education or 504 services, the HCDE transition specialist or designated representative must be invited to attend the placement ARD/504 meeting to confirm each HCDE school's responsibilities, supports, resources, calendar, schedules, and courses. All ARD or 504 documents must delineate the scope of services that will be provided by the HCDE School and which services will be provided by the student's home district.
- **DOCUMENTATION:** The most recently updated Full and Individualized Evaluation (FIE), ARD/504 documents, IEPs, schedule of services (aligned with HCDE school course offerings and course minutes), transition plan, return criteria, and the health/safety plan must be received by the HCDE school before starting the enrollment process. Upon verification of all necessary documents, a 5-day window is necessary to prepare for the student's arrival. The student's start date is contingent upon 1) receipt of all necessary documents, 2) parent/ student attendance at the campus orientation, and 3) completion of the electronic enrollment process in PowerSchool Enrollment Express.
- **ORIENTATION**: Both the parent and student must participate in the school's new student orientation. The earliest available orientation date will be provided during the student staffing and/ or placement meeting. Orientations are held weekly.
- The ARD committee identifies the projected enrollment date. Transportation arrangements are made by the student's home school district. The parent is required to complete all of the pre-enrollment steps prior to student enrollment.

ENROLLMENT

HCDE utilizes the PowerSchool Enrollment Express platform for student enrollment. Parents must complete a parent portal request and the online student enrollment process. Campus staff is available to assist parents through this process, if needed.

TRANSITION
An ARD committee is convened for the purpose of considering the transition of the student back to a less restrictive environment in the home district when the student has met the exit criteria identified in the student's IEP. A plan for transitioning the student to the less restrictive environment is developed by the ARD committee during this meeting.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES - HIGHPOINT SCHOOL

Enrollment at Highpoint School is contingent on both the parent/guardian and student agreeing that the student will comply with all rules, regulations and procedures that are now in effect, or which may come into effect during the student's enrollment.

Students in grades 6 through 12 are eligible for admission to the Highpoint program if they meet one or more of the following criteria from their home district:

- The student has received a referral from the home district.
- The student has committed an offense severe enough to be classified as an offender by the court.
- The student has been placed by the home district according to Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code.
- The student has been removed or expelled under the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct of the home district.
- The student requires an alternative placement due to chronic or persistent misbehavior.

Special education students must have a placement ARD meeting prior to enrollment at Highpoint School.

Both the student and parent/guardian must attend the orientation at Highpoint School and complete applicable pre-enrollment and enrollment steps listed above. Parents must complete the PowerSchool Enrollment process each year, which gives parents access to the Parent Portal. Students will not be enrolled until the orientation has been completed and all forms have been submitted.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES – FORTIS ACADEMY

Alternative Peer Group (APG) Referral and Treatment Recommendations
Student must maintain active referral from their APG counselor to remain a student. The individual APG counselor will set the expectation for maintaining the referral. A student will be withdrawn from Fortis if the counselor revokes the referral. A student may be eligible to return once the referral is reinstated.

Fortis Academy Enrollment Process:

1. Students attend a parent meeting with the principal and/or his designee.

2. Students participate in an interview with the principal and/or his designee for screening.
3. Students are selected and completed form is sent to Irvington for district contract.
4. Student Information Form is coupled with a Contract and the Senior Director contact's district.
5. Student and family are notified of acceptance and enrollment date for Fortis Academy.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Counselor recommendation
- Successful discharge
- Interest in this school and furthering education.
- Stage of change
- Behavioral records, school records, fights, history of relapse
- Participation in group, completion of assignments, and family involvement
- Transportation/Location

Both the student and parent/guardian must attend the orientation at Fortis Academy and complete all applicable pre-enrollment and enrollment steps listed above. Parents must complete the PowerSchool Enrollment process each year, which gives parents access to the Parent Portal. Students will not be enrolled until the orientation has been completed and all forms have been submitted.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Students are recognized throughout the school year for academic achievement, as well as positive behavior improvement. Parents will be notified by the principal of recognitions and honors.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

The behavior management system employed at the Academic and Behavior Schools is based on the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System and Applied Behavior Analysis strategies. Both are supplemental to the Behavior Intervention Plan.

The Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System involves training for school staff and administrators followed by on- site technical assistance, coaching and evaluation. Staff training includes information and practice with:

- Classroom management plans that establish clear expectations for student behavior;
- Prevention of student disruptive behavior;
- Blending of social and academic instruction;
- Verbal reinforcement for student pro-social behavior and academic performance.

- Methods for correcting student misbehavior;
- Daily lessons on social skills instruction and generalization of skills;
- Implementing a school-wide social skills curriculum; and
- Using data to support building wide change.

The **Academic and Behavior Schools Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System** is more fully explained in the **Appendix** at page 118.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - HIGHPOINT SCHOOLS

The behavior management system employed at the Highpoint School East is based on a restorative practice point system. Highpoint East use a motivational level system that is explained in the **Appendix** at page 120.

BULLYING

The Department strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the Department's policies, by promoting a respectful school climate; encouraging reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

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

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

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

- A cellular or other type of telephone
- A computer
- A camera
- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application

- An internet website
- Any other internet-based communication tool.

Bullying is prohibited by the Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) and could include:

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

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or witnesses the bullying of another student, the student or parent should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another Department employee as soon as possible. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the Department's website.

Steps to Report Bullying

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by follow these steps (including completing the Bullying Complaint Form): Your campus administration will assist you if needed.

Step 1: A report must be completed to file a complaint related to an incident of the alleged bullying.

Step 2: Return the completed form to the school's principal/designee of the victim's school or center.

Step 3: Upon receiving the Complaint Form, the administration will investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct. The Department will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying.

Bullying Complaint Report Form

May be accessed from the HCDE website: www.hcde-texas.org and download the "Access The HCDE Bullying Form" to file an incident report.

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

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

Available counseling options will be provided to the affected individuals, including any student who witnessed the bullying.

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

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

The parent of a student who has been determined to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district.
[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 19.]

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

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

[See Safety **Transfers/Assignments** on page 19, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 52, **Hazing** on page 71, policy FFI and the Department's Student Code of Conduct

CAFETERIA SERVICES

The Department participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The Department may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent requests the student's information not be disclosed.
Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

Each new student must complete the form when placed at either an ABS or Highpoint school. The Department follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO (LEGAL).] Students at AB Schools from Houston ISD, Highpoint School from Galena Park ISD do not need to complete a new application if already approved.

Cafeteria Services - Academic and Behavior and Highpoint Schools
The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO (LEGAL).]

Students may bring their own, cold lunch. The lunch must be packed in a clear zip lock bag. Lunch bags are searched daily. Prohibited items will be confiscated and will be thrown away. Other than a sandwich or Lunchables, the following are the maximum servings allowed in a sack lunch:

- One 12 oz. non-carbonated can drink is allowed. (re-sealable bottles, cans, thermoses, carbonated drinks are not allowed.)
- One serving of chips in a sealed bag (no larger than a grab bag) is allowed. Ziplocs or bags larger than a gr
- ab bag is not allowed.
- Only one serving of a dessert or sweet food product is allowed. Candy is not allowed including candy in a Lunchables, will be removed.
- Parents may not bring in outside food for their student without prior approval from the principal or designee.
- The principal or designee of each campus will make the final decisions regarding what is acceptable, whether specified in the handbook or not.

STUDENTS ARE PROHIBITED FROM TRADING OR GIVING FOOD ITEMS AMONG EACH OTHER. STUDENTS ARE SUBJECT TO DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES FOR CHOOSING TO SHARE FOOD.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

The department offers a limited selection of career and technical education programs. Edgenuity is utilized to expand the CTE courses offered for students while they are enrolled. Admission to these programs is based on Edgenuity and campus course offerings.

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

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

Department policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Harris County Department of Education will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

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

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 84 for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator.]

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, TRAFFICKING AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN (All Grade Levels)

The department has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at board policy FFH (LOCAL). Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse

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

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

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

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomach aches and headaches.

- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior; or
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 52.]

Warning Signs of Trafficking

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

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

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude.
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for example, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology);
- Tattoos or branding.
- Refillable gift cards.
- Frequent runaway episodes.
- Multiple phones or social media accounts.
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Isolation from family, friends, and community; and
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

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

- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

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

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

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

If your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs.

To find out what services may be available in your county, see Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to the CPS division of the DFPS at 1-800- 252- 5400 or on the web at **Texas Abuse Hotline Website**.

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

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

- Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet
- Kids Health, For Parents, Child Abuse
- Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team
- Human Trafficking of School-aged Children
- Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
- National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking

Class Schedules (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a full class schedule. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9– 12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day schedule. [See **Schedule Changes** on page 92 for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

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

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

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

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

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

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

As required by law, the district will provide written notice concerning:
- Automatic college admission
- Curriculum requirements for financial aid
- Benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid
- The Texas First Early High School Completion Program and the Texas First Scholarship Program

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

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

[See **Graduation** on page 65 for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** on page 20 for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)
Students in grades 9–12 may earn college credit through the following opportunities:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or college preparatory.
- Enrollment in AP or dual credit courses through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN);
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with the home district, which may be offered on or off campus.

Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities. Enrollment in these programs is based on the home district.

A student may be eligible for subsidies based on financial need for AB or IB exam fees. See **Fees (All Grade Levels)** on page 64 for more information.

A student may also earn credit for certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. See **Career and Technical Education (CTE) (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** on page 38 for information on CTE programs.

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

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

Communications (All Grade Levels)

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

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

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

A parent may update contact information by emailing the Campus Clerk or correcting the enrollment sheet.

Automated Emergency Communications
The district will rely on contact information on file with the department to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency situation may include early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to the campus due to severe weather, another emergency, or a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes. [See **Safety** on page 90 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

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

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's principal. [See Safety on page 66 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)
Usually, student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy FNG(LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at https://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/578?filter=FNG. The complaint forms can be accessed online at www.hcde-texas.org or at the principal's or senior director's office.

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

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

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

Conduct (All Grade Levels)

Applicability of School Rules
The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior—on and off campus, during remote and in-person instruction, and on district vehicles— and outlines consequences for violation of these standards. The department has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

During summer instruction, the Parent/Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the school year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

Campus Behavior Coordinator
Each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The campus principal serves at the Campus Behavior Coordinator.

The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is listed below and is available on the department website at [www.hcde-texas.org]:

Campus	Name	Email Address	Phone Number
ABSE	Trent C. Manuel	trent.manuel@hcde-texas.org	(713)242-8036
ABSW	Jatata Hutton	jatata.hutton@hcde-texas.org	(713)339-9411
HSE	Courtney Waters	cwaters@hcde-texas.org	(713)696-2160
Fortis	Travita Godfrey	travita.godfrey@hcde-texas.org	(713)696-2195

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

Disruption of School Operations
Disruption of school operations is not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by state law, disruptions include the following:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.

- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.

Disruption of classes or other school activities while on or within 500 feet of district property includes:

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

Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district is also considered a disruption.

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

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

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

CONTRABAND-ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

Students are not allowed to bring anything to school except homework and a house key. Anything else brought to school is considered contraband. A parent is required to come to school to pick up any contraband items from the principal.

Contraband Items: The list of contraband items will be updated to include vapes, jewelry, and cell phones. The incident process for these items will be revised as follows:

1. First Incident: Warming issued with parent contact.
2. Second Incident: Parent contact required, and the student must pick up confiscated items.
3. Third Incident: Confiscated items will be disposed of.

The AB Schools and HCDE are not responsible for the safekeeping and/or replacing any confiscated contraband. A student in possession of any contraband item may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

CONTRABAND-HIGHPOINT SCHOOL

Students are not allowed to bring anything to school except homework and a house key. Anything else brought to school is considered contraband. Contraband will be treated according to the following guidelines:

- All contraband will be immediately confiscated. Failure to comply with request will result in disciplinary consequences.
- Cash that is confiscated that was not turned in prior to entering the search line will not be returned.
- All non-valuable contraband will be disposed of immediately. (i.e., combs, hairbrushes, gum, candy, makeup, etc.)
- Contraband of value may be returned to the parent only within 5 days if the parent pays the required handling charges. This includes all electronic devices.
- Handling fee: 1st incident - $15.00; Second incident = $30.00; Third incident = $30.00; Fourth incident = $30.00.
- After 5 days the contraband will be disposed.

Highpoint School and HCDE are not responsible for the safekeeping and/or replacing any confiscated contraband. A student in possession of any contraband item may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

See **Highpoint School Contraband Policy** Acknowledgement in Appendix at page 114.

COOL DOWN ROOMS – ACADEMIC & BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

The Cool Down Rooms are designed as a location used to assist students to de-escalate and regain composure. It is therapeutic intervention not a form of punishment. This location will be used when students have exhausted all interventions available within the classroom. The use of cool-down rooms for special education students should be addressed in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Staff cannot use force to place students in a cool-down room, even if the student is endangering staff.

A. Students may use the break card or visual communication card. (This is a card that if they simply raise it, they can get some time to themselves or get someone to take them for a walk or see a staff member they prefer.)

B. Students may use/show the break card or visual communication card that says, "I need…" This card allows them to request to go the Cool Down Room.

C. We also have a Cool Down Corner which allows students an opportunity to leave their seats and move around while remaining in their classrooms.

D. If they become violent, physically aggressive, and/or create serious property destruction, then the Crisis Team is called to escort or remove the student from the classroom.

E. The student may request to go outside the class to talk or advocate for themselves.

F. If the student's behavior continues to escalate or disrupt the educational process, then they may be escorted to the Cool Down Room.

The student will return to class once they are calm, completes the Compliance Sequence (Life Skills) or asks to return to class. Students requiring additional Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System will report to On Campus Intervention (OCI).

COUNSELING

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

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

In promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students, the district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum available to parents to review during school hours.

Academic Counseling
Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels
The school counselor will provide information to students and parents about college and university admissions and the importance of planning for post-secondary education, including appropriate coursework and financial aid availability and requirements.

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

High School Grade Levels
High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements,

and early graduation procedures. The sending district counselors determines the schedules for students.

Each year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year, how to make the most of academic and career and technical education (CTE) opportunities, and the importance of postsecondary education.

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

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

Additionally, the school counselor can provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry- recognized certificates and licenses.

Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels)

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should inform their teacher. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

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

[See **Mental Health Support** on page 75, and **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children** on page 39 and **Dating Violence** on page 52.]

COURSE CREDIT (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

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

Edgenuity Courses- HCDE Schools do not award credit for any Edgenuity course. HCDE will provide each home district with the student's course completion certificate. The home district will award credit when they deem that the course is completed with fidelity in the appropriate time and passing score. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, Edgenuity courses will not receive a grade on the report card.

CREDIT BY EXAMINATION—If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (Grades 6–12)

A student who has previously taken a course or subject but did not receive credit or a final grade for it may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the Department's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject.

Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."
The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination.

If the student is granted approval to take an examination for credit, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.
[See the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

CURRICULUM

Harris County Department of Education uses the **TEKS** Resource System (TRS) curriculum, as well as other instructional strategies and materials that are best practices and approved by the Texas Education Agency or department administration. TEKS Resource System is aligned with TEKS/STAAR expectations. It includes instructional strategies, questioning techniques, suggested resources and intervention plans to meet the needs of a diverse learning population. Both ABS and Highpoint students are expected to master the **State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)** as defined by the Texas Education Agency. Students receiving special education services

are expected to master the TEKS as defined in the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Teachers are required to submit lesson plans to their principal using components of TRS.

N2y-Unique Learning System is the curriculum used for the Life Skills classes. It is specifically designed to give students with complex learning needs meaningful access to the general education curriculum. It provides checkpoints and benchmark assessments that are modified to accurately capture present skill levels and guide individual instruction, evidence-based instructional strategies, and a n2y library.

Edgenuity is an on-line education program that is available at all campuses for students who have not earned credit in required courses for graduation. Students may also be placed in an Edgenuity course for initial credit. Students are expected to complete the course assignments per the guidelines in the Edgenuity procedures. Students will be required to complete a minimum of three lessons per week. The average lesson consists of four activities. Modifications will be made for students based on their Individualized Education Plans. Credit will be awarded when the student's Relative grade reaches 70% (which indicates that 80% of the course is completed) and the student's Overall grade is 70% or higher. Students are expected to login to Edgenuity and complete assignments each day unless completing a written assignment. Students who give their passwords to others or are caught cheating will be subject to removal from the course and additional disciplinary consequences.

Edgenuity may also be utilized for national test preparation (SAT, ACT, COMPASS, ACCUPLACER), state test preparation (STAAR, STAAR EOC) and intervention (reading, writing, mathematics). Lessons are web-based and are available in 17 languages. Edgenuity is aligned with TEKS Resources System curriculum.

Teachers use other instructional programs such as:

- **N2y Positivity** is also utilized to assist campus staff in designing the most appropriate instruction for each student on the autism spectrum and with behavioral or developmental difficulties.
- **Success Ed** is utilized by the teaching staff to develop an IEP for students with disabilities.
- **iReady** is used to support student learning in Reading and Math (ABS Campuses.
- IXL is used to support student learning in Reading and Math (Highpoint and Fortis)
- **NewsELA** is used on all HCDE campuses to support reading across all curricular areas.

In accordance with the law, "Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act", students also receive instruction on the appropriate online behavior, use of social networking websites, chat rooms, cyberbullying and online safety. For additional information, please contact the principal.

Edgenuity Courses- HCDE Schools do not award credit for any Edgenuity course. HCDE will provide each home district with the student's course completion certificate. The home district will award credit when they deem that the course is completed with fidelity in the appropriate time and passing score. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, Edgenuity courses will not receive a grade on the report card.

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, RETALIATION, VIOLENCE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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

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

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the Department's policy is available on the Department's website. [See policy FFH for more information.]

Dating Violence

Dating Violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship or any of the person's past or subsequent partners. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical or sexual assaults.
- Name-calling.
- Put-downs.
- Threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household.
- Destroying property belonging to the student.
- Threats to die by suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship.
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family.
- Stalking; or
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

A flier from the Texas Attorney General's office includes information on recognizing and responding to dating violence, including contact information for help. The counselor's office has additional information about the dangers of dating violence and resources for seeking help.

For more information on dating violence, see the CDC's Preventing Teen Dating Violence:
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teendatingviolence/fastfact.html

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

Harassment
Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:
- Offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation.
- Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct.
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors.
- Physical aggression or assault.
- Graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Harassment and Sex-Based Harassment
Sexual harassment and sex-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to:
- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature.
- Sexual advances.
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and
- Other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and other inappropriate social relationships between students and department employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

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

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

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

Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See **Bullying** on page 35.]

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

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

To the extent possible, the department will respect the privacy of the student. However, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and comply with law.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies the department that it is investigating the matter and requests that the department delay its investigation, the department will resume its investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

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

If the department's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The department may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct was not unlawful.
All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the department investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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

DISCRIMINATION

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

DISTANCE LEARNING (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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

The distance learning opportunities available to students is Edgenuity. Other distance learning opportunities will be determined by the sending district.

