HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

2026 – 2027

STUDENT HANDBOOK













2026 – 2027

STUDENT HANDBOOK

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2026 School Board

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If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact the district at infocenter@houstonisd.org or 713-556-6005.

HISD
HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

YEARLY CALENDAR

2026-2027

JUNE • 2026
4 .....Last day for students
5.....Staff PD Day (no classes)
9.....5th Quarter Staff PD
10-30..5th Quarter
19 .....Juneteenth

JULY • 2026
1-17.....5th Quarter
2.....Recess (no classes)
3 .....Independence Day observed
20-29..School Leaders' Induction and Preparation
30-31..All Staff Induction and Preparation

AUGUST • 2026
3-7 .....All Staff Induction and Preparation
10 .....First Day for Students

SEPTEMBER • 2026
7 .....Labor Day
21.....Staff PD Day (no classes)

OCTOBER • 2026
9.....Staff PD Day (no classes)

NOVEMBER • 2026
23-27..Recess (no classes)
26 .....Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER • 2026
21-31..Recess (no classes)

JANUARY • 2027
1 .....New Year's Day
4.....Staff PD Day (no classes)
18 .....MLK Jr. Day

FEBRUARY • 2027
15.....Staff PD Day (no classes)

MARCH • 2027
8-12.....Recess (no classes)
26.....Staff PD Day (no classes)
29 .....Chavez-Huerta Day observed

APRIL • 2027
16.....Staff PD Day (no classes)

MAY • 2027
28 .....Last day for students
31 .....Memorial Day

JUNE • 2027
1.....Staff PD Day (no classes)
7.....5th Quarter Staff PD Day
8-30.....5th Quarter
18 .....Juneteenth

JULY • 2027
1-15.....5th Quarter
2.....Recess (no classes)
5 .....Independence Day observed
16.....5th Quarter Staff PD Day

JUNE 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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28	29	30				

JULY 2026

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AUGUST 2026

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SEPTEMBER 2026

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OCTOBER 2026

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NOVEMBER 2026

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DECEMBER 2026

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JANUARY 2027

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FEBRUARY 2027

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MARCH 2027

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APRIL 2027

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MAY 2027

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30	31					

JUNE 2027

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JULY 2027

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

★ **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL** AUGUST 10, 2026
★ **LAST DAY FOR STUDENTS** MAY 28, 2027
LAST DAY FOR TEACHERS JUNE 1, 2027

- Holiday (no classes)
- Recess (no classes)
- Staff PD (no classes)
- 5th Quarter
- 5th Quarter Staff PD Day (no classes)
- School Leaders' Induction and Preparation
- All Staff Induction and Preparation

GRADING CYCLES	REPORT CARD
Aug. 10 - Sep. 18	Sep. 25 (Friday)
Sep. 22 - Oct. 30	Nov. 6 (Friday)
Nov. 2 - Dec.18	Jan. 8 (Friday)
Jan. 5 - Feb. 19	Feb 26 (Friday)
Feb. 22 - Apr. 15	Apr. 23 (Friday)
Apr. 19 - May 28	Jun. 2 (Wednesday)

Updated 1/29/2026

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OVERVIEW

HISD Commitments

Parental engagement is critical to creating a collaborative community which supports and advocates an equitable learning environment. The Parent/Student Handbook is key to building positive and effective relationships between students, parents, and the district by clearly stating the expectations, guidelines, and procedures for Houston ISD.

We request all students and parents to become familiar with this handbook and use it as a general reference guide for information and guidance during this school year. Please read the handbook thoroughly. If you have questions, contact your campus principal.

Of note, the Student Code of Conduct (SCC) is a separate resource and can be obtained either on the district website or at your campus. The SCC provides comprehensive information regarding the following:

- HISD behavior management expectations
- Description of prohibited conduct
- Disciplinary options, methods, and consequences for preventing and addressing student misconduct
- Behavior framework
- The district process for administering disciplinary consequences

This handbook remains in effect during summer school and at all school-related events and activities outside the school year until an updated version becomes effective for the next school year. If there is a conflict between the SCC and the Parent/Student Handbook, the terms of the SCC will govern.

Please note, this handbook is updated each school year, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that impact information for the Handbook will be communicated to students and parents. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the handbook at any time whenever it deems necessary. Notice of any revisions or modification will be given as reasonably practicable.

Additionally, students may be subject to campus, classroom, transportation, extracurricular, and/or organization rules in addition to those found in the Parent/Student Handbook. Students may face consequences under these additional rules as well as possible disciplinary action under the SCC. Further, to the extent a student engages in conduct that is not specifically addressed in the SCC, the student may still be disciplined if the conduct disrupts or interferes with the educational process, learning environment, and/or school safety.