Edgenuity Courses- HCDE Schools do not award credit for any Edgenuity course. HCDE will provide each home district with the student's course completion certificate. The home district will award credit when they deem that the course is completed with fidelity in the appropriate time and passing score. Beginning in the 2026-27 school year, Edgenuity courses will not receive a grade on the report card.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

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

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

Non-school Materials from Students
Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Approval will be granted or denied within two school days.

The campus principal/center director has designated the bulletin board as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA for more information.]

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

Non-school literature shall not be distributed by students on Department property if:
1. The materials are obscene, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience.
2. The materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students.
3. The materials promote illegal use of drugs, alcohol or other controlled substances.
4. The distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person.
5. The materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others.
6. The materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action.
7. 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.
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.

A student may appeal a principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL). Any student who posts non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without the principal's approval will be removed.

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

To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or

organization, and be submitted to the principal/center manager/assistant superintendent for prior review. The principal will approve or

reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies DGBA or GF for more information.]

The principal at each campus has designated the bulletin board as the location for approved non- school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD (LOCAL) or a non-curriculum related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

All non-school materials distributed under these circumstances must be removed from department property immediately following the event at which the materials are distributed.

DRESS AND GROOMING - ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

The department's dress code at the ABS campuses is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimizes safety hazards, and maintains a positive learning climate. All students in Adaptive Behavior (AB) classes shall wear the designated uniform from the time they board the school bus until they depart the bus at the end of the day. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

1. **Black, khaki or navy-blue colored pants or skirts**. Clothing items may include walking shorts, skorts, and jumpers which may not be more than three (3) inches above the knee or five inches from the floor to the lower edge of the article when the student is kneeling. Pants and skirts shall be properly sized and belted at the waist. Pants may not be oversized or baggy. NO CORDUROY, JEANS, LOW RISE OR CARGO PANTS ARE ALLOWED. Pant legs must be properly hemmed with no slits.
2. **Black, gray, white or navy-blue shirts, blouses and polo-style pullovers** (without decorations, logos, emblems, accent color etc.) Undershirt (if worn) must be solid white without pictures or writing. Shirts must be long enough to tuck in at the waist.
3. All students must wear a belt (brown or black).
4. Athletic shoes only (tennis shoes/sneakers).
5. White or dark colored socks only (without decorations, i.e. emblems, logos, accent color, etc.).
6. Jackets will be taken at search and returned at the end of the day.
7. Sweatshirts should be solid navy or white. They are the only outerwear that is permitted in the classroom. They must be worn over an appropriate dress code shirt.

Sweatshirts may not have hoods, zippers, buttons, pockets, emblems or logos. They may not be tied around the waist or draped over the shoulders.

8. Students must maintain the hair on their head in a well-groomed, non-distracting manner that does not disrupt the educational process. Girls may not wear anything in their hair other than a black scrunchie are permitted, and colored hair is acceptable. Students are required to maintain well-groomed facial hair.
9. Students may not wear makeup or cosmetics of any kind: this includes lash extensions. Students may not bring cosmetics to school.
10. Clothing may not be worn to reflect gang affiliation or hide illegal items.
11. Hats, caps, bandannas (colors) or other head apparel may not be worn or carried on the bus.
12. Fingernails shall be conventionally trimmed. No sculptured nails, tips, or extensions are allowed.
13. Sunglasses or shades may not be worn or brought to school. Only prescribed contacts and glasses are allowed, and no sharing is permitted.
14. No jewelry of any kind may be worn.
15. Backpacks are allowed on campus for students attending the Life Skills Program.
16. Obscene tattoos must be covered. The principal or designee will make the determination of the appropriateness of tattoos.

If the principal or designee determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

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

DRESS AND GROOMING-HIGHPOINT

The department's dress code at the Highpoint Schools has been established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards, and maintain a positive learning climate. The principal or designee of each campus shall apply the dress code and make all final decisions regarding what is acceptable and appropriate, whether specified in the handbook or not. Any items held by a student, which are deemed inappropriate by the school staff, will be confiscated, and not returned.

Students who do not adhere to the dress code shall be given choices to correct the offense, if possible.

Students who do not adhere to the dress code:

1. Will not be permitted to attend class until the parent/guardian brings the acceptable change of clothing or the student will be sent home.

2. After repeated disregard for the rules concerning the uniform dress code and grooming, the student will be declared insubordinate and will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension.
3. Any uniform or appearance violation will result in an office referral and will receive appropriate consequences determined by the administration. Any extra clothing items will be discarded.

The following uniform dress code is to be followed by all students. Students are subject to search in an appropriate manner by school personnel each day. All students will wear the designated uniform from the time they board the school bus until they depart the bus at the end of the day.

1. Khaki or tan pants. Pants shall be properly sized and belted at the waist. The following are not allowed: baggy and/or oversized pants, tight/stretch material, split seams and/or cuffs. no more than two front pockets and two back pockets are allowed. Cargo pants or low-rise pants are not allowed. Joggers are not allowed.
2. All white, conventionally sized polo/golf-style shirt or white long-sleeved dress shirt (without decorations, logos, emblems, accent color etc.) Shirts must be tucked into the pants. Only the top button may be unbuttoned.
3. Both male and female students required to wear:
    - Solid white, black, or gray underwear, undershirts, and socks ONLY!
    - Undergarments must be clean and free of inappropriate designs and logo
    - Athletics shorts, leggings, tights, and bodysuits are prohibited.
    - Students found wearing two or more pairs of undergarments will have the extra pair confiscated.
4. Belts must be solid black or brown, free of brads and decorative buckles. Belts must be appropriately sized and must pass through all belt loops. A belt must be worn at all times. No designer belts may be worn.
5. Solid black athletic tennis shoes are required. Shoes may not have any color or decorations on them. Shoes must lace up so they can be used for PE activities. Shoes must be laced with black shoelaces. NO VELCRO STRAPS ARE ALLOWED. WHITE OR COLORED LOGOS MAY NOT BE COLORED IN OR TAPED OVER TO CONCEAL LOGOS.
6. White, black or gray socks only. Only one pair of socks may be worn at a time.
7. Hats, caps, bandanas (colors) or other head apparel may not be worn.
8. Fingernails must be neatly trimmed; colored polish is not allowed, and artificial enhancements such as acrylic nails, sculpted nails, gel extensions, or nail tips are prohibited.
9. Students may not wear make-up or cosmetics of any kind (this includes lash extensions, eyeliner, mascara, lip gloss, pimple patches etc.). Students may not bring cosmetics to school.
10. Sunglasses or shades may not be brought to school. Only conventional glasses or prescribed contacts are allowed, and no sharing is permitted. Students cannot bring eyeglasses/contact cases to school.
11. No jewelry of any kind is allowed. This includes, but is not limited to: watches, rings, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, anklets, body piercings (such as belly, nose, tongue, or ear), grills, mouth jewelry, decorative hair accessories, and retainers used to keep piercings open. Band-aids may not be used to cover piercings.

12. All tattoos must be covered at all times, including at lunch. THE SCHOOL WILL NOT FURNISH COVERINGS. Plain white sweatbands without logos or neutral band aids without colors or decorations may be used. Long sleeved dress shirts buttoned at the wrist may be required in order to keep tattoos covered.
13. Hair must be well groomed, worn in the student's natural color, not distracting and kept out of the face area. No ornamental hair accessories (i.e., colored hair ties, hair bows, scarves, ribbons, barrettes, bobby pins) allowed. Hair extensions should not go past mid back. Boys: Hair must be free of all designs and intentional lines. Students may wear black, brown or colorless ties. May wear weaves or extensions pulled back in a ponytail, but no wigs are allowed.
14. Facial hair must be neatly groomed.
15. Jackets/Outerwear Policy:
    - Students may wear a solid white sweater over their polo shirt (no logos allowed).
    - Students may also wear solid white, black, or gray long sleeve thermal under their polo shirts.
    - The Highpoint jacket is the only approved jacket that may be worn throughout the school day.
    - Only the purchaser may wear the jacket.

If the principal or designee determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

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

ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES (All Grade Levels)

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

Except as described below, students are not allowed to possess or use personal electronic devices such as cell phones, smart watches, video or audio recorders cameras, e-readers, or other personal communication devices to school, unless prior permission has been obtained. If a student uses a personal communications device without authorization during the school day, the student will be disciplined. Parents of ABS students will be required to pick up any personal communications device from the principal's office on any subsequent offenses. Refer to the Contraband procedure for Highpoint students.

The use of mobile telephones or any device capable of capturing images is strictly prohibited in locker rooms or restroom areas while at school or at a school-related or school-sponsored event. Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parents will be disposed of after notice required by law. [See policy FNCE for more information.] In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 94 and policy FNF for more information.]

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

Instructional Use of Personal Electronic Devices
Personal electronic devices are not allowed on any campus. The campuses will furnish any electronic device necessary for instructional use.

Acceptable Use of Department Technology Resources
Department-owned technology resources may be issued to individual students for instructional purposes. Use of the department's network systems and equipment is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding use of these department resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.
Students use of Department Technology Resources shall comply at all times with applicable law and HCDE policies, including Board Policy CQ and HCDE's Internet Safety Policy. Students may not engage in hacking, cyber-attacks, or other unlawful activities through Department Technology Resources.
Use of Department Technology Resources shall not be considered private. HCDE may monitor any activity occurring on HCDE equipment or accounts and will monitor the online activity of students as required by law. HCDE also employs filtering software to limit access to restricted sites and inappropriate material on the Internet. This software is compatible with Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act recommendations for student access to the Internet.

Computers or other electronic devices issued to students must be utilized for instructional purposes only. Students and parents will be required to loan the equipment for a predetermined amount of time. By signing the user agreement, the parent takes responsibility for the care and safe return of the loaned equipment.

Students and parents must agree to the following:
1. No food or drink around the computer, ever.
2. No installation of software or applications (apps) on the loaned computer.
3. No hacking, altering unauthorized files, or using the computer in any way other than what is
   intended.
4. Shutdown, log off and put the computer away appropriately every day.

5. Notify the campus principal immediately if a problem occurs with the computer.
6. Follow all Acceptable Use of Department Technology Resources requirements.

The use of loaned equipment is a privilege, not a right. Failure to abide by any terms of the user agreement may result in loss of computer/device privileges.

Inappropriate Use of AI Tools
The inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools including, but not limited to completing assignments, writing essays, or answering test questions may result in disciplinary consequences.

Proper Use of AI Tools
Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools can support learning when used responsibly. Students may use AI for:

- Brainstorming ideas
- Practicing skills
- Clarifying concepts
- Checking grammar or formatting

However, using AI to complete assignments, write essays, or answer test questions is considered academic dishonesty. Students must always follow instructor guidelines and cite any AI-generated content when appropriate. Consequences for academic dishonesty apply to utilizing AI inappropriately.

Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources
Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages or other materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented or pornographic, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, harmful to minors, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether on department-owned or personally owned equipment, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Students may not use Department Technology Resources to access unauthorized material and may not disclose, use, or disseminate personal identification information regarding minors without appropriate authorization.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement.

This type of behavior may constitute bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student. We encourage you to review with your child "Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences sexting.

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

End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments
[See **Graduation** on pages 65 and **Standardized Testing** on page 91.]

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

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

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 91, may be administered to an English learner up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

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

FEES

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

- Materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations.
- Security deposits.

- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books or textbooks.
- student identification cards.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [See policies at FP for more information.]

FUNDRAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. An application for permission must be made to the Senior Director at least ten days before the event. [See policies at FJ and GE for more information.]

GANG-FREE ZONES (All Grade Levels)

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. Gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district/department-owned or leased property or campus playground. Any gang signs, symbols, gestures may result in a citation, ticket, or referral to the Harris County Gang Task Force. Handshakes, writings, drawings, gang websites are considered gang activity.

Gender-Based Harassment
[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 52.]

GRADE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION (Grades 9 – 12 ONLY)

After the ninth grade, students are classified according to the number of credits earned toward graduation. Each home district may have different local policies regarding grade classification.
Refer to the home district policy for additional information regarding local requirements.

GRADING GUIDELINES

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

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

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 89 for additional information on grading guidelines.]

GRADING SCALE	
Numerical Grade	**Letter Grade**
90-100	**A**
80-89	**B**
75-79	**C**
70-74	**D**
69 or below	**F**

GRADUATION (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

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

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

TESTING REQUIREMENTS for GRADUATION
Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on EOC assessments in:

- English I,
- English II,

- Algebra I,
- Biology, and
- US. History.

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

State law allows a student to meet EOC requirements by substituting satisfactory performance on approved national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities. [See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.]

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation in the applicable content area. This may require the student's participation outside normal school operating times.

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may still be eligible to graduate if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate.
[See **Standardized Testing** on page 91.]

Foundation Graduation Program
Every Texas public school student will graduate under the foundation graduation program. The foundation graduation program features endorsements, which are paths of interest that include:
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM);
- Business and Industry;
- Public Service;
- Arts and Humanities; and
- Multidisciplinary Studies.

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

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

The student's home district is responsible for assisting the student with creating his/her Personal Graduation Plan.

State law prohibits a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student's sophomore year, the student and student's parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who wishes to attend a four-year

university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether graduation under the foundation program without an endorsement will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

A student graduating under the foundation graduation program can also earn performance acknowledgments on his or her transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB examination, on certain national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance examinations or for earning a license or certificate recognized at the state, national, or international level. The school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and the district will annually notify a student's parent of this fact. However, not taking Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.
A school district will permit a student to satisfy the curriculum requirements for graduation under the foundation program with a distinguished level of achievement, including an endorsement, by successfully completing courses in the core curriculum of a public Texas institution of higher education. Please see your home district counselor for more information.

Credits Required
The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

COURSE AREA	Number of Credits:	Number of Credits:
	Foundation Graduation Program	Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social Studies	3	3
Physical Education	1	1
Languages other than English	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Electives	5	7
Total	22 Credits	26 Credits

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

Mathematics. To obtain the distinguished level of achievement foundation graduation program, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the 4 mathematics credits. A student's completion of the distinguished level of achievement is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university and will be included on a student's transcript.

Physical Education. A student who is unable to participate in activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit in physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee applicable.

Languages other than English. Students are required to earn 2 credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits.

- A student may satisfy one of the two required credits by successfully completing in elementary school a dual language immersion program or a course in American Sign Language.
- In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

Available Endorsements

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

FAFSA or TASFA

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA).

The campus counselor or designee will provide a training on how to assess the FAFSA or TASFA.

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

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

Please contact the school counselor for more information.

The home district will confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA in accordance with TEA guidance. To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a TASFA, the student must submit confirmation of submittal.

Personal Graduation Plans

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student by the home district.

The home district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the

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

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

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

Your home district will determine if you will be able to amend your personal graduation plan.

A student may amend his or her personal graduation plan at the sending school after this initial confirmation. The school will send written notice of any such amendment to the student's parent.

Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs
Each spring, the home district will update students on the courses required or offered in each curriculum area so students can enroll for the upcoming school year.

Note: The home district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.
Not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the department. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the home district will offer the course the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Graduation Expenses
Because students and parents will incur expenses to participate in the traditions of graduation— such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year.
[See **Fees** on page 64]

Scholarships and Grants
Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the foundation graduation program may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program and the Teach for Texas Grant Program for scholarships and grants toward tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community
colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. Certain students who graduate early may also be eligible for the Texas First Scholarship Program.

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

HARASSMENT

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

HAZING (All Grade Levels)

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

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

The department will not tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[See **Bullying** on page 35 and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

HEALTH – PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

Illness (All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. State rules require to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever- free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. Student with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without use of diarrhea-suppressing medications for 24 hours.

A parent should contact the school nurse or principal if a student has been diagnosed with COVID- 19 or may have COVID-19.

A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she will be sent to see the nurse or designee. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

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

The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether their child should stay home.

Guidelines for Keeping Sick Children at Home

A sick child who is unable to participate in school in a meaningful way should be kept home to rest and recover until symptoms resolve. Keeping a sick child home also protects other children, school staff and visiting community members from contracting an illness that can be spread from person to person. Please be aware of the following guidelines for school attendance.

- **Fever:** A child must remain home with fever equal to or > 100◦F and may only return after he/she has been fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol or Motrin.
- **Diarrhea/Vomiting**: A child with diarrhea and/or vomiting must stay at home and may return to school only after being symptom free for 24 hours.
- **Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye):** Following a diagnosis of pink eye, a child may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of prescribed medication has been administered.
- **Rashes**: Common infectious diseases with rashes are most contagious in the early stages. A child with a suspicious rash must stay at home and may return to school after a health care provider has made a diagnosis and authorizes the child's return to school in writing or symptoms have resolved completely.
- **Head Lice**: According to the CDC, students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice. Students who have an active case of live lice may attend school only after treatment which eliminates all live lice. The student's hair must be checked by the school nurse before they can return to class.

If you take your child to a healthcare provider for an evaluation of illness or injury, please be sure to request a written letter stating when your child may return to school and any accommodations required upon his/her return.

Immunizations (All Grades Levels)

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized.

For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained online at Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization or by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or

school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are:

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

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

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. registered and licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and wellbeing of the student or a member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a lifelong condition.

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 77, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this or other vaccination requirements.

[See the DSHS website: Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements and policy FFAB(LEGAL) for more information.]

Lice (All Grade Levels)

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

The district does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits. According to the CDC, students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate and successful treatment has killed crawling lice.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a treatment plan using an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery

store. After the student undergoes one treatment, the parent should contact the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments, how best to get rid of lice, and how to prevent lice from returning.
The department will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home.

[See policy FFAA for more information and the Appendix on page 118.]

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

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

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

- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request. Written physician orders are required in order to administer medications at school.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified department employee from the original, properly labeled container. Written physician orders are required in order to administer medications at school.
- Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. Note: Insect repellant is considered a nonprescription medication.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

Each medication to be administered must be accompanied by a completed Parent/Guardian Consent for Administration of Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication at School or a School Related Activity form. The form detailing parental consent is good only for the school year in which it was submitted. A new form must be completed annually. See the **Request for the Administration of Medication at School** in the Appendix at page 125.

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school. At the elementary level, a student's teacher or other department personnel will apply

sunscreen to the student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and asks for help applying it. A student at this level may apply his or her own sunscreen if the student is able to do so. At the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions
A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her health-care provider and the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal.

See the **Request for Food Allergy/Anaphylactic Information** in the Appendix at page 127 See also **Food Allergies** on page 78.

Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only)
State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for physician prescribed medical use only.

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

Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)
The department has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

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

- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the department 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 department employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [See policy FFAC FFEB for more information.]
For related information, see:

- Consent to Conduct a **Psychological Evaluation** on page 6 (referred to student's home district) and Consent to **Provide a Mental Health Care Service** on page 6 for the department's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information;
- **Counseling** on page 48 for the department's comprehensive school counseling program;
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** on page 48 for campus and community mental and physical health resources; and
- Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health on pages 79 for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

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

For additional information on the department's elementary school student physical activity programs and requirements, please see the principal.

Junior High/Middle School
The department will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters, in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education
Students who are temporarily restricted from participating in physical education will not actively participate in skill demonstrations but will remain in class to learn the concepts of the lessons.

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

Physical Health Screenings / Examinations

Spinal Screening Program
School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spin curvature at an early stage, when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted in accordance with the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards.

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.
For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, contact the superintendent, or see policy FFAA(LEGAL).

Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels)
Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for Type 2 diabetes at the same time the department screens students for hearing and vision issues or for abnormal spinal curvatures. [See policy FFAA for more information.]

Special Health Concerns (All Grade Levels)

Bacterial Meningitis
Please see the district's website at hcde-texas.org for more information regarding meningitis.

Note: Entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization** on page 72.]

Diabetes
In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information.
[See policy FFAF(LEGAL) for more information.]

Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)
Parents should notify the department when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. If your child has a food allergy, please complete the Food Allergy form in the appendix. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.
The department has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis" found on the DSHS website at Allergies and Anaphylaxis.
When the department receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed from the principal's office. [See policy FFAF and the **Request for Food Allergy/Anaphylactic Information** in the Appendix at page 125 for more information.]

Seizures (All Grade Levels)
To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder.
[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 24 and contact the school nurse for more information.]

Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)
Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e- cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property or while attending an off- campus school-related activity.
The department and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products, e- cigarettes, or any other electronic vaporizing device by students and all others on school property and at school-sponsored and school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policies at FNCD and GKA for more information.]

HEALTH-RELATED RESOURCES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Physical and Mental Health Resources
Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

Campus Full-Time Nurse:

CAMPUS	EMAIL	NURSE'S NAME
ABS East	scharlde.franklin@hcde-texas.org	Scharlde Franklin
ABS West	smatthews@hcde-texas.org	Shawniqua Matthews
ABS East/West	Faith.adewale@hcde-texas.org	Faith Adewale
HSE	Kgonzalez@hcde-texas.org	Karina Jerez Gonzalez
Fortis	Ksimpson@hcde-texas.org	Kaynell Simpson

Campus Full-Time School Counselor:

Campus	Email	Counselor's Name
ABS East	clara.vidacovich@hcde-texas.org	Clara Vidacovich
ABS East	ebony.adams@hcde-texas.org	Ebony Adams
ABS West	jessica.sharp@hcde-texas.org	Jessica Sharp
HSE	awolf@hcde-texas.org	Andrea Sneed Wolf
HSE	Lshortis@hcde-texas.org	Lori Shortis
Fortis	nlfrancis@hcde-texas.org	Nakia Lee Francis

The local public health authority, Houston Health Department, may be contacted at hhd.director@houstontx.gov.
The local mental health authority, The Harris Center, may be contacted at (713) 970-7000.

Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels) The district has adopted board policies that promote student physical and mental health. (LOCAL) policies on the topics below can be found in the district's policy manual, available at https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/578

- Food and nutrition management: CO, COA, COB
- Wellness and Health Services: FFA
- Physical Examinations: FFAA
- Immunizations: FFAB
- Medical Treatment: FFAC
- Communicable Diseases: FFAD
- School-Based Health Centers: FFAE
- Care Plans: FFAF

- Crisis Intervention: FFB
- Trauma-informed Care: FFBA
- Student Support Services: FFC
- Student Safety: FFF
- Child Abuse and Neglect: FFG
- Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation
- Freedom from Bullying: FFI

The department has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.
For further information regarding these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan, please contact:

Dr. Charles Ned, Senior Director of Schools Division
6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas, 77022
Email: cned@hcde-texas.org | Telephone: (713) 696-8218

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)
To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LEGAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it. For questions about the content or implementation of the department's wellness policy and plan, please contact Dr. Margaret C. Patton.

HOMEWORK

Homework may be assigned by the teacher to reinforce instruction. For questions regarding homework policies, please contact the teacher or principal.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (All Grade Levels)

Questioning of Students
When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including without parental consent, if necessary, if it is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances the principal will:

1. Verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
2. Ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
3. Ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken into Custody
State law requires the district to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

1. To comply with an order of the juvenile court.

2. To comply with the laws of arrest.
3. By law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
4. By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation
5. By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
6. By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
7. By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
8. To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.

Before a student is released to a legally authorized person, the principal will verify the person's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the person's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the Senior Director of School Administration and will attempt to notify the parent, unless the legally authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a student's release to a legally authorized person, any notification will most likely be after the fact.

Notification of Law Violations

The Department is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who been convicted, received deferred
- prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- All appropriate department personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[For further information, see policies GRAA (LEGAL) for more information]

LEAVING CAMPUS (All Grade Levels)

Remember that student attendance is crucial. Appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours if possible. Absent extenuating circumstances, students will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day.

For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or authorized adult must come to the office and show identification to sign the student out. A campus representative will ask the student to report to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow any unescorted adult to go to the classroom or other area to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

The same process applies to students in high school if a parent picks the student up from campus. If the student's parent authorizes the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note for documentation purposes. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other department personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school.

Unless the parent directs department personnel to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures listed above. If a student is permitted by his or her parent to leave campus unaccompanied, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a student in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied.

If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may sign him- or herself out of school. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

At Any Other Time During the School Day

Students are not authorized to leave campus during the regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal.

Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

LOST AND FOUND (All Grade Levels)

A "lost and found" collection box is located in the campus office. If your child has lost an item should check the lost and found box. The department discourages students from bringing to school personal items of high monetary value, as the department cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

MAKEUP WORK

Makeup Work Because of Absence

The teacher may assign makeup work to a student who misses class based on the instructional objectives and the needs of the student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

The student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

The student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold regarding the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit or final grade." [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 28.]

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

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

A student will be permitted to complete any assignments missed due to an Out of School Suspension (OSS).

MESSAGES

Department telephones are for business purposes only. Parents are not to call their children at school except in case of an emergency. Campus personnel will deliver parent messages, when necessary. Students are not permitted to use the telephone except in emergencies. Requests to use the telephone will be granted on an individual basis, as determined by an administrator.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT (All Grade Levels)

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, the department does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the department's Title IX Coordinator (see below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

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

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

Jonathan Parker
Assistant Superintendent of Academic Support
6300 Irvington Blvd, Houston, Texas
713-694-6300

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During department business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the department receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH (LOCAL).

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination. For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator:

Jonathan Parker
Assistant Superintendent of Academic
Support 6300 Irvington Blvd, Houston, Texas 713-694-6300

For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the superintendent:

Mr. James Colbert, Jr.
6300 Irvington Blvd, Houston,
Texas 713-694-6300

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

ON CAMPUS INTERVENTON (OCI) - ACADEMIC & BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

Purpose of OCI:
To provide a vital and short-term social skills and behavioral intervention outside of the classroom setting, following an incident. The student's IEP/BIP is used as the guide for intervention. A focus is placed on the student taking responsibility for his or her skill deficit and showing an understanding of his or her relative, individualized, and effective intervention and strategies that support replacement skills, while working to quickly return to the learning environment.

OCI Staff Members:
- Campus Behavior Interventionist, Certified in Crisis Prevention Institute Model and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System,
- Certified Special Education Teacher, Certified in Crisis Prevention Institute Model and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System,
- Educational Aide III, Certified in Crisis Prevention Institute Model and Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System,
- Additional Educational Aides when needed.

OCI Model:
- Continue the implementation of the student's Individualized Education Program including the Behavior Intervention Plan and all necessary accommodations in the OCI.
- Utilize the Behavior Intervention Plan to guide the behavior intervention that is provided in OCI.
- Utilize the Boys Town framework for social skills instruction and character building, when applicable.
- Provide an orientation focused on all components of the campus' PBISS and classroom expectations for all new students and their parents or guardians.
- Provide immediate intentional and individualized lessons and supports to students who are having challenges with de-escalation and have reached a crisis level of behavior.
- Provide immediate corrective instruction and restorative tools for students who are exhibiting disruptive and/or aggressive behaviors that could cause harm to themselves or others.
- Chart student behavioral and progress data using the n2y Positivity program (antecedent, behavior, consequence, duration, frequency, etc.)
- Document and communicate student data with teachers, administrators, and IEP team regarding intervention and progress.
- Document and communicate time spent in OCI and supports provided to the student's parent or guardian and home district.
- Align student's Boys Town account with the student's IEP goals including individual student data, behavioral trends, earnings, etc. on a weekly basis.
- Utilize the Out of Class Behavioral Intervention Log to record time spent on intervention (cool down room, OCI, etc.)

Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)

Working Together

Experience and research tell us that a child succeeds in education with good communication and a strong partnership between home and school. A parent's involvement and engagement in this partnership may include:

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 48.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office at for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences on page 66 volunteer]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [See Volunteers on page 77 and policy GKG for more information.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well- being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about department operations. Regular board meetings are held on the "third Wednesday" of each month at 1:00 p. m. at Harris County Department of Education building at 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas 77022. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting on the lobby window at 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas, 77022 and online at https://hcde-texas.org/board-trustees/board-agenda/.
- [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

For more information on Parent and Family Engagement Contact:
Catalina Ramos
Catalina.ramos@hcde-texas.org

Parking and Parking Permits (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Students are not allowed to drive to campus.

PARENT PORTAL (PowerSchool)

The HCDE PowerSchool's Student Information System (SIS) offers information about students, including their contact information, enrollment, demographic data, and grades. Each parent of a student is given an access ID, which can be used to create an account to access their student's profile via the parent portal. The portal allows parents to access their student's attendance and grades daily. It is the place where parents can update their contact information and complete enrollment forms.

PHYSICAL RESTRAINT

All Staff members at HCDE campuses receive annual training in de-escalation and physical restraint techniques. A restraint may be used when a student's behavior poses a threat of:

- Imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others; or
- Imminent, serious property destruction. 19 TAC89.1053(b)(1)-(2)
  A student may be restrained **as a last resort. Aversive techniques, prone and supine restraints are prohibited. Utilizing a restraint to transport a student is also prohibited.**

The staff employs a non-harmful control and restraint system designed to defuse and ensure the safety and welfare of challenging, disruptive behavior before it escalates to a crisis situation. The purpose of the method used is to assist student to:

- Learn to live and thrive in a safe and respectful environment;
- Interact with positive role models who are equipped to manage difficult situations;
- Learn new coping skills;
- Receive guidance about making positive behavior choices in the future and;
- Feel supported by staff who are empathic, compassionate, and respectful.
  Physical restraint is a serious action; therefore, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian the day the restraint is used. Written notification of the restraint and the behaviors leading to the restraint will be mailed to the parent/guardian and home district within 24 hours. [See policy FO (LEGAL) for more information.]

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE (All Grade Levels)

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 principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 10.]
State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001, at the beginning of the first-class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day.

[See policy EC for more information.]

PRAYER (All Grade Levels)

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt school activities. The school will not encourage, require, or coerce a student to engage in or refrain from such prayer or meditation during anyschool activity.

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

A student will be promoted only based on academic achievement or proficiency. In making promotion decisions, the department will consider:

- Teacher recommendation,
- Grades,
- Scores on criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessments, and
- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district.

[Prekindergarten or Kindergarten]—Grade 3
A parent may request in writing that a student repeat [prekindergarten,] kindergarten, or grade 1, 2, or 3. Before granting the request, the home district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

Elementary and Middle/Junior High Grade Levels
HB 4545 Elimination of grade retention and retesting requirements in grades 5 and 8.

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat the grade (4, 5, 6, 7, or 8) that he or she was enrolled in during that school year. Before granting the request, the department may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

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

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade-Level Classification** on page 64.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on pages 64 and **Standardized Testing** on page 91.]

Remote Conferencing
Remote Conferencing will be offered to any student who contracts COVID 19 or for students whose parents opt to keep them home due to close contact. Remote conferencing is limited to 20 days per school year.

All district policies, procedures, guidelines, rules, and other expectations of student behavior will be enforced as applicable in a remote or virtual learning environment.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Report Cards/Grading Periods

GR PD	Dates	Progress Report (PR) Date	Last Date to Enter PR Grades	Last Date to Enter GR PD Assignments	Sem Exams (HS Only)	Last Day to Update Grades	Admin Certify Grades	Grades Stored at Noon	Report Cards	Days in Grading Cycle
G1	Aug 24 – Oct 2, 2026	Sept 11, 2026	Sept 9, 2026	Oct 2, 2026		Oct 2, 2026	Oct 5-6, 2026	Oct 7, 2026	Oct 9, 2026	29
G2	October 5 – Nov 13, 2026	Oct 23, 2026	Oct 21, 2026	Nov 13, 2026		Nov 13, 2026	Nov 16-17, 2026	Nov 18, 2026	Nov 20, 2026	28
G3	Nov 16, 2026 – Jan 15, 2027	Dec 11, 2026	Dec 8, 2026	Jan 12, 2026	Jan 13-15, 2026	Jan 15, 2026	Jan 19-20, 2026	Jan 21, 2027 (Noon)	Jan 22, 2027	29
G4	Jan 19 – Feb 26, 2027	Feb 5, 2027	Feb 3, 2027	Feb 26, 2027		Feb 26, 2027	Mar 2-3, 2027	Mar 4, 2027	March 5, 2027	27
G5	Mar 1 – April 16, 2027	Mar 25, 2027	Mar 23, 2027	April 16, 2027		April 16, 2027	Apr 19-20, 2027	April 21, 2027	April 23, 2027	29
G6	Apr 19 – June 3, 2027	May 7, 2027	May 5, 2027	May 21, 2027	May 24-26, 2027	May 26, 2027	May 27, 2027	May 28, 2027	June 3, 2027	33

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are available at least once every 6 weeks through the PowerSchool Parent Portal. Daily grades can be viewed at any time in the Parent Portal.

At the end of each three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive an electronic progress report of their child's performance via the email address provided in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. If a student receives a grade lower than a 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be asked to schedule a conference with the teacher. [See **Working Together** on page 85 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the Senior Director pursuant to the board-adopted policy. Grading guidelines are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each standards-based assignment. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the department's grading policy. [See **Grading Guidelines** on page 64 for more information.] Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher. If the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG(LOCAL).

Report cards and progress reports are distributed through email. The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes. Parents may also access grades daily through the Parent Portal.

AB Schools will also provide a Behavioral Progress Report. These reports are compiled and distributed to parents by email or by folders sent home with the student. The purpose of this report is to identify specific behaviors the student is working on to improve and the progress that has been made, as identified in the IEP/BIP. Parents/guardians who do not receive these reports should notify the counselor or principal to arrange for other options for delivery of the reports.

RETALIATION

[See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation on page 52]

SAFETY (All Grade Levels)

Student safety on campus and at school-related events, and in department vehicles is a high priority of the department. The cooperation of students is essential to ensuring school safety. A student is expected to:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavior standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by department employees.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member and promptly report any incidents to a department employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by reporting the incident to campus administration.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other department employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Accident Insurance

Accident Insurance may be available from your home campus/district. Contact the administration of your home campus for more information. The Harris County Department of Education does not carry personal injury insurance on students.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

Periodically, the school will conduct preparedness drills of emergency procedures. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed

The department will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students enrolled in grades 7–12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

The department will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed and Stop the Bleed Texas.

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

All parents are asked each year to complete a medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs. Parents should contact the school nurse to update emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies,etc.).

The department may consent to medical treatment, which includes dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if:

- The department has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent;
- That person cannot be contacted; and
- That person has not given the department actual notice to the contrary.

The emergency care authorization form will be used by the department when a student's parent or authorized designee is unable to be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.

Regardless of parental authorization for the department to consent to medical treatment, department employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Emergency School-Closing Information

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information if the department needs to notify parents of early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to a campus because of severe weather, a security threat, or another emergency cause.

The department will rely on contact information on file with the department to communicate with parents in an emergency, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to keep your contact information updated in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. You may also notify your child's school when a phone number changes. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the department will also alert the community in the following ways: Blackboard calls and texts.

[See **Communications-Automated, Emergency** on page 44]

SAT, ACT, and Other Standardized Tests

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 96.]

SCHEDULE CHANGES

Schedule changes will be made on a limited basis and in conjunction with the student's counselor at their home campus. Requests for schedule changes must be made in writing on the campus form. Students must complete a counselor referral form. Once the request for a schedule change has been reviewed the school counselor will notify the student's home counselor of the student's requested schedule change.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)
The department works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the department's asbestos management plan is available in the central administrative office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the department's plan in more detail, please contact Albert Valadez, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at avaladez@hcde-texas.org.

Food and Nutrition Services
[See **Cafeteria Services** on page 37 for more information.]

Vending Machines
The department has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. Students do not have access to vending machines.

Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)
The department is required to follow integrated pest management (IPM) procedures to control pests on school grounds. Although the department strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of nonchemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area.

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Michelle C. Williams, the district's IPM coordinator, at michelle.williams@hcde-texas.org.

Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)
Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities. Whether a school activity is on or off district premises, students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day. Misbehavior will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct, or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

Use of Hallways during Class Time
Student transitions during class time are supervised.

Use by Students Before and After School
Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place.

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

Students must leave campus immediately after dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless the student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult.

School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)
The department periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes. A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

The department may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The department may require a fee for student participation in a field trip that is not required as part of a basic educational program or course to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. The department is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

Educational and incentive field trips are permitted for ABS students who meet individual campus criteria. Information and permission slips are sent home prior to the planned trip and must be returned to the school at least one (1) day before a scheduled trip. Verbal permission by phone may be given on occasion, if the parent can be reached. [See Student Activity Participation Permission Agreement and Waiver in Appendix at page 116]

Students who do not have verbal or written permission before the field trip will not be permitted to attend the field trip. Students must be in dress code compliance to attend.

SEARCHES

Searches in General (All Grade Levels)
In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, department officials may conduct searches.

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

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person or belongings will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a division official may conduct a search in accordance with law and department regulations. Any unauthorized/illegal items will be confiscated. Searches are done daily upon entering the building and randomly as needed. Students who refuse to comply with search procedures will be issued disciplinary consequences.

Division Property (All Grade Levels)
Desks, department-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the department and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. Department property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in department property. Searches can occur whether or not a student is present.

Students are responsible for any item found in department property provided to the student that is prohibited by law, department policy, or the Student Code of Conduct.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)
To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the department reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a department campus and at off-campus, school- sponsored activities.

Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)
Use of department-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the department. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed. [See Electronic **Devices and Technology Resources** on page 60 and policy FNF (LEGAL) for more information.]

Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)
The department may use trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. If a dog alerts an item or an area, it may be searched by department officials and parents/guardians will be contacted immediately.

DRUG TEST PROCEDURE: ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS

If a student is suspected of being under the influence of illegal substances while enrolled at Academic and Behavior School, the administration may require the student to submit to a drug test. Academic and Behavior School administrators, counselors, nurses, Juvenile Probation staff, and/or private testing facilities secured by the parent/guardian may administer drug tests. Students testing positive for illegal substances are subject to disciplinary consequences. [See **Steroids** on page 75.]

DRUG TEST PROCEDURE: HIGHPOINT SCHOOL

All Highpoint students are required to pass a drug test to successfully complete the program and exit the program and return to their home campus. Highpoint staff will administer the drug test. If a student is suspected of being under the influence of illegal substances while enrolled at Highpoint Schools, the administration may require the student submit to a drug test. Students are also subject to random drug tests at designated points in the level system.
Students who have a positive drug test at Highpoint must enroll in the Youth Prevention Program and provide proof of continuous attendance and completion. Students are also subject to additional days or a recommendation to their home district for expulsion to JJAEP in accordance with the law. Students who test positive for illegal substances or alcohol will drop to Level 1.
Refusal to submit to a drug test when requested to do so by Highpoint administration will be considered the same as testing positive for drug use. The student refusing to submit to drug testing will face the same consequences as a student testing positive. [See Highpoint School: Drug and Alcohol Test Procedures Form in the Appendix at page 115.]

Vehicles on Campus
Students are not allowed to drive vehicles to and from school to any campus.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation** on page 52.]

SPECIAL PROGRAMS (All Grade Levels)

The department provides special programs for homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, English learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the department or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the campus counselor.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Talking Book Program provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

Standardized Testing Secondary Grade Levels

SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)
Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. These assessments are usually taken at the end of the junior year. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to learn about these assessments and determine the appropriate examination to take. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT.

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

TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment
Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The TSI assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that freshmen-level students need to perform effectively as undergraduates in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may also be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the department. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

TELPAS
TELPAS is an assessment program for students K – 12 in Texas public schools who are learning the English language. The letters in TELPAS stand for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System. The Texas Education Agency developed TELPAS to meet state and federal requirements. Texas annually assesses the English

language proficiency of students who have been identified as English learners (ELs) in four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS evaluates the progress that each EL makes in becoming proficient in the use of academic English.

The student's home district is responsible for notifying the HCDE campus counselor of all students who must take the TELPAS during the student's staffing, LPAC, ARD, or 504 meeting and in follow-up notifications.

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) Grades 3-8

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated assessments, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

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

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

The student's home district is responsible for notifying the HCDE campus counselor of all students who must take the STAAR and STAAR-ALT during the student's staffing, ARD, or 504 meeting and in follow-up notifications.

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on STAAR Reading or Math

If a student in grades 3–8 does not perform satisfactorily on the state assessment, the student's home district will provide accelerated instruction for the student. A student who does not attend accelerated instruction may violate school attendance requirements.

For a student who does not perform satisfactorily on the math or reading assessment in grades 3, 5, or 8, the student's home district will establish an accelerated learning committee (ALC), which includes the student's parent, to develop an educational plan for accelerated instruction to enable the student to perform at the appropriate grade level by the conclusion of the next school year. The home district will document the educational plan in writing and provide a copy to the student's parents.

The parent of a student in grades 3, 5, or 8 who fails to perform satisfactorily on the math or reading assessment may:

- Request that the home district consider assigning the student to a particular classroom teacher in the applicable subject areas, if more than one classroom teacher is available.

- File a grievance or complaint regarding the content or implementation of the ALC's educational plan. See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** on page 32 and FNG (LOCAL).

Standardized Testing for a Student Enrolled Above Grade Level
If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grades 3–8 shall be assessed at least once in high school with the ACT or the SAT if the student completes the high school end-of-course assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, or science prior to high school.

Standardized Testing for a Student in Special Programs
Certain students—some with disabilities and some classified as English learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

Personal Graduation Plans – Middle of Junior High School Students
For a middle-school or junior high-school student who does not perform satisfactorily on a state- mandated examination, the student's home district will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP).

School officials will also develop a PGP for a middle-school or junior high-school student who is determined by the student's home district to be unlikely to earn a high school diploma within five years of high school enrollment. The plan will, among other items:

- Identify the student's educational goals,
- Address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and
- Outline an intensive instruction program for the student.

[See the school counselor and policy EIF (LEGAL) for more information.]

For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

High School Courses End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments
STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

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

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

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment. The windows occur in the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have opportunities to retake the assessment. The test is offered at the AB schools and Highpoint East during the Fall and Spring. Fortis Academy is the only HCDE school that offers a third opportunity to take the EOC in the summer.

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

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

An assessment calendar is included in the Appendix.

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on an EOC
If a student does not perform satisfactorily on an EOC, the student's home district is responsible for providing accelerated instruction.

Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

Student In Foster Care (All Grade Levels)
To provide educational stability, the department will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Margaret C. Patton, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at margaret.patton@hcde-texas.org or (713)696-0761.

[See **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** on page 20.]

Students Who Are Homeless (All Grade Levels)
A parent is encouraged to inform their home district if his or her child is experiencing homelessness. Home district staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

For more information on services for students who are homeless, please contact Dr. Margaret C. Patton, the Divisions' homeless education liaison at margaret.patton@hcde-texas.org or (713)696-0761. Dr. Patton will assist you with additional resources and with contacting your district homeless liaison.

For more information, see http://www.theotx.org/

Summer School-Academic and Behavior Schools

Extended Year Services (ESY) will be addressed in the student's annual ARD meeting. ESY services will be provided for eligible students in the summer of 2026, Monday through Thursday. ESY services will not be offered on Fridays. **ESY services will be offered from June 9, 2027, through July 8, 2027.**

Summer School is only offered to students attending Fortis Academy who have been assigned by their home district for credit recovery. Summer School will be provided for eligible students in the summer of 2027 Monday through Thursday. Services will be provided from **June 9, 2027, through July 8, 2027.**

Student Supervision

Students are always supervised to ensure their safety. Therefore, any Academic and Behavior School student that is transported by parents is not allowed to be dropped off before 7:40 AM. Students must be picked up by 3:10 PM each day. Parents are required to sign the student in at the front office each morning.

Occasionally a student may need to be picked up at school during the school day. Any student remaining on campus at 5:30 PM may be referred to Child Protective Services (CPS).

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 or principal. 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 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 The Highpoint campuses also have the services of a substance abuse counselor at each campus.

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

The department provides textbooks and other approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat any books with care and place covers on them, directed by the teacher. The department may also provide electronic textbooks and technological equipment to students, depending on the course and course objectives.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the department does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is paid for by the parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

Transfers (All Grade Levels)
The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

The superintendent is authorized to investigate and approve transfers between schools, in consultation and agreement with the student's home district.

[See **Safety Transfer/Assignments** on page 19, **Bullying** on page 34, and **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 22, for other transfer options.]

TRANSPORTATION (All Grade Levels)

School-Sponsored Trips
Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for his or her child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. [See **School-Sponsored Field Trips** on page 101.]
As approved by the principal an exception to this requirement may be made when the parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent in writing.

Other Forms of Transportation
Students are not allowed to use other forms of transportation, such as UBER, etc. or cabs to or from schools for campus safety.

Buses and Other School Vehicles
The home district makes school bus transportation available to all ABS and Highpoint students. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are available from the home district. The division does not have input into the bus routes or pick up/drop off locations. Questions about routes, times and pick up locations must be addressed to the home district. Students are required to ride the bus provided by the home district to and from school unless the principal has granted an exception to the parent.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus

routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the transportation department at the home campus/district.

Students are expected to assist district/division staff in ensuring that buses and other department vehicles remain clean and safe. When riding in district/department vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.

Students must:

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

Misconduct will be addressed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct including loss of the privilege to ride in a department vehicle.

Highpoint students must arrive and depart by their district school bus. Students who miss the bus in the morning and do not attend school are charged with an unexcused absence. Students missing the bus may be brought to school by a parent; however, the parent must bring the student into the office and sign the student in. Students missing the bus intentionally to circumvent riding the bus will be subject to disciplinary action.

Students returning to school from a court appearance or doctor's visit on the same day must bring a written note from the court or doctor in order for the absence not to count.

Students suspended from the bus are still required to attend school unless they are suspended from school. Parents must bring the student to school no later than 15 minutes before the beginning of the first class. Parents must pick the student up in the afternoon at the dismissal time. The parent is required to bring the child to the office and sign them in. Failure to attend school due to bus suspension will result in an unexcused absence.

TRESPASSING-HIGHPOINT SCHOOL EAST

Students are advised that visiting other schools or district facilities while they are enrolled at Highpoint School East may constitute trespassing. Therefore, students should not enter the grounds, buildings, or property of other schools without permission by a campus administrator.

This includes during the school day and outside the school day at any extra-curricular event. Students may be charged or ticketed for criminal trespass if they are found on any campus at any time without the appropriate permission.

VANDALISM (All Grade Levels)

Littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Parents may be required to pay restitution.

VIDEO CAMERAS (All Grade Levels)

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment will be used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. Video availability is subject to the traffic in the area: approximately 30 days.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE OF CERTAIN SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTINGS

To promote student safety, HCDE's Self-contained classes are equipped with video cameras in self-contained classrooms and other special education settings in which a majority of the students in regular attendance are provided special education and related services and are assigned to one or more self-contained classrooms or other special education settings for at least 50 percent of the instructional day.

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain self-contained special education classrooms. The department will provide notice before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which a child receives special education services. For more information or to request the operation of this equipment, speak with the principal or Dr. Charles Ned, who the department has designated to coordinate the

implementation of and compliance with this law. [See policy EHBAF (LOCAL) for more information]

Prior to the end of the 2026-27 school year, parents will be reminded that they will need to make another written request for the district to turn on video and audio recording equipment in their child's special education classrooms for the upcoming year.

[For video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms, See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** on page 7.]

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL (All Grade Levels)

For the safety and security of the students and staff, all visitors will be escorted to the pre-determined and agreed upon areas of the building.

General Visitors
Parents and others are welcome to visit department schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and must comply with all applicable department policies and procedures. The campuses are equipped with the Raptor program and a driver's license, or other form of proper identification is required to visit the campus. All visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Individuals may visit classrooms during instructional time only with approval of the principal or teacher. Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in to the main office first. Visitors must always be escorted by designated campus staff during the school day.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted. [See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** on page 7 for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

Unauthorized Persons
In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, **school resource officer (SRO**), or department police officer has the authority to refuse to or eject a person from department property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

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

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from department property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG (LOCAL) or GF (LOCAL).

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students Career Day
Harris County Department of Education College and Career Day is provided during the second semester. The department invites representatives from higher education institutions, trade schools, prospective employers and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

Volunteers (All Grade Levels)
The department invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students.
If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Catalina Ramos at Catalina.ramos@hcde-texas.org.
The district does not require state criminal history background checks for volunteers who are parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district. Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, other volunteers will be subject to a state criminal history background check, and the volunteer must pay all costs for the background check.

Voter Registration (Secondary Grade Levels Only)
A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

To withdraw a student under age 18 from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawals must be completed at the student's Home Campus/District.

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

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

Glossary

Accelerated instruction, also referred to as supplemental instruction, is an intensive supplemental program designed to help an individual student acquire the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

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

ACT-Aspire is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

ARD stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

Attendance review committee is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered.

Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

CPS stands for Child Protective Services.

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

DFPS stands for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

DPS stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

ED stands for the U.S. Department of Education.

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

ESSA is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, unless a student's parent or a student 18 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

HOME DISTRICT The partner school district where the student resides and would attend school. The home district enters into a contract with the HCDE Schools Division to provide services for their student.

IEP stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services.

IGC is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to

demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

Parent Portal is the PowerSchool Student Information System portal where parents can enroll students, update information, upload medical records, and view student attendance and grades.

PBISS means Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System.

PGP stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

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

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

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to help ensure that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, as well as assist with other student and employee wellness issues.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

STAAR Alternate 2 is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

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

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Except under limited circumstances students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle; sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP; and outlines conditions for out- of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAC stands for the Texas Administrative Code.
TEA stands for the Texas Education Agency, which oversees primary and secondary public education in Texas.
TEC stands for the Texas Education Code.
TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English learners make in learning the English language and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.
TSI stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.
TXVSN stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public-school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors and are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.
UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests

APPENDIX – Local Policies

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit: http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Search/578?filter=ffi%20local Below is the text of the Harris County Department of Education's Policy FFI (LOCAL) as of the date that this Handbook was finalized for this school year.

Student Discipline FO (Legal)

Bullying Complaint Report Form Schools Division

Step 1: This report must be completed to file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying (for the purpose of this form, bullying encompasses bullying, harassment, and discrimination).

Step 2: Once completed, this form should be returned to the school Principal/designee of the school.

Incident Information	**Male**	**Female**	**Race**	**Grade**
Complaint Name *(Last, First, Middle)*				
Victim Name *(Last, First, Middle)*				
Accused Name *(Last, First, Middle)*				
Date of Incident				
Administrator				
Campus *(or site where incident occurred)*				

Step 3: Upon receiving the Complaint Form, an investigation will be conducted to determine whether a violation of the Student Code of Conduct occurred; if so, the appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Describe the location where the incident occurred
Describe the incident:
List all witnesses' names and grades
List evidence of incident (i.e.: attach evidence, if possible):

Step 4: All of the information on this form is accurate and true:

_____

Printed name of the person completing the Bullying Complaint Report Form Date:

Signature of person Completing the Bullying Complaint Report Form Date:

Please attach any and all supporting documentation/evidence/investigation information.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Date Received:	
Action Taken:	
Investigation Completed By:	
Follow Up Contact Made By:	

Step 5: If you fear a student is in imminent danger, please contact the police immediately.

Harris County Department of Education

Student/Parent Complaint Form Level One

To file a formal complaint, please fill out this form completely and submit it by hand-delivery, fax, or U.S. Mail within the time established in FNG(LOCAL) to:

Harris County Department of Education
6300 Irvington Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77022
Fax: (713) 696-0739

All complaints will be heard in accordance with FNG(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) or any exceptions outlined therein. A complaint form that is incomplete in any material way may be dismissed but may be refiled with all the required information if the refiling is within the designated time for filing a complaint.

The Department will attempt to schedule a mutually agreeable time for your conference to take place and notice shall be provided. If you fail to attend your scheduled conference, your complaint may be dismissed unless you contact the HCDE Human Resources office at (713) 694-6300 to provide good cause as to why you failed to appear for the conference.

You are responsible for submitting records if your complaint goes to an appeal. Please keep a copy of the completed form and any supporting documentation for your records.

Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone number: (____)_____

Personal e-mail: _____

Campus: _____

If you will be represented in voicing your complaint, please identify the person representing you. If the person representing you will participate by telephone conference call, please check the box below. The Department will inform you if the equipment necessary for telephone representation is unavailable.

☐ Representation will be by telephone conference call.

Please note: You must designate a representative who will be participating in person or by telephone with an advance notice of at least three days, or the Department may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date.

Name:_____

Address:_____

Telephone number: (____)_____

What/who is the subject of your complaint?

_____

Please describe the decision or circumstances causing your complaint (give specific factual details).

What was the date of the decision or circumstances causing your complaint? Please explain how you have been harmed by this decision or circumstance.

Please describe any efforts you have made to resolve your complaint informally and the responses to your efforts.

With whom did you communicate?

On what date? _____ Please describe the outcome or remedy you seek for this complaint.

Student's or parent's signature: _____

Signature of student's or parent's representative: _____

Date of filing: _____

Date received by Human Resources Office: _____

Highpoint School Contraband Policy Acknowledgement

Contraband Policy

I understand and agree to the following:

- Contraband is defined as anything that is not a house key or schoolwork. All contraband is to be immediately confiscated.
- Cash and change will be confiscated and will not be returned.
- All non-valuable contraband will be disposed of immediately (i.e., Combs, hairbrushes, do rags, gum, candy, etc.).
- Contraband of value may be returned to the parent within 5 days if the parent pays the required handling charge. This includes all electronic devices.
- The handling fee is as follows:
  - First incident = $15.0
  - Second incident $30.0
  - Third incident = $30.0
  - Fourth incident = $30.0
- After 5 days, the contraband will be disposed of.

Student Signature	Date
Parent Printed Name	Parent Signature
Highpoint Representative Signature	

Harris County Department of Education

Highpoint School: Drug and Alcohol Test Procedures

Date:_____

Student Name:_____ DOB:_____

District:_____ School:_____

I understand my child will be drug tested at any time by an administrator/designee of Highpoint or HCDE License Chemical Dependency Counselor if there is a suspicion of any illegal and/or ethyl alcohol usage. I understand that a positive test will result in a level demotion and my child will remain at Highpoint until the following steps are completed:

- The student participates in a substance abuse prevention program provided at Highpoint.
- A negative drug test must be given upon release from Highpoint.

I understand that if I do not consent or if my child refuses to be tested, my child will face the same consequences as if he/she tested positive.

If my child tests positive for illegal drugs/ethyl alcohol use, I understand that I have the right to have my child tested at a private facility at my own expense. I understand that Highpoint administration has the right to accept or refuse the results of the private testing.

I understand that if a Highpoint administrator, counselor, teacher, or nurse suspect that a student may be, or has been under the influence of illegal substances while enrolled at Highpoint, the administration may require that the student submit to a drug test.

I also understand that a positive test for being under the influence of illegal drugs/ethyl alcohol use will result in further disciplinary actions while enrolled in Highpoint. Those disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to:

- Highpoint Additional Discipline (i.e., new placement)
- Citations
- Arrest
- Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Student Signature

Harris County Department of Education

Student Activity Participation Permission Agreement and Waiver

Student Name:_____ HCDE Campus:_____

I,_____, the parent (including natural or adoptive parent, legal guardian or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or legal guardian) of the above-named student or eligible student hereby give written permission and consent to Harris County Department of Education ("HCDE") for HCDE to transport the student (including, without limitation, by school bus, 15- passenger van, and/or other vehicles) to and from field trips, therapeutic horseback riding and equestrian education, vocational training, ropes challenge course, and similar activities (including, for Fortis Academy students, student's drop-off point(s) after alternative peer group sessions) (collectively, "Student Activities") and for the student to participate in such Student Activities. I understand and acknowledge the risks of and potential for risks associated with such transportation and Student Activities. However, I feel that the possible benefits are greater than the risks or potential risks.

IN CONSIDERATION FOR THE STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT ACTIVITIES, I HEREBY AGREE TO INDEMNIFY, HOLD HARMLESS FROM, AND WAIVE AGAINST HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ("HCDE"), ITS TRUSTEES, EMPLOYEES, OFFICERS AND AGENTS, BOTH IN THEIR OFFICIAL AND INDIVIDUAL CAPACITIES, ANY AND ALL CLAIMS FOR MEDICAL EXPENSES, DAMAGES, INJURIES (INCLUDING DEATH) AND/OR OTHER LOSSES, CLAIMS, ACTIONS, AND/OR LIABILITIES ARISING FROM OR IN ANY WAY RELATED TO THE STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, BEING TRANSPORTED TO/FROM THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES BY HCDE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS INDEMNIFICATION BINDS MYSELF, MY MINOR CHILD, ASSIGNS, PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES, AND HEIRS.

I hereby authorize HCDE to secure any and all emergency medical care and treatment for the student for acute illness suffered or injury sustained while participating in the Student Activities. I understand that, while student safety is a high priority for HCDE, under state law, HCDE is not responsible for medical costs associated with student injury.

I hereby give my written consent for HCDE to videotape, photograph, and/or audio record the above- named student, consent to the release of said record(s) to be used for public viewing, and release HCDE, Inc. and its employees and agents from any liability under Tex. Educ. Code § 26.009, FERPA, and any other law for the release of this information.

Nothing in this Agreement waives or alters any immunities provided the HCDE, its employees, officers, or agents, under Texas or Federal law. This agreement shall be interpreted according to the laws of the State of Texas. Any disputes related to this agreement shall be litigated and venue shall be Harris County, Texas.

I, the undersigned, represent that I have read and do understand the foregoing consent agreement and waiver of liability and sign it voluntarily, with full knowledge of its significance.

Parent/Guardian's Name:	
Parent/Guardian Signature:	
Date:	

WARNING: Under Texas law (Chapter 87, Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code), an equine activity sponsor or equine professional is not liable for an injury to or the death of a participant in an equine activity because of the dangers or conditions that are an inherent risk of equine activities.

2026-2027 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grade K-12

This chart summarizes the vaccine requirements incorporated in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 25 Health Services, §§97.61-97.72. This document is not intended as a substitute for the TAC, which has other provisions and details. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is granted authority to set immunization requirements by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 38.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

A student shall show acceptable evidence of vaccination prior to entry, attendance, or transfer to a public or private elementary or secondary school in Texas.

Vaccine Required (Attention to notes and footnotes)	Minimum Number of Doses Required by Grade Level													NOTES
	Grades k-6th							Grade 7th	Grades 8th-12th					
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTaP/DTP/DT/Td/Tdap)	Five doses or four doses							Three dose primary series and one booster dose of Tdap / Td within the last five years	Three dose primary series and 1 booster dose of Tdap / Td *within the last 10 years*					**For K – sixth grade**: five doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine; one dose must have been received on or after the fourth birthday. However, four doses meet the requirement if the fourth dose was received on or after the fourth birthday.1 For students aged 7 years and older, three doses meet the requirement if one dose was received on or after the fourth birthday.[1] **For seventh grade**: one dose of Tdap is required if at least five years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. * **For eighth – 12th grade**: one dose of Tdap is required when 10 years have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. **Td is acceptable in place of Tdap if a medical contraindication to pertussis exists
Polio	Four doses or Three doses													**For K – 12th grade:** four doses of polio; one dose must be received on or after the fourth birthday. [1] However, three doses meet the requirement if the third dose was received on or after the fourth birthday. [1]
Measles, Mumps, and Rubella[2] (MMR)	Two doses													**For K – 12th grade:** two doses are required, with the first dose received on or after the first birthday. [1] Students vaccinated prior to 2009 with two doses of measles and one dose each of rubella and mumps satisfy this requirement.
Hepatitis B[2]	Three doses													**For students aged 11 – 15 years**, two doses meet the requirement if adult hepatitis B vaccine (Recombivax®) was received. Dosage (10 mcg /1.0 mL) and type of vaccine (Recombivax®) must be clearly documented. If Recombivax® was not the vaccine received, a three-dose series is required.
Varicella[2,3]	Two doses													**For K – 12th grade:** two doses are required, with the first dose received on or after the first birthday. [1]
Meningococcal[1] (MCV4)								One dose						**For 7th – 12th grade,** one dose of quadrivalent meningococcal conjugate vaccine is required on or after the student's 11th birthday. **NOTE:** If a student received the vaccine at 10 years of age, this will satisfy the requirement.
Hepatitis A[2]	Two doses													**For K – 12th grade:** two doses are required, with the first dose received on or after the 1st birthday. [1]

NOTE: Shaded area indicates that the vaccine is not required for the respective grade.

1 Receipt of the dose up to (and including) 4 days before the birthday will satisfy the school entry immunization requirement.

2 Serologic evidence of infection or serologic confirmation of immunity to measles, mumps, rubella, hepatitis B, hepatitis A, or varicella is acceptable in place of vaccine. 3 Previous illness may be documented with a written statement from a physician, school nurse, or the child's parent or guardian containing wording such as: "This is to verify that (name of student) had varicella disease (chickenpox) on or about (date) and does not need varicella vaccine." This written statement will be acceptable in place of any and all varicella vaccine

Texas Administrative Code

TITLE 25 PART 1 CHAPTER 97 SUBCHAPTER A RULE §97.7
DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Diseases Requiring Exclusion from Schools:
(a) The school administrator shall exclude from attendance any child having or suspected of having a communicable condition. Exclusion shall continue until the readmission criteria for the conditions are met. The conditions and readmission criteria are as follows:
(1) amebiasis--exclude until treatment is initiated;
(2) campylobacteriosis--exclude until after diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(3) chickenpox--exclude until the lesions become dry or if lesions are not vesicular, until 24 hours have passed with no new lesions occurring;
(4) common cold--exclude until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(5) conjunctivitis, bacterial and/or viral--exclude until permission and/or permit is issued by a physician or local health authority or until symptom free;
(6) coronavirus disease 2019--exclude and readmit based upon guidance from the Department of State Health Services on its website at https://dshs.texas.gov/covid19readmission;
(7) fever--exclude until fever free for 24 hours without use of fever suppressing medications;
(8) fifth disease (erythema infectiosum)--exclude until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(9) gastroenteritis--exclude until diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications;
(10) giardiasis--exclude until diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications;
(11) hepatitis A--exclude until one week after onset of illness;
(12) infections (wounds, skin, and soft tissue)--exclude until drainage from wounds or skin and soft tissue infections is contained and maintained in a clean dry bandage; restrict from situations that could result in the infected area becoming exposed, wet, soiled, or otherwise compromised;
(13) infectious mononucleosis--exclude until physician decides or fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(14) influenza--exclude until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(15) measles (rubeola)--exclude until four days after rash onset or in the case of an outbreak, exclude unimmunized child for at least 21 days after the last date the unimmunized child was exposed;
(16) meningitis, bacterial--exclude until 24 hours after start of effective treatment and approval by health care provider;
(17) meningitis, viral--exclude until fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(18) meningococcal infections (invasive disease)--exclude until 24 hours after start of effective treatment and approval by health care provider;
(19) mumps--exclude until five days after the onset of swelling;

(20) pertussis (whooping cough)--exclude until completion of five days of appropriate antibiotic therapy, or until 21 days have passed since cough onset, whichever is earlier;
(21) ringworm--none, if infected area can be completely covered by clothing or a bandage, otherwise exclude until treatment has begun;
(22) rubella (German measles)--exclude until seven days after rash onset or in the case of an outbreak, unimmunized children should be excluded until at least three weeks after the onset of the last rash;
(23) salmonellosis--exclude until diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(24) scabies--exclude until treatment has begun;
(25) shigellosis--exclude until diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(26) streptococcal sore throat and scarlet fever--exclude until 24 hours from time antibiotic treatment was begun and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications;
(27) tuberculosis disease (suspected or confirmed), pulmonary or laryngeal--exclude until antibiotic treatment has begun and a physician's certificate or health permit obtained; and
(28) typhoid fever-exclude until diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications; and 3 consecutive stool specimens have tested negative for Salmonella Typhi.
(b) The school administrator shall exclude from attendance any child having or suspected of having a communicable disease designated by the Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services (commissioner) as cause for exclusion until one of the criteria listed in subsection (c) of this section is fulfilled.
(c) Any child excluded for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted, as determined by the health authority, by:
(1) submitting a 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 communicability in a school setting;
(2) submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
(3) meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner.

Academic & Behavior Schools Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System

The discipline management system employed at the ABS is based on the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support System. The system consists of three levels of skill development:

Level 1: Daily Points System: Acquisition Level

- All students begin at this level.
- Students earn points for appropriate behavior and earn negative points for inappropriate behavior. Students are given an opportunity to earn points back by correcting inappropriate behavior.
- Points are recorded on a daily point card.
- 25-30 positive social interactions are used each day to ensure adequate teaching and practice of newly introduced skills.
- Students have an opportunity during the week to use accumulated points to spend on privileges, activities, items from the school store, or to purchase bonds in order to buy up to the next level. (Each bond is worth 6,000 points and it takes 100 bonds for a student to move to the next level.)
- The Daily Points Level I is designed for students who are learning appropriate behavior and social skills and need a great deal of structure, immediate feedback and short-term consequences.
- Once a student has purchased 100 bonds, they are able to apply to move to Level 2 Progress Level.

Level 2: Progress Level: Fluency Building Level

- At the Progress Level, basic social skills have been learned and are being refined and practiced by the student. Basic social skills target areas are expanded upon.
- The 25-30 positive social interactions that were initially used are gradually decreased to 6-10 positive social interactions.
- Some of the structural aspects of the Daily Point System, Level 1, are faded out. Students at this level are able to negotiate points at the end of the day with their homeroom teacher.
- The use of points for purchasing privileges, activities, items from the school store while on Progress Level does not differ from the use of points on Daily Level 1. The only difference on Level 2, items "cost" less points than on Level1.
- Once a student has purchased 100 bonds on Level 2, the student is able to complete the application process to move to the Merit Level, Level3.

Level 3: Merit Level: Proficiency/Fluency Level

- To apply for Merit Level, the student and his/her homeroom teacher will review the Merit expectations. During this time, the student must not receive an office referral for 10 school days prior to the completion of the application. The student understands that in order to complete and sign the Merit Contract, he/she also needs to complete a school service project (during school hours) for a specified

period of time. The student's classroom teachers must sign the contract stating if they agree with the student progressing to Merit Level 3.

- Once the service project has been completed, the student and school administrators will sign a Merit System contract indicating that the student has purchased the necessary bonds, has not had an office referral for ten school days, and successfully completed the school service project.
- Under this contract, it is agreed the student shall remain on the Merit Level 3 as long as the following conditions are met:
- School staff does not have to refer the student to the office for a serious misbehavior or infraction of school rules.
- The student does not fail to accept feedback or refuses to follow instructions when corrected by a staff member.
- The student does not exhibit a repeated pattern of minor misbehaviors.
- The student carries the daily Merit Card for ten consecutive days.
- The students who are no longer required to carry the daily Merit Card is responsible for obtaining feedback from all teachers and meets to discuss progress with his/her homeroom teacher each week.
- Once the student is able to maintain appropriate behavior on the Merit System Level 3 for approximately 6-8 weeks, the student's school district representative will be contacted in order to schedule an ARD meeting to plan for the student's transition back to the home campus. The transition back to the home campus will be in accordance with the student's behavior intervention plan and the decision of the ARD committee.

Highpoint Level Discipline Management System

The Highpoint Discipline Management System is designed to instill self-discipline and to assist students in becoming better decision-makers. Students enter on Level 1 and move up and/or down the level system depending on subsequent behaviors. Students who successful complete the program will return to their home campus. Students who do not make adequate progress or regress in their school behavior will remain in the Highpoint Program or be referred to their home district for possible expulsion or placement in JJAEP.

General descriptions of the levels are follows:

Level I
Students enrolling in the Highpoint School Discipline Program are immediately place on Level I. Students learn appropriate behavior and social skills while receiving immediate feedback, short term consequences and a great deal of structure.

Level II
Level II students have demonstrated they have learned the basic social skills and are practicing them on a consistent basis. Expanded social skills are targeted while on Level II.
Students on Level II receive a variety of privileges as deemed appropriate by Highpoint administration.

Level III
Students reach Level III by successfully completing Level I and Level II. Level III students must maintain passing grades and acceptable attendance. Students on Level III receive a variety of privileges as deemed appropriate by the Highpoint administration.

Level IV
Students reach Level IV or Exit Level by successfully completing Levels I, II and III. During that time, student may not receive an office referral and must maintain passing grades and acceptable attendance.
Students on Level IV/Exit receive a variety of privileges as deemed appropriate by the Highpoint administration.

Level System Promotion/Demotion

LEVEL I

- All students enter on Level.

UPGRADE TO LEVEL II

- Good attendance with no unexcused absence for 10 days.
- Passing all classes.
- No office referrals for 10 days.

UPGRADE TO LEVEL III

- Good attendance with no unexcused absences for 10 days.
- Passing all classes.
- No office referrals for 10 consecutive days.

UPGRADE TO LEVEL IV

- Good attendance with no unexpected absences/office referrals for 15 days.
- Passing all classes.
- Maintain required number of daily points for 10 days.

EXIT

- Maintained Level III status for the required time and approval by their home district.
- Maintained Level IV status for the required time and approval by their home district.
- Good attendance with no unexcused absences/office referrals for 15 days.
- Passing all classes.
- Pass required drug test.

Note: Level demotions may occur at any time during this process for behaviors such as but not limited to drug/alcohol violations; fighting; excessive absences; bus infractions; etc. at the discretion of the campus administrator.

Harris County Department of Education

Exhibit A—Request for the Administration of Medication at School

Date form was received by the school: _____

Student name:_____ Date of birth or age: _____ Grade:_

_____Teacher/Classroom: _____

Name of medication: _____

Reason for medication: _____

Form of medication/treatment:

☐ Tablet/capsule ☐ Liquid ☐ Inhaler ☐ Injection ☐ Nebulizer

☐ Other _____

Instructions: (Schedule and dose to be given at school): _____

_____

Start: ☐ Date form received ☐ Other date: _____

Stop: ☐ End of school year ☐ Other date: _____

Restrictions and/or important side effects:

☐ None Anticipated

☐ Yes. Please describe: _____

_____

Special storage instructions:

☐ None ☐ Refrigerate ☐ Other: _____

Physician Information:

Name: _____

Address:_____ Phone Number: _____

Physician Signature_____Date _____

To be completed by parent/guardian:
I give permission for_____*(name of child)* to receive the above medication at school in accordance with district policy [See FFAC]

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____Date _____
[Developed using resources from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Texas Department of State Health Services]

Academic and Behavior Schools Request for Confidential Information

Student Name:_____ DOB:_____

Address:_____ Telephone:_____

City, State, Zip Code:

I hereby authorize Harris County Department of Education and ABS to request from the named agency (individual) psychological, medical, educational, legal, family, and/or social information concerning my child. This information will be used in educational planning for my child.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date:

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

To:

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Please send/fax the requested information as soon as possible to:

Academic and Behavior School East
7710 Office City Drive
Houston, Texas 77012
Telephone: (713) 242-8036
Fax: (713) 645-5773
Attention: School Counselor

Academic and Behavior School West
12772 Medfield Dr
Houston, TX 77082
Telephone: (713) 339-9411
Fax: (713) 978-7662
Attention: School Counselor

Harris County Department of Education

Highpoint School East & Fortis Academy

Request for Confidential Information

Student Name:_____ DOB:_____

Address:_____ Telephone:_____

City, State, Zip Code:

I hereby authorize Harris County Department of Education, Highpoint School, and Fortis Academy to request from the named agency (individual) psychological, medical, educational, legal, family, and/or social information concerning my child. This information will be used in educational planning for my child.

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date:

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

To:

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Please send/fax the requested information as soon as possible to:

Highpoint School East
8003 E. Sam Houston, Pkwy N.
Houston, Texas 77049
Telephone: (713) 696-2160
Fax: (713) 696-1861
Attention: School Counselor

Fortis Academy
11902 Spears Road
Houston, TX 77067
Telephone: (713) 696-2195
Fax: (713) 696-2196
Attention: School Counselor

Request for Food Allergy/Anaphylactic Information

This form allows you to disclose whether your child has a severe food allergy that could result in a dangerous or anaphylactic reaction to the campus principal to enable the campus to take necessary precautions for your child's safety. This information will be included in the development of the required Individualized Health Care Plan.

"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.

Please list any foods to which your child is allergic or severely allergic, as well as the nature of your child's allergic reaction to the food.

Food	Nature of allergic reaction to the food

The Division will maintain the confidentiality of the information provided above and may disclose the information to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only within the limitations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Department policy.

Student Name:_____ DOB _____

School:_____ Grade _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____

Work Phone:_____ Home Phone:_____

Date:_____Date form was received by the school:_____

TEXAS ASSESSMENT

2026–2027 STUDENT ASSESSMENT TESTING CALENDAR

2026 Assessments

Testing Window	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®)		Reporting Time Frames*
Nov 30–Dec 11	**Algebra I** **English I** **English II** **Biology** **U.S. History**	Friday, Dec 11, 2026, is the last day to complete make-up tests.	Assessment Results: 4 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 5–6 weeks Final Reports for Accountability: 15 weeks

2027 Assessments

Testing Window	National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
Late Jan–Early Mar	To be determined

Testing Window	Student Success Tool (SST) Stand-Alone Field Test
Feb 1–5	**Grades 3–8 Mathematics** **Grades 3–8 Reading Language Arts** **Elementary and Middle School Science** **Grade 8 Social Studies** **Algebra I, English I, Biology, U.S. History**

NOTE: Actual selection of subjects for field testing will depend on availability of items in the SST item banks and will be announced in August 2026.

Testing Window	Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)	Reporting Time Frames*
Feb 15–Mar 26	**Grades K–1 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing** **Grades 2–12 Listening and Speaking** **Grades 2–12 Reading and Writing**	Assessment Results: 8 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 10–11 weeks Final Reports for Accountability: 17–18 weeks

Testing Window	TELPAS Alternate	Reporting Time Frames*
Feb 15–Mar 26	**Grades 2–12 Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing**	Assessment Results: 2 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 4–5 weeks Final Reports for Accountability: 7–8 weeks

Testing Window	STAAR Alternate 2	Reporting Time Frames*
Mar 15–Apr 16	**Grades 3–8 and EOC Assessments**	Assessment Results: 8 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 9–10 weeks Final Reports for Accountability: 13–14 weeks

NOTE: Test administrators may **preview (not administer)** STAAR Alternate 2 assessments during the two weeks before the assessment window opens, from Mar 1–15. Assessments may also be previewed anytime during the assessment window.

Testing Window	STAAR		Reporting Time Frames*
Apr 5–Apr 16	**Grades 3–8 Reading Language Arts** **English I** **English II**	Friday, Apr 16, 2027, is the last day to complete make-up tests.	**Grades 3–8 Assessments:** Assessment Results: 4–5 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 6–7 weeks Final Reports for Accountability:12 weeks **EOC Assessments:** Assessment Results: 2–3 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 4–5 weeks Final Reports for Accountability: 9–10 weeks
Apr 12–Apr 23	**Grade 5 Science** **Grade 8 Science** **Grade 8 Social Studies** **Biology** **U.S. History**	Friday, Apr 23, 2027, is the last day to complete make-up tests.	
Apr 19–Apr 30	**Grades 3–8 Mathematics** **Algebra I**	Friday, Apr 30, 2027, is the last day to complete make-up tests.	

Testing Window	STAAR		Reporting Time Frames*
Jun 14–Jun 25	**Algebra I** **English I** **English II** **Biology** **U.S. History**	Friday, Jun 25, 2027, is the last day to complete make-up tests.	Assessment Results: 4 weeks Reports for Data Verification: 5 weeks Final Reports for Accountability: 9–10 weeks

*Time frames are after testing window closes. Assessment results are for student-level decisions; data verification and final reports are for accountability.

Texas Education Agency
Student Assessment Division
March 2026

Technology Acceptable Use Agreement

I agree to the following:

HCDE technology, hardware, and software may only be used for legitimate education purposes. Under no circumstances may HCDE technology be used for any of the following, or similar activities:

- Any illegal activity:
- Harassment and/or threats:
- Obscene materials:
- Commercial activities; and/or
- Copying, altering and/or destroying:
  - Data:
  - Software; and/or
  - Equipment.

Violations of HCDE Acceptable Use guidelines may include, but are not limited to:

- Revocation of access to technology resources:
- Disciplinary action:
- Expulsion; or
- Legal action.

HCDE reserves the right to monitor and/or censor any and all technology activity.

_____
Student Signature Date _____

_____
Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

_____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date _____

_____
Campus Representative Signature Date _____

USE OF STUDENT PROJECTS/PHOTOS/VIDEO IN DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESS RELEASES TO MEDIA

Occasionally, Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) wishes to display or publish student artwork or special projects on the department's website and in department publications.

In addition, HCDE may send photos/videos/information to media about student accomplishments. It is my understanding that this photograph/video or portions thereof may be used for public view.

My agreement for the use of my child's projects, photos, video is given without financial remuneration, and I understand that this releases the photographer/videographer/interviewer from any future claims, as well as from any liability arising from the use of said photo/video/interview.

- Release to Media _____Yes _____No
- Use of Video _____Yes _____No
- Publish Special Project _____Yes _____No

Child's Name: _____

Parent Printed Name: _____

Parent's Signature:_____Date: _____

Campus/Center:_____

This page is intentionally left blank.

Student Code of Conduct

Schools Division

2026-2027

Acknowledgment of Receipt of the Student Code of Conduct

Dear Student and Parent:

As required by state law, the board of trustees has officially adopted the Student Code of Conduct to promote a safe and orderly learning environment for every student.

We urge you to read this publication thoroughly and to discuss it with your family. If you have any questions about the required conduct and consequences for misconduct, we encourage you to ask for an explanation from the student's teacher or appropriate campus administrator.

The student and parent should each sign this page in the space provided below and then return the page to the student's school.

Thank you.
James Colbert, Jr.
HCDE County School Superintendent

My child and I have reviewed a copy of the HCDE Student Code of Conduct for the **2026-2027** school year. I understand that the Code of Conduct contains information that my child and I may need during the school year. I also understand that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this Code of Conduct, I will direct those questions to the principal.

Student Name (Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Student Code of Conduct

Accessibility

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact Dr. Margaret Patton, Director of Curriculum and Special Services, at 713-696-8218.

Purpose

The Student Code of Conduct ("Code"), as required by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, provides methods and options for managing student behavior, preventing, and intervening in student discipline problems, and imposing discipline.

The law requires the department to define misconduct that may—or must—result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences, including removal from a regular classroom or campus, out-of-school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), placement in a juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP), or expulsion from school.

This Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Harris County Department of Education board of trustees and developed with the advice of the district-level planning and decision-making committee. It provides information to parents and students regarding standards of conduct, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline. This Code remains in effect during summer school and at all school-related events and activities outside the school year until the board adopts an updated version for the next school year.

In accordance with state law, the Code shall be posted at each school campus or shall be available for review at the campus principal's office. Additionally, the Code shall be available at the campus behavior coordinator's office and posted on the department's website. Parents shall be notified of any conduct violation that may result in a student being suspended, placed in a DAEP or JJAEP, expelled, or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under Chapter 37 of the Education Code.

Because the Student Code of Conduct is adopted by the department's board of trustees, it has the force of policy. In the event of a conflict between the Code and the Student Handbook, the Code shall prevail.

Please note: The discipline of students with disabilities who are eligible for services under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) is subject to the provisions of those laws.

School District Authority and Jurisdiction

School rules and the department's authority to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the department is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

The department has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day;
2. While the student is traveling on district/department transportation.
3. During lunch periods in which a student is allowed to leave campus;
4. At any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
5. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
6. When retaliation against a school employee, board member, or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
7. When a student engages in cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832;
8. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
9. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line;
10. For certain offenses committed while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
11. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
12. When the student is required to register as a sex offender.

Campus Behavior Coordinator

As required by law, a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The designated person may be the principal, or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline. The department shall post on its website and in the Student Handbook, for each campus, the email address and telephone number of the person serving as campus behavior coordinator. Contact information may be found at https://hcde-texas.org/and at https://hcde-texas.org/schools.

Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team

The campus behavior coordinator or other appropriate administrator will work closely with the campus threat assessment safe and supportive school team to implement the department's threat assessment policy and procedures, as required by law, and shall take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code.

Searches

Department officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with state and federal law and department policy. Searches of students shall be

conducted in a reasonable and nondiscriminatory manner. Refer to the department's policies at FNF(LEGAL) and FNF(LOCAL) for more information regarding investigations and searches.

School District Authority and Jurisdiction

The department has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable suspicion to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the department.

Desks, lockers, department-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the department and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. Department property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice.

Reporting Crimes

The principal and other school administrators as appropriate shall report crimes as required by law and shall call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

School Resource Officer (SRO) Duties

The SRO's primary responsibility is to enforce the law. This may include responding to calls for assistance, preventative patrol, making arrests, and conducting follow-up investigations on campus. The SROs should be contacted for all on-campus responses; however, in the event of an emergency that requires additional officers, or in the absence of the SRO, the 9-1-1 reporting system should be utilized. SROs should maintain close liaison with campus personnel and be familiar with potential problems. SROs have the discretion afforded them under the Department Rules and Procedures as to what enforcement action is taken when a law is violated. SROs have the final decision. SROs may be contacted by HCDE to deal with law enforcement situations that exceed HCDE's ability to handle administrative and/or emergency situations that require rapid police response and the special knowledge or expertise an SRO can offer. SROs will take 25 permissible enforcement actions when necessary. SROs will not enforce HCDE regulations or rules to include classroom discipline or administrative tasks unless the violation of such rule or regulation constitutes a violation of a state law or city ordinance. SROs shall be responsible for handling minor, non-priority incidents typically handled by district officers. These incidents include, but are not limited to, collisions, burglary/theft reports from personnel or students, parking lot details, traffic, or fire lane violations, etc. The ultimate goal of the SRO is to maintain a peaceful environment that allows the learning process to continue uninterrupted.

Security Personnel

The board utilizes school resource officers (SROs) to ensure the security and protection of students, staff, and property. In accordance with law, the board has coordinated with the campus behavior coordinator (CBC) and other district employees to ensure appropriate law enforcement duties are assigned to these persons. Provisions addressing the various types of security personnel can be found in the CKE policy series.

1. *Provide law enforcement and police services to the school, school grounds and areas adjacent to the school. Investigate allegations of criminal incidents per police School District Authority and Jurisdiction department policies and procedures. Enforce state and local laws and ordinances. Make appropriate referrals to juvenile authorities or other governmental agencies.*

2. *Work to prevent juvenile delinquency through close contact and positive relationships with students. In addition, the SRO shall develop crime prevention programs and conduct security inspections to deter criminal or delinquent activities. The SRO should monitor crime statistics and work with local patrol officers and students together designing crime prevention strategies*

3. *Establish and maintain a close partnership with school administrators in order to provide for a safe school environment. Assist school officials with their efforts to enforce Board of Education policies and procedures. Ensure school administrator safety by being present during school searches, which may involve weapons, controlled dangerous substances or in such cases, the student's emotional state may present a risk to the administrator. Assist school administrators in emergency crisis planning and building security matters. Provide a course of training for school personnel in handling crisis situations, which may arise at the school.*
4. *Be visible within the school community. Attend and participate in school functions. Build working relationships with the school's staff as well as with student and parent groups.*
5. *Develop and implement classes in law related education to support the educational efforts of the faculty. Work closely with teachers in designing and presenting law- related topics and the role of police in our society. Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses*
6. *Work with guidance counselors and other student support staff to assist students and to provide services to students involved in situations where referrals to service agencies are necessary. Assist in conflict resolution efforts.*
7. *Initiate interaction with students in the classroom and general areas of the school building. Promote the profession of police officer and be a positive role model. Increase the visibility and accessibility of police to the school community.*

"Parent" Defined

Throughout the Code of Conduct and related discipline policies, the term "parent" includes a parent, legal guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child.

Participating in Graduation Activities

The department has the right to limit a student's participation in graduation activities for violating the department's Code.

Participation might include a speaking role, as established by department policy and procedures.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks at graduation shall be notified by the campus principal. Notwithstanding any other eligibility requirements, in order to be considered eligible, a student shall not have engaged in any misconduct that resulted in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

School District Authority and Jurisdiction

Unauthorized Persons

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator**, school resource officer** (SRO), or department police officer shall have the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from department property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

School District Authority and Jurisdiction

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

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from department property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL), as appropriate. However, the timelines for the department's grievance procedures shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the person to address the board in person within 90 calendar days, unless the complaint is resolved before a board hearing.

See **DAEP—Restrictions During Placement** on page 29 for information regarding a student assigned to DAEP at the time of graduation.

Standards for Student Conduct

Each student is expected to:

- Demonstrate courtesy, even when others do not.
- Behave in a responsible manner.
- Exercise self-discipline.
- Attend all classes regularly and on time.
- Bring appropriate materials and assignments to class.
- Meet department and campus standards of grooming and dress.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Respect the rights and privileges of students, teachers, and other department staff and volunteers.
- Respect the property of others, including department 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.

General Conduct Violations

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school, in vehicles owned or operated by the department, or home district and at all school-related activities, but the list does not include the most severe offenses. In the subsequent sections on **Out-of-School Suspension** on page 23, **DAEP Placement** on page 25, **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 32, and Expulsion on page 35, those offenses that require or permit specific consequences are listed. Any offense, however, may be severe enough to result in **Removal from the Regular Educational Setting** as detailed on page 21.

Disregard for Authority

Students shall not:

- Fail to comply with directives given by school personnel.
- Leave school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
- Disobey rules for conduct in department vehicles.
- Refuse to accept discipline or consequences assigned by a teacher or principal.

Mistreatment of Others

Students shall not:

- Use profanity or vulgar language or make obscene gestures.
- Fight or scuffle. (For assault, see DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses on page 32.)
- Threaten a department student, employee, or volunteer, including off-school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists. (See glossary for all four terms.)
- Release or threaten to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Engage in sexual or gender-based harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct directed toward another person, including a department student, employee, board member, or volunteer.
- Engage in conduct that constitutes dating violence. (See glossary.)
- Engage in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
- Participate in hazing. (See glossary.)
- Coerce an individual to act through the use or threat of force.
- Commit extortion or blackmail.
- Engage in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including a department student, employee, or volunteer.
- Record the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individual being recorded or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.

Property Offenses

Students shall not:

- Damage or vandalize property owned by others. (For felony criminal mischief, see DAEP— **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 32.)
- Deface or damage school property, including textbooks, technology and electronic resources, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means.
- Steal from students, staff, or the school.
- Commit or assist in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Penal Code. (For felony robbery, aggravated robbery, and theft, see **DAEP— Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 32.)
- Enter, without authorization, department facilities that are not open for operations.

Possession of Prohibited Items

Students shall not possess or use:

- Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
- A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.
- A “look-alike” weapon that is intended to be used as a weapon or could reasonably be perceived as a weapon;
- An air gun or BB gun;
- Ammunition;
- A hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown;
- A firearm silencer or suppressor.
- *A location-restricted knife;
- A club;
- A firearm;
- A short barrel firearm;
- A stun gun;
- Knuckles;
- A pocketknife or any other small knife;
- Mace or pepper spray;
- Pornographic material;
- Tobacco products **(including nicotine pouches),** cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e- cigarette device;
- Matches or a lighter;
- A laser pointer, unless it is for an approved use; or
- Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists.

General Conduct Violations

*For weapons and firearms, see DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses on page 32. In many circumstances, possession of these items is punishable by mandatory expulsion under federal or state law.

Possession of Personal Communication Devices

Students shall not:

- *Bring or use a personal communication device, including a cell phone, or other electronic device on school property during the school day. (see Glossary)*
- *The district may authorize the use of a personal communication device for the following reasons:*
- *To implement an individualized education program (IEP) or for a plan created under Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C Section 794) or a similar program or plan;*
- *With documented need based on a directive from a qualified physician; or*
- *To comply with a health or safety requirement imposed by law or as part of the district's safety protocols.*

Inappropriate use of a personal communication device during the school day will result in disciplinary action in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

Illegal, Prescription, and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Students shall not:

- Possess, use, give, or sell alcohol or an illegal drug. (Also see **DAEP Placement** on page 25 and **Expulsion** on page 35 for mandatory and permissive consequences under state law.)
- Possess or sell seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
- Possess, use, give, or sell paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance. (See **glossary** for "paraphernalia.")
- Possess, use, abuse, or sell look-alike drugs or attempt to pass items off as drugs or contraband.
- Abuse the student's own prescription drug, give a prescription drug to another student, or possess or be under the influence of another person's prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event. (See **glossary** for "abuse.")
- Abuse over-the-counter drugs. (See **glossary** for "abuse.")
- Be under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that cause impairment to body or mind. (See glossary for "under the influence.")
- Have or take prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs at school other than as provided by department policy.

Misuse of Technology Resources and the Internet

Students shall not:

- Violate policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student's parent regarding the use of technology resources.
- Attempt to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the department, students, or employees or upload or create computer viruses, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Attempt to alter, destroy, or disable department technology resources including, but not limited to, computers and related equipment, department data, the data of others, or

other networks connected to the department's system, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

General Conduct Violations

- Use the internet or other electronic communications to threaten or harass district students, employees, board members, or volunteers, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Send, post, deliver, or possess electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including cyberbullying and "sexting," either on or off school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Use the internet or other electronic communication to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- *Utilize artificial intelligence in a way that would constitute academic dishonesty or as a means of engaging in any other prohibited conduct.*

Safety Transgressions

Students shall not:

- Possess published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
- Engage in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
- Make false accusations or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety.
- Engage in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
- Throw objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause.

Miscellaneous Offenses

Students shall not:

- Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Student Handbook.
- *Engage in academic dishonesty, which includes cheating or copying the work of another student, unauthorized use of artificial intelligence, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination.*
- Gamble.
- Falsify records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Repeatedly violate other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.

The department 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.

Discipline Management Techniques

Discipline shall be designed to improve conduct and encourage students to be responsible members of the school community. Disciplinary action shall draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques, including restorative practices. Discipline shall be based on 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.

First-Time Offense of Possession or Use of Nicotine Delivery Product or E-Cigarette

An appropriate administrator may place a student in a disciplinary alternative education program for the first-time offense of possession or use of a nicotine delivery product or e-cigarette, as defined by

Section 161.081, Health and Safety Code.

If a student who possesses or uses an e-cigarette is not placed in a disciplinary alternative education program for the first-time offense under Education Code 37.008, the student shall be placed in in-school suspension for a period of at least 10 school days.

Students with Disabilities

The discipline of students with disabilities is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct. In the event of any conflict, the department shall comply with federal law. For more information regarding the discipline of students with disabilities, see policy FOF(LEGAL).

In accordance with the Education Code, a student who receives special education services may not be *disciplined in a manner that results in a change to the student's educational placement for* conduct meeting the definition of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists (see glossary) until an ARD committee meeting has been held to review the conduct.

In deciding whether to order suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the department shall take into consideration a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct.

Techniques

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

- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Cooling-off time or a brief "time-out" period, in accordance with law.
- Seating changes within the classroom or vehicles owned or operated by the department.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Rewards or demerits.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Counseling by teachers, school counselors, or administrative personnel.

- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Behavior coaching.
- Anger management classes.
- Mediation(victim-offender).
- Classroom circles.
- Family group conferencing.
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- Detention, including outside regular school hours.
- Sending the student to the office, another assigned area, or to in-school suspension.
- Assignment of school duties, such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Penalties identified in student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Restriction or revocation of district transportation privileges.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation.
- *In-school suspension, as specified in In-School Suspension.*
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in Out-of-School Suspension on page 23.
- Placement in a DAEP, as specified in DAEP on page 25.
- Expulsion and/or placement in an alternative educational setting, as specified in Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses on page 32.
- Expulsion, as specified in Expulsion on page 35.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the department.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

Prohibited Aversive Techniques

Aversive techniques are prohibited for use with students and are defined as techniques or interventions intended to reduce the reoccurrence of a behavior by intentionally inflicting significant physical or emotional discomfort or pain. Aversive techniques include:

- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain, other than corporal punishment as permitted by department policy. [See policy FO(LOCAL).]
- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain by electric shock or any procedure involving pressure points or joint locks.
- Directed release of noxious, toxic, or unpleasant spray, mist, or substance near a student's face.
- Denying adequate sleep, air, food, water, shelter, bedding, physical comfort, supervision, or access to a restroom facility.
- Ridiculing or demeaning a student in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning or mental health of the student or constitutes verbal abuse.
- Employing a device, material, or object that immobilizes all four of a student's extremities, including prone or supine floor restraint.
- Impairing the student's breathing, including applying pressure to the student's torso or neck or placing something in, on, or over the student's mouth or nose or covering the student's face.
- Restricting the student's circulation.
- Securing the student to a stationary object while the student is standing or sitting.

Discipline Management Techniques

- Inhibiting, reducing, or hindering the student's ability to communicate.
- Using chemical restraints.
- Using time-out in a manner that prevents the student from being able to be involved in and progress appropriately in the required curriculum or any applicable individualized education program (IEP) goals, including isolating the student using physical barriers.
- Depriving the student of one or more of the student's senses, unless the technique does not cause the student discomfort or complies with the student's IEP or behavior intervention plan (BIP).

Notification

The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent by phone or in person of any violation that may result in in-school or out-of-school suspension, placement in a DAEP, placement in a JJAEP, or expulsion. The campus behavior coordinator shall also notify a student's parent if the student is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under the disciplinary provisions of the Education Code.

A good-faith effort shall be made to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action was taken, for delivery to the student's parent. If the parent has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5:00 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action was taken, the campus behavior coordinator shall send written notification by U.S. Mail. If the campus behavior coordinator is not able to provide notice to the parent, the principal or designee shall provide the notice.

Before the principal or appropriate administrator assigns a student under age 18 to detention outside regular school hours, notice shall be given to the student's parent to inform him or her of the reason for the detention and permit arrangements for necessary transportation.

Parental Involvement

HCDE has not adopted a policy for parental involvement in school disciplinary placements under Education Code 37.0014.

All placement decisions will be conducted by the home district.

Appeals

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the teacher, campus administration, or campus behavior coordinator, as appropriate. Appeals or complaints regarding the use of specific discipline management techniques should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of the policy may be obtained from the principal's office, or through Policy On Line at the following address: http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/578

The home district shall not delay a disciplinary consequence while a student or parent pursues a grievance. In the instance of a student who is accused of conduct that meets the definition of sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, the home district will comply with applicable federal law, including the Title IX formal complaint process. See policies FFH(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).

Removal from the School Bus

A bus driver may refer a student to the principal's office or the campus behavior coordinator's office to maintain effective discipline on the bus. The principal or campus behavior coordinator must employ additional discipline management techniques, as appropriate, which can include restricting or revoking a student's bus riding privileges.

To transport students safely, the vehicle operator must focus on driving and not be distracted by student misbehavior. Therefore, when appropriate disciplinary management techniques fail to improve student behavior or when specific misconduct warrants immediate removal, the district may restrict or revoke a student's transportation privileges, in accordance with law.

Removal from the Regular Educational Setting

In addition to other discipline management techniques, misconduct may result in removal from the regular educational setting in the form of a routine referral or a formal removal.

Routine Referral

A routine referral occurs when a teacher sends a student to the campus behavior coordinator's office as a discipline management technique. The campus behavior coordinator shall employ alternative discipline management techniques, including progressive interventions. A teacher or administrator may remove a student from class for behavior that violates this Code to maintain effective discipline in the classroom.

Formal Teacher Removal

A teacher may initiate a formal removal from class if:

1. *A student's behavior repeatedly interferes with the teacher's ability to teach the class or with other students' ability to learn.*
2. *A student demonstrates behavior that is unruly, disruptive, or abusive toward the teacher, another adult, or another student in the classroom.*
3. *A student engages in conduct that constitutes bullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832.*

Within three school days of the formal removal, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference with the student's parent, the student, the teacher who removed the student from class, and any other appropriate administrator.

At the conference, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and the proposed consequences. The student shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

When a student is removed from the regular classroom by a teacher and a conference is pending, the campus behavior coordinator or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

A teacher or administrator must remove a student from class if the student engages in behavior that under the Education Code requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP or expelled. When removing for those reasons, the procedures in the subsequent sections on DAEP or expulsion shall be followed.

Returning a Student to the Classroom

A student who has been formally removed from class by a teacher for conduct against the teacher containing the elements of assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's *written* consent.

A student who has been formally removed by a teacher for any other conduct may *not* be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's *written* consent if the placement review committee determines that the teacher's class is the best or only alternative available.

In-School Suspension

An in-school suspension is not subject to any time limit.

A school's principal or other appropriate administrator shall review the in-school suspension of a student at least once every 10 school days after the date of the suspension begins to evaluate the educational progress of the student and to determine if continued in-school suspension is appropriate.

During in-school suspension, a student shall receive appropriate behavioral support services and comparable educational services as the student would receive in the classroom. If the student receives special education services, the student must continue to receive special education and related services specified in the student's individualized education program (IEP) and continue to have an opportunity to progress in the general curriculum.

[See First-Time Offense of Possession or Use of Nicotine Delivery Product or E-Cigarette for limitations to the general rule.]

Process

Before being suspended, a student shall have an informal conference with the CBC or appropriate administrator, who shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegation before the administrator makes a decision.

The CBC shall determine the number of days of a student's suspension.

In deciding whether to order in-school suspension, the CBC shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense [see Glossary];

2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct;

3. The student's disciplinary history;

4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct;

5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care); or

6. A student's status as homeless.

The appropriate administrator shall determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

Out-of-School Suspension

Misconduct

Students may be suspended for behavior listed in the Code as a general conduct violation, DAEP offense, or expellable offense.

The department shall not use out-of-school suspension for students below grade 3 unless the conduct meets the requirements established in law.

A student below grade 3 or a student who is homeless shall not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless, while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, the student engages in:

- Conduct that contains the elements of a weapons offense, as provided in Penal Code sections 46.02 or 46.05;
- *Conduct that threatens the immediate health and safety of other students in the classroom;*
- *Documented conduct that results in repeated or significant disruption to the classroom; or*
- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of marijuana, an alcoholic beverage, or a controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by federal or state law.

The department shall use a positive behavior program as a disciplinary alternative for students below grade 3 who commit general conduct violations instead of suspension or placement in a DAEP. The program shall meet the requirements of law.

Process

State law allows a student *to be assigned to out-of-school suspension* for no more than three school days per behavior violation, with no limit on the number of times a student may be suspended in a semester or school year.

Before being suspended a student shall have an informal conference with the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator, who shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegation before the administrator makes a decision.

The campus behavior coordinator shall determine the number of days of a student's suspension, not to exceed three school days.

In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or

6. A student's status as homeless.

The appropriate administrator shall determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

Coursework During Suspension

The department shall ensure a student receives access to coursework for foundation curriculum courses while the student is placed in in-school or out-of-school suspension, including at least one method of receiving this coursework that doesn't require the use of the internet.

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity before the beginning of the next school year to complete each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal. The department may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The department will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the department.

Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Placement

The DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom. An elementary school student may not be placed in a DAEP with a student who is not an elementary school student.

For purposes of DAEP, elementary classification shall be kindergarten–grade 5 and secondary classification shall be grades 6–12.

A student who is expelled for an offense that otherwise would have resulted in a DAEP placement does not have to be placed in a DAEP in addition to the expulsion.

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

Discretionary Placement: Misconduct That May Result in DAEP Placement

A student may be placed in a DAEP for behaviors prohibited in the General Conduct Violations section of this Code.

Misconduct Identified in State Law

In accordance with state law, a student may be placed in a DAEP for any of the following offenses:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student *to die by* suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Involvement in a public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society, or gang including participating as a member or pledge, or soliciting another person to become a pledge or member of a public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang. (See glossary.)
- Involvement in criminal street gang activity. (See glossary.)
- Criminal mischief, not punishable as a felony.

In accordance with state law, a student may be placed in a DAEP if the superintendent or the superintendent's designee has reasonable belief (see glossary) that the student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony, other than aggravated robbery or those listed as offenses in Title 5 (see glossary) of the Penal Code, that occurs off school property and not at a school-

sponsored or school-related event, if the student's presence in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process.

The campus behavior coordinator may place a student in a DAEP for off-campus conduct for which DAEP placement is required by state law if the administrator does not have knowledge of the conduct before the first anniversary of the date the conduct occurred.

Mandatory Placement: Misconduct That Requires DAEP Placement

A student must be placed in a DAEP if the student:

- Engages in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school. (See glossary.)
- Commits the following offenses on school property, within 300 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:
- Engages in conduct punishable as a felony.
- Commits an assault (see glossary) under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1).
- Sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug, *unless the conduct is punishable as a felony.* A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (School- related felony drug offenses are addressed in Expulsion on page 35.) (See glossary for "under the influence" "controlled substance," and "dangerous drug.")
- Sells, gives, or delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage; commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony offense. (School-related felony alcohol offenses are addressed in Expulsion on page 35.)
- Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
- Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure. (See glossary.)
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of an offense of harassment against an employee under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1), (2), (3), or (7).
- Engages in expellable conduct and is between six and nine years of age.
- Commits a federal firearms violation and is younger than six years of age.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of retaliation against any school employee or volunteer on or off school property. (Committing retaliation in combination with another expellable offense is addressed in Expulsion on page 35.)
- Engages in conduct punishable as aggravated robbery or a felony listed under Title 5(see glossary) of the Penal Code when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and:
    1. The student receives deferred prosecution (see glossary),
    2. A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct (see glossary), or
    3. The superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief (see glossary) that the student engaged in the conduct.

Sexual Assault and Campus Assignments

A student shall be transferred to another campus if:

- The student has been convicted of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual or convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student on the same campus; and
- The victim's parent or another person with the authority to act on behalf of the victim requests that the board transfer the offending student to another campus.

If there is no other campus in the home district serving the grade level of the offending student, the offending student shall be transferred to a DAEP.

Process

Removals to a DAEP shall be made by the campus behavior coordinator.

Conference

When a student is removed from class for a DAEP offense, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference within three school days with the student's parent, the student, and, in the case of a teacher removal, the teacher.

At the conference, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall provide the student:

- Information, orally or in writing, of the reasons for the removal;
- An explanation of the basis for the removal; and
- An opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal.

Following valid attempts to require attendance, the department may hold the conference and make a placement decision regardless of whether the student or the student's parents attend the conference.

Consideration of Mitigating Factors

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

Placement Order

After the conference, if the student is placed in a DAEP, the campus behavior coordinator shall write a placement order. A copy of the DAEP placement order shall be sent to the student and the student's parent.

Not later than the second business day after the conference, the board's designee shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the placement order and all information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the student is placed in a DAEP and the length of placement is inconsistent with the guidelines included in this Code, the placement order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

Coursework Notice

The parent or guardian of a student placed in DAEP shall be given written notice of the student's opportunity to complete, at no cost to the student, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal and which is required for graduation. The notice shall include information regarding all methods available for completing the coursework.

Length of Placement

The campus behavior coordinator shall determine the duration of a student's placement in a DAEP.

The duration of a student's placement shall be determined case by case based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misconduct, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The maximum period of DAEP placement shall be one calendar year, except as provided below.

Unless otherwise specified in the placement order, days absent from a DAEP shall not count toward fulfilling the total number of days required in a student's DAEP placement order.

The home district shall administer the required pre- and post-assessments for students assigned to DAEP for a period of 90 days or longer in accordance with established department administrative procedures for administering other diagnostic or benchmark assessments.

Exceeds One Year

Placement in a DAEP may exceed one year when a review by the department determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or to department employees.

The statutory limitations on the length of a DAEP placement do not apply to a placement resulting from the board's decision to place a student who engaged in the sexual assault of another student so that the students are not assigned to the same campus.

Exceeds School Year

Students who are in a DAEP placement at the end of one school year may be required to continue that placement at the start of the next school year to complete the assigned term of placement.

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond the end of the school year, the campus behavior coordinator or the board's designee must determine that:

1. The student's presence in the regular classroom or campus presents a danger of physical harm to the student or others, or
2. The student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior (see glossary) that violates the department's Code.

Exceeds 60 Days

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond 60 days or the end of the next grading period, whichever is sooner, a student's parent shall be given notice and the opportunity to participate in a proceeding before the board or the board's designee.

Appeals

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the campus administration.

Student or parent appeals regarding a student's placement in a DAEP should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of this policy may be obtained from the sending district.

Appeals shall begin at Level I with the campus principal.

The home district shall not delay disciplinary consequences pending the outcome of an appeal. The decision to place a student in a DAEP cannot be appealed beyond the board.

Restrictions During Placement

Restrictions during place are determined by the sending district. Please review your district's policy.

Placement Review

A student placed in a DAEP shall be provided a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the campus behavior coordinator or the board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus. The student may not be returned to the classroom of a teacher who removed the student without that teacher's consent.

Additional Misconduct

If during the term of placement in a DAEP the student engages in additional misconduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the campus behavior coordinator may enter an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

Notice of Criminal Proceedings

When a student is placed in a DAEP for certain offenses, the office of the prosecuting attorney shall notify the department if:

1. Prosecution of a student's case was refused for lack of prosecutorial merit or insufficient evidence, and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication (see glossary), or deferred prosecution will be initiated; or
2. The court or jury found a student not guilty or made a finding that the student did not engage in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision, and the case was dismissed with prejudice.

If a student was placed in a DAEP for such conduct, on receiving the notice from the prosecutor, the superintendent or designee shall review the student's placement and schedule a review with the student's parent not later than the third day after the superintendent or designee receives notice from the prosecutor. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the review.

After reviewing the notice and receiving information from the student's parent, the superintendent or designee may continue the student's placement if there is reason to believe that the presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers.

The student or the student's parent may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal. In the case of an appeal, the board shall, at the next scheduled meeting, review the notice from the prosecutor and receive information from the student, the student's parent, and the superintendent or designee, and confirm or reverse the decision of the superintendent or designee. The board shall make a record of the proceedings.

If the board confirms the decision of the superintendent or designee, the student and the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner of Education. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal.

Withdrawal During Process

When a student violates the department's Code in a way that requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP and the student withdraws from the home district before a placement order is completed, the campus behavior coordinator may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order. If the student then re-enrolls in the home district during the same or a

subsequent school year, the department may enforce the order at that time, less any period of the placement that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district. If the campus behavior coordinator or the board fails to issue a placement order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order.

Newly Enrolled Students

The home district shall continue the DAEP placement of a student who enrolls in the district and was assigned to a DAEP in an open-enrollment charter school or another district including a district in another state, or

The home district shall decide on a case-by-case basis whether to continue the placement of a student who enrolls in the district and was assigned to a DAEP in an open-enrollment charter school or another district including a district in another state. The district may place the student in the district's DAEP or a regular classroom setting, or

The home district shall place a student who enrolls in the district and was previously assigned to a DAEP in an open-enrollment charter school or another district including a district in another state, directly into a regular classroom setting.

When a student enrolls in the district with a DAEP placement from a district in another state, the district has the right to place the student in DAEP to the same extent as any other newly enrolled student if the behavior committed is a reason for DAEP placement in the receiving district.

State law requires the district to reduce a placement imposed by a district in another state that exceeds one year so that the total placement does not exceed one year. After a review, however, the placement may be extended beyond a year if the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or employees, or the extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

Emergency Placement Procedure

When an emergency placement is necessary because the student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with classroom or school operations, the student shall be given oral notice of the reason for the action. Not later than the tenth day after the date of the placement, the student shall be given the appropriate conference required for assignment to a DAEP.

Transition Services

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services to a student returning to the regular classroom from an alternative education program, including a DAEP. See policy FOCA(LEGAL) for more information.

Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses

This section includes two categories of offenses for which the Education Code provides unique procedures and specific consequences.

Registered Sex Offenders

Upon receiving notification in accordance with state law that a student is currently required to register as a sex offender, the district must remove the student from the regular classroom and determine appropriate placement unless the court orders JJAEP placement.

If the student is under any form of court supervision, including probation, community supervision, or parole, the student shall be placed in either DAEP or JJAEP for at least one semester.

If the student is not under any form of court supervision, the student may be placed in DAEP or JJAEP for one semester or placed in a regular classroom. The student may not be placed in the regular classroom if the board or its designee determines that the student's presence:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interests of the district's students.

Review Committee

At the end of the first semester of a student's placement in an alternative educational setting and before the beginning of each school year for which the student remains in an alternative placement, the home district shall convene a committee, in accordance with state law, to review the student's placement. The committee shall recommend whether the student should return to the regular classroom or remain in the placement. Absent a special finding, the board or its designee must follow the committee's recommendation.

The placement review of a student with a disability who receives special education services must be made by the ARD committee.

Newly Enrolled Students

If a student enrolls in the home district during a mandatory placement as a registered sex offender, the district may count any time already spent by the student in a placement or may require an additional semester in an alternative placement without conducting a review of the placement.

Appeal

A student or the student's parent may appeal the placement by requesting a conference between the board or its designee, the student, and the student's parent. The conference is limited to the factual question of whether the student is required to register as a sex offender. Any decision of the board or its designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

Certain Felonies

Regardless of whether placement or expulsion is required or permitted by one of the reasons in the DAEP Placement or Expulsion sections, in accordance with Education Code 37.0081, a student may be expelled and placed in either DAEP or JJAEP if the board or campus behavior coordinator makes certain findings and the following circumstances exist in relation to aggravated robbery or a felony offense under Title 5 (see glossary) of the Penal Code. The student must:

- Have received deferred prosecution for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been charged with engaging in conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title5 felony offense;
- Have been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense; or
- Have received probation or deferred adjudication or have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense.

The district may expel the student and order placement under these circumstances regardless of:

1. The date on which the student's conduct occurred,
2. The location at which the conduct occurred,
3. Whether the conduct occurred while the student was enrolled in the district, or
4. Whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct.

Hearing and Required Findings

The student must first have a hearing before the board or its designee, who must determine that in addition to the circumstances above that allow for the expulsion, the student's presence in the regular classroom:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interest of the district's students.

Any decision of the board or the board's designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

Length of Placement

The student is subject to the placement until:

1. The student graduates from high school,
2. The charges are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense, or

3. The student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

Placement Review
A student placed in a DAEP or JJAEP under this section is entitled to a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the campus behavior coordinator or board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall have the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus.

Newly Enrolled Students

A student who enrolls in the district before completing a placement under this section from another school district must complete the term of the placement.

Expulsion

In deciding whether to order expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

Discretionary Expulsion: Misconduct That May Result in Expulsion

Some of the following types of misconduct may result in mandatory placement in a DAEP, whether or not a student is expelled. (See DAEP Placement on page 25.)

Any Location

A student may be expelled for:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Conduct that contains the elements of assault under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer.
- Criminal mischief, if punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of one of the following offenses against another student:
- Aggravated assault.
- Sexual assault.
- Aggravated sexual assault.
- Murder.
- Capital murder.
- Criminal attempts to commit murder or capital murder.
- Aggravated robbery.
- Breach of computer security. (See glossary.)
- Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school.

At School, Within 300 Feet, or at a School Event

A student may be expelled for committing any of the following offenses on or within 300 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:

- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug, unless the conduct is punishable as a felony. A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (See glossary for "under the influence.")
- Selling, giving, or delivering another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of assault under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) against an employee or a volunteer.
- Engaging in deadly conduct. (See glossary.)

Within 300 Feet of School

A student may be expelled for possession of a firearm, as defined by federal law, while within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line.
A student may be expelled for engaging in the following conduct while within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line:

- Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
- Arson. (See glossary.)
- Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
- Indecency with a child.
- Aggravated kidnapping.
- Manslaughter.
- Criminally negligent homicide.
- Aggravated robbery.
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual.
- Felony drug- or alcohol-related offense.
- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person a handgun or a location-restricted knife, as these terms are defined by state law. (See glossary.)
- Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined by state law. (See glossary.)
- Possession of a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See glossary.)

Property of Another District

A student may be expelled for committing any offense that is a state-mandated expellable offense if the offense is committed on the property of another district in Texas or while the Expulsion student is attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of a school in another district in Texas.

While in a DAEP

A student may be expelled for engaging in documented serious misbehavior that violates the district's Code, despite documented behavioral interventions while placed in a DAEP. For purposes of discretionary expulsion from a DAEP, serious misbehavior means:

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Penal Code 1.07; or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:

a. Public lewdness under Penal Code21.07;
b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code21.08;
c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code28.03;
d. Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
e. Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

Mandatory Expulsion: Misconduct That Requires Expulsion

A student must be expelled under federal or state law for any of the following offenses that occur on or off school property.

Under Federal Law

- Bringing to school or possessing at school, including any setting that is under the district's control or supervision for the purpose of a school activity, a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See glossary.)

Note: Mandatory expulsion under the federal Gun Free Schools Act does not apply to a firearm that is lawfully stored inside a locked vehicle or to firearms used in activities approved and authorized by the district when the district has adopted appropriate safeguards to ensure student safety.

Under the Penal Code

- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person the following, in the manner prohibited by Penal Code 46.02:
  - A handgun, defined by state law as any firearm designed, made, or adapted to be used with one hand. (See glossary.) Note: A student may not be expelled solely on the basis of the student's use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm that occurs at an approved target range facility that is not located on a school campus; while participating in or preparing for a school-sponsored, shooting sports competition or a shooting sports educational activity that is sponsored or supported by the Parks and Wildlife Department; or a shooting sports sanctioning organization working with the department. [See policy FNCG(LEGAL).]
  - A location-restricted knife, as defined by state law. (See glossary.)
  - Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined in state law. (See glossary.)
  - *Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of exhibiting, using, or threatening to exhibit or use a firearm under Education Code 37.125.*
  - Behaving in a manner that contains elements of the following offenses under the Penal Code:
    - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
    - Arson. (See glossary.)
    - Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
    - Indecency with a child.

- *Kidnapping or aggravated kidnapping.*
- *Burglary, robbery or aggravated robbery.*
- Manslaughter.
- Criminally negligent homicide.
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual.
- Behavior punishable as a felony that involves selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or alcohol, or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol.
- Engaging in conduct that contains elements of assault against a school employee or volunteer.

Under Age Ten

When a student under the age of ten engages in behavior that is expellable behavior, the student shall not be expelled but shall be placed in a DAEP. A student under age six shall not be placed in a DAEP unless the student commits a federal firearm offense.

Process

If a student is believed to have committed an expellable offense, the campus behavior coordinator or other appropriate administrator shall schedule a hearing within a reasonable time. The student's parents shall be invited in writing to attend the hearing.

Until a hearing can be held, the campus behavior coordinator or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

Hearing

A student facing expulsion shall be given a hearing with appropriate due process. The student is entitled to:

1. Representation by the student's parent or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district,
2. An opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense, and;
3. An opportunity to question the witnesses called by the home district at the hearing.

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the home district may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student or the student's parent attends.

The hearing shall be conducted by the board of trustees and the decision to expel shall be made by the board or The Board of Trustees delegates to the hearing officer authority to conduct hearings and expel students.

Board Review of Expulsion

After the due process hearing, the expelled student may request that the board review the expulsion decisions. The student or parent must submit a written request to the superintendent within seven days after receipt of the written decision. The superintendent must provide the student or parent written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board will review the decision.

The board shall review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting unless the parent requests in writing that the matter be held in an open meeting. The board may also hear a statement from the student or parent and from the board's designee.

The board shall consider and base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. The board shall make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. Consequences shall not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing.

Expulsion Order

Before ordering the expulsion, the board or campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see glossary),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

If the student is expelled, the board or its designee shall deliver to the student and the student's parent a copy of the order expelling the student.

Not later than the second business day after the hearing, the home district shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the expulsion order and the information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the length of the expulsion is inconsistent with the guidelines included in the Student Code of Conduct, the expulsion order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

Length of Expulsion

The length of an expulsion shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The duration of a student's expulsion shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. The maximum period of expulsion is one calendar year, except as provided below.

An expulsion may not exceed one year unless, after review, the home district determines that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or to home district employees, or
2. Extended expulsion is in the best interest of the student.

State and federal law require a student to be expelled from the regular classroom for a period of at least one calendar year for bringing a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. However, the superintendent may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Students who commit offenses that require expulsion at the end of one school year may be expelled into the next school year to complete the term of expulsion.

Withdrawal During Process

When a student's conduct requires or permits expulsion from the home district and the student withdraws from the home district before the expulsion hearing takes place, the district may conduct the hearing after sending written notice to the parent and student.

If the student then re-enrolls in the home district during the same or subsequent school year, the district may enforce the expulsion order at that time, less any expulsion period that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district.

If the campus behavior coordinator or the board fails to issue an expulsion order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings.

Additional Misconduct

If during the expulsion, the student engages in additional conduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the campus behavior coordinator or the board may issue an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

Restrictions During Expulsion

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.

No district academic credit shall be earned for work missed during the period of expulsion unless the student is enrolled in a JJAEP or another district-approved program.

Newly Enrolled Students

The district shall decide on a case-by-case basis the placement of a student who is subject to an expulsion order from another district or an open-enrollment charter school upon enrollment in the district.

Please review your home district's policy.

If a student expelled in another state enrolls in the home district, the district may continue the expulsion under the terms of the expulsion order, may place the student in a DAEP for the period specified in the order, or may allow the student to attend regular classes if:

1. The out-of-state district provides the home district with a copy of the expulsion order, and

2. The offense resulting in the expulsion is also an expellable offense in the district in which the student is enrolling.

If a student is expelled by a district in another state for a period that exceeds one year and the district continues the expulsion or places the student in a DAEP, the home district shall reduce the period of the expulsion or DAEP placement so that the entire period does not exceed one year, unless after a review it is determined that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees, or
2. Extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

Emergency Expulsion Procedures

When an emergency expulsion is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm, the student shall be given verbal notice of the reason for the action. *Emergency expulsion may be ordered based on a single incident of behavior by the student.* Within ten days after the date of the emergency expulsion, the student shall be given appropriate due process required for a student facing expulsion.

DAEP Placement of Expelled Students

The district may provide educational services to any expelled student in a DAEP; however, educational services in the DAEP must be provided if the student is less than ten years of age.

Certain Felonies

Regardless of whether DAEP placement or expulsion is required or permitted by one of the reasons in the DAEP Placement or Expulsion sections, in accordance with Education Code 37.0081, a student may be expelled and placed in either DAEP or JJAEP if the board or CBC makes certain findings and the following circumstances exist in relation to aggravated robbery or a felony offense under Title 5 [see Glossary] of the Penal Code. The student must have:

• Received deferred prosecution for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;

• Been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;

• Been charged with engaging in conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;

• Been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense; or

• Received probation or deferred adjudication or have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense.

The district may expel the student and order placement under these circumstances regardless of:

1. The date on which the student's conduct occurred;

2. The location at which the conduct occurred;

3. Whether the conduct occurred while the student was enrolled in the district; or

4. Whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct.

Hearing and Required Findings

The student must first have a hearing before the board or its designee, who must determine that in addition to the circumstances above that allow for the expulsion, the student's presence in the regular classroom:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers;

2. Will be detrimental to the educational process; or

3. Is not in the best interest of the district's students.

Any decision of the board or the board's designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

Length of Placement

The student is subject to the placement until:

1. The student graduates from high school;

2. The charges are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense; or

3. The student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

Placement Review

A student placed in a DAEP or JJAEP under this section is entitled to a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the CBC or board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall have the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus.

Newly Enrolled Students

A student who enrolls in the district before completing a placement under this section from another school district must complete the term of the placement.

Transition Services

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services for a student returning to the regular classroom from placement in an alternative education program, including a DAEP or JJAEP. See policies FOCA(LEGAL) and FODA(LEGAL) for more information.

Glossary

Abuse is improper or excessive use.

Aggravated robbery is defined in part by Penal Code 29.03(a) as when a person commits robbery and:

1. Causes serious bodily injury to another.
2. Uses or exhibits a deadly weapon; or
3. Causes bodily injury to another person or threatens or places another person in fear of imminent bodily injury or death, if the other person is:
    a. 65 years of age or older, or
    b. A disabled person.

Antisemitism *is defined by Government Code section 448.001 as a certain perception of Jews that may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. The term includes rhetorical and physical acts of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals or their property or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities. Examples of antisemitism are included with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's "Working Definition of Antisemitism" adopted on May 26, 2016.*

Armor-piercing ammunition is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as handgun ammunition used in pistols and revolvers and designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

Arson is defined in part by Penal Code 28.02 as a crime that involves:

1. Starting a fire or causing an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:
    a. Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
    b. Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
        (1) Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
        (2) Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
        (3) Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
        (4) Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
        (5) Knowing that it has located within it property belonging to another, or
        (6) 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.
2. Recklessly starting a fire or causing an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance if the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or

3. Intentionally starting a fire or causing an explosion and in so doing:

    a. Recklessly damaging or destroying a building belonging to another, or
    b. Recklessly causing another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

Assault is defined in part by Penal Code 22.01 as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another; intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury; or intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another that can reasonably be regarded as offensive or provocative.

Breach of computer security includes knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system without the effective consent of the owner as defined in Penal Code 33.02, if the conduct involves accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a school district and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes school district property or information or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system.

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

1. 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 damage to the student's property;
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
3. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
4. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. (See below.) This state law on bullying prevention applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property.
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Chemical dispensing device is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as 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. A small chemical dispenser sold commercially for personal protection is not in this category.

Club is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as an instrument, specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, and includes but is not limited to a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk

Controlled substance means a substance, including a drug, an adulterant, and a dilutant, listed in Schedules I through V or Penalty Group 1, 1-A, 1-B, 2, 2-A, 3, or 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes the aggregate weight of any mixture, solution, or other substance containing a controlled substance. The term does not include hemp, as defined by Agriculture Code 121.001, or the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in hemp.

Criminal street gang is defined by Penal Code 71.01 as 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.

Cyberbullying is defined by Education Code 37.0832 as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an internet website, or any other internet-based communication tool.

Dangerous drug is defined by Health and Safety Code 483.001 as a device or a drug that is unsafe for self-medication and that is not included in Schedules I through V or Penalty Groups 1 through 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes a device or drug that federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription or restricts to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense, as defined by Section 71.0021 of the Family Code.

Deadly conduct under Penal Code 22.05 occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, such as 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 and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

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 or a consumable liquid solution or other material aerosolized or vaporized during the use of an electronic cigarette or other device described by this provision. The term includes any device that is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description and a component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.

Explosive weapon is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine and its delivery mechanism 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.

False alarm or report under Penal Code 42.06 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:

1. Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies.
2. Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly

Firearm is defined by federal law (18 U.S.C. 921(a)) as:

1. Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive.
2. The frame or receiver of any such weapon.
3. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, defined as any device for silencing, muffling, or diminishing the report of a portable firearm; or
4. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade. Such term does not include an antique firearm.

Graffiti includes markings 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.

Handgun is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand.

Harassment includes:

1. Conduct that meets the definition established in district policies DIA(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL);
2. Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer; is sexually intimidating; 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, as defined in Education Code 37.001(b)(2); or
3. Conduct that is punishable as a crime under Penal Code 42.07, including the following types of conduct if carried out with the intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another:
    a. Initiating communication and, in the course of the communication, making a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene, as defined by law;
    b. Threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;
    c. Conveying, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury.

d. Sending repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another; and
e. Publishing on an internet website, including a social media platform, repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to cause emotional distress, abuse, or torment to another person, unless the communications are made in connection with a matter of public concern, as defined by law.

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

1. Any type of physical brutality;
2. An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
3. An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; or
4. Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated. Hit list is defined in Education Code 37.001(b)(3) as 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.

Improvised explosive device is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a completed and operational bomb designed to cause serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage that is fabricated in an improvised manner using nonmilitary components.

Indecent exposure is defined by Penal Code 21.08 as an offense that occurs when a person exposes the person's anus or any part of the person's genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person, and is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

Intimate visual material is defined by Civil Practices and Remedies Code 98B.001 and Penal Code 21.16 as visual material that depicts a person with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct. "Visual material" means any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide of any photographic reproduction or any other physical medium that allows an image to be displayed on a computer or other video screen and any image transmitted to a computer or other video screen.

Location-restricted knife is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches.

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.

Look-alike weapon means an item that resembles a weapon but is not intended to be used to cause serious bodily injury.

Machine gun as defined by Penal Code 46.01 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.

Paraphernalia are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

Personal Communication Device *means a telephone, 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.*

Possession means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including, but not limited to:

1. Clothing, purse, or backpack.
2. 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;
3. *Personal communication devices* or electronic devices; or
4. Any school property used by the student, including, but not limited to, a locker or desk.

Prohibited weapon under Penal Code 46.05(a) means:

1. The following items, unless registered with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives or otherwise not subject to that registration requirement or unless the item is classified as a curio or relic by the U.S. Department of Justice:
   a. An explosive weapon.
   b. A machine gun;

2. Armor-piercing ammunition;
3. A chemical dispensing device;
4. A zip gun;
5. A tire deflation device; or
6. An improvised explosive device.

Public Lewdness is defined by Penal Code 21.07 as an offense that occurs when a person knowingly engages in an act of sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, or sexual contact in a public place or, if not in a public place, when the person is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

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. Educational organizations listed in Education Code 37.121(d) are excepted from this definition.

Reasonable belief is that which an ordinary person of average intelligence and sound mind would believe. Chapter 37 requires certain disciplinary decisions when the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that a student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony offense. In forming such a reasonable belief, the superintendent or designee may use all available information, including the notice of a student's arrest under Code of Criminal Procedure Article 15.27.

Self-defense is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

Serious misbehavior means:

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code; or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
    a. Public lewdness under Penal Code21.07;
    b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code21.08;
    c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code28.03;
    d. Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
    e. Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

Serious or persistent misbehavior includes, but is not limited to:

- Behavior that is grounds for permissible expulsion or mandatory DAEP placement.
- Behavior identified by the district as grounds for discretionary DAEP placement.
- Actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Refusal to attempt or complete schoolwork as assigned.
- Insubordination.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Falsification of records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Refusal to accept discipline assigned by the teacher or principal.

Short-barrel firearm is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as 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.

Terroristic threat is defined by Penal Code 22.07 as a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

1. Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
3. 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 other public place;
4. Cause impairment or interruption of public communications; public transportation; public water, gas, or power supply; or other public service;
5. Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
6. Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the district).

Tire deflation device is defined in part by Penal Code 46.01 as a device, including a caltrop or spike strip, that, when driven over, impedes or stops the movement of a wheeled vehicle by puncturing one or more of the vehicle's tires.

Title 5 felonies are those crimes listed in Title 5 of the Penal Code that typically involve injury to a person and may include:

- Murder, manslaughter, or homicide under Sections19.02–.05;
- Kidnapping under Section 20.03;
- Trafficking of persons under Section20A.02;
- Smuggling or continuous smuggling of persons under Sections 20.05–.06;
- Assault under Section 22.01;
- Aggravated assault under Section22.02;
- Sexual assault under Section 22.011;
- Aggravated sexual assault under Section22.021;
- Unlawful restraint under Section20.02;
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual under Section 21.02;
- Bestiality under Section 21.09;
- Improper relationship between educator and student under Section21.12;
- Voyeurism under Section21.17;
- Indecency with a child under Section 21.11;
- Invasive visual recording under Section21.15;
- Disclosure or promotion of intimate visual material under Section21.16;
- Sexual coercion under Section 21.18;
- Injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person of any age under Section 22.04;
- Abandoning or endangering a child under Section22.041;
- Deadly conduct under Section22.05;
- Terroristic threat under Section 22.07;
- Aiding a person *to die by* suicide under Section 22.08; and
- Tampering with a consumer product under Section 22.09.

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 in-fluence" 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 defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a device or combination of devices that was not originally a firearm and is adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

Harris County Department of Education

ACADEMIC AND BEHAVIOR SCHOOLS EAST AND WEST
FORTIS ACADEMY AND HIGHPOINT EAST

Special Schools

2026-2027 Academic Calendar

August 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
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27	28	29	30			

October 2026						
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November 2026						
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29	30					

December 2026						
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27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027						
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31						

February 2027						
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28						

March 2027						
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28	29	30	31			

April 2027						
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May 2027						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027						
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28	27	29	30			

July 2027						
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

IMPORTANT DATES

Students First Day	August 24, 2026 January 5, 2027
Students Last Day / Early Dismissal	December 18, 2026 June 3, 2027

STAFF DEVELOPMENT/WORK DAY (Student Holiday)

August 7-21, 2026
November 2 & 3, 2026
January 4, 2027
February 12, 2027
June 4, 2027

*Inclement Weather Days: Please note that some HCDE schools may experience calendar adjustments due to inclement weather.

HOLIDAYS

September 7, 2026 - Labor Day
November 23-27, 2026 - Thanksgiving Break
December 21, 2026- January 4, 2027 Winter Break
January 18, 2027 - Martin Luther King Day
February 15, 2027 - President's Day
March 8-12, 2027 Spring Break
March 26, 2027 Good Friday
May 31, 2027 Memorial Day

SIX WEEK GRADING PERIOD

1st: August 24 - October 2, 2026
2nd: October 5 - November 13, 2026
3rd: November 16, 2026 - January 15, 2027
4th: January 19 - February 26, 2027
5th: March 1 - April 16, 2027
6th: April 19 - June 3, 2027

PROGRESS REPORT

September 11, 2026
October 23, 2026
December 11, 2026
February 5, 2027
March 25, 2027
May 7, 2027

REPORT CARD

October 9, 2026
November 20, 2026
January 22, 2027
March 5, 2027
April 23, 2027
June 3-4, 2027

TESTING

Fall Testing Dates: November 30, 2026-December 11, 2026
TELPAS & TELPAS Alt: February 15 - March 26, 2027
STAAR Alt: March 15 - April 16, 2027
STAAR: April 5 - 30, 2027
Summer Testing: June 14 - 25, 2027

"Providing Alternative Pathways for Student Success Ages 5-22"

LEGEND

- First/Last Day
- Staff Development Day / Student Holiday
- Early Dismissal
- Holiday
- Extended School Year Services

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR SERVICES: ABSE & ABSW

(Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm)
June 9, 2027- July 8, 2027

NOTES: 450 Minutes per Instructional Day
260 Minutes per Early Dismissal Day

Academic & Behavior School East, Academic & Behavior School West, Fortis Academy & Highpoint School East

Regular School Day Hours	7:40 AM to 3:10 PM	(450 Minutes per day)
Early Dismissal	7:40 AM to 12:00 PM	(260 Minutes per day)

HARRIS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Schools Division 6300 Irvington Blvd. | Houston, Texas 77022 | www.hcde-texas.org

LEADERSHIP

James Colbert, Jr.
Superintendent

Jonathan Parker
Assistant Superintendent
Academic Services

Charles Ned
Senior Director
Schools Division

Margaret Patton
Director Curriculum and
Special Services

Trent Manuel
Principal
Academic and Behavior
School East

Jatata Hutton
Principal
Academic and Behavior
School West

Courtney Waters
Principal
Highpoint School

Travita Godfrey
Principal
Fortis Academy