The Parent/Student Handbook is posted on the district's website and is available at the main office at each HISD school campus. Additionally, in accordance with the state law, the SCC is available for review at the office of each campus principal.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

HISD values parents as partners in preparing our students to succeed in college, career, and beyond. The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) department is dedicated to building intentional partnerships to advance student achievement by promoting a welcoming environment, honoring families, and linking activities to learning. Our core beliefs are as follows:

- All families have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
- All families have the capacity to support their children's learning.
- Families and school/program staff should be equal partners.
- The responsibility for building and sustaining partnerships between school, home, and community rests primarily with school staff, specifically school leaders.

We bring these beliefs to life through key initiatives and programs, including:

Family Friendly Schools

The Family Friendly Schools program is centered around assisting campuses in implementing activities that improve school-family partnerships. The goal of the program is to ensure that families feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class by building capacity on campuses to help:

- Build positive relationships
- Create a welcoming school culture
- Incorporate family engagement as an essential instructional strategy
- Strengthen family capacity to support learning at home
- Assess the quality impact of home school partnership practices

School Choice and Enrollment

Houston ISD is proud to be an open-enrollment district of choice, giving every family the opportunity to find the school that best fits their child's needs. Through the School Choice process, families can explore hundreds of neighborhood and specialty campuses and apply to them all with a single, streamlined application.

The School Choice process allows families to apply to any school within the district, subject to eligibility requirements and available space. For more information on School Choice, please visit https://schoolchoice.houstonisd.org/

Parent Organization Formation and Support

Parent organizations are essential in helping parents and families advocate for their children. The FACE department assists parent leaders by offering training on officer roles and guidance through the legalization process of a parent organization.

Parent organizations have access to district guidelines to support effective and compliant operations, including Board Policy GE1 (REGULATION), which outlines expectations for operating a parent organization in alignment with district policies. To ensure understanding and consistency, parent organizations will have access to annual online training covering these guidelines, expectations, and best practices.

Whether you are new to a parent leadership role or an experienced leader seeking additional support, FACE is available to assist you.

To learn more or request support, families can reach out to your FACE specialist or email us at FACE@HoustonISD.org for more information.

Possip Pulse Checks

The "Possip pulse check" takes place monthly. It is a short text message or email asking about your experience with your school. If you are not receiving pulse checks and would like to opt in, contact the FACE department at FACE@HoustonISD.org.

Parent University & Parent Leaders Academy

Parent Leaders Academy is a program designed to empower parents with the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to support their child's academic success and confidently navigate the school system. Through a series of interactive sessions, families learn about district programs, student learning, and ways to partner with schools to support achievement.

The Parent Leadership Academy (PLA) builds on this foundation by empowering families to become strong advocates and leaders within their school communities. Participants engage in a six-session series focused on understanding HISD systems, strengthening advocacy skills, and elevating parent voice. Sessions are facilitated in partnership with community organizations and district staff.

To support participation, families may be provided with childcare, transportation, meals, and incentives, as available.

To learn more about Parent University and Parent Leadership Academy, families can:

- **Email: FACE@houstonisd.org**
- **Call:** 713-556-FACE (3223)
- Join FACE ParentSquare

Family Connections Center

The Family Connections Center (FCC), part of the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Department, serves as a centralized support system for families seeking assistance, guidance, or resolution to concerns related to their child's education or school experience. FCC ensures families are heard, supported, and connected to the appropriate campus or district staff to address concerns in a timely and respectful manner.

Our team is committed to fostering strong partnerships between families and schools by providing clear guidance on district policies, procedures, and available resources.

Families can share questions, concerns, or complaints through the following options:

- **Online Form:** Submit a concern
- **Phone:** Call 713-556-FACE (3223) to speak with a team member
- **Email:** Parentassistance@houstonisd.org

All submissions are reviewed and routed to the appropriate department or campus for resolution, with follow-up provided to families throughout the process.

Parent Power Sessions

FCC also offers Parent Power Sessions designed to equip families with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the school system, understand district processes, and effectively advocate for their children. Sessions include guidance on how to address concerns, understand school policies, and access available resources.

To learn more about FACE,Family Connections Center (FCC) and our programs, **join our FACE group ParentSquare**.

Working Together

Research shows that students are most successful when families and schools work together through strong communication and meaningful partnerships. Families play an important role in supporting their child's education and are encouraged to stay actively involved. Opportunities for involvement may include:

- Ensuring your child completes assignments, is prepared, and arrives at school ready to learn
- Encouraging your child to prioritize education and make the most of their learning opportunities each day
- Staying informed about your child's academic progress and school activities
- Communicating regularly with teachers and school staff, and reaching out with questions or concerns
- Attending parent-teacher conferences and requesting additional meetings as needed
- Becoming familiar with academic programs, services, and opportunities available to your child
- Reviewing graduation requirements and planning for your child's academic future
- Volunteering at your child's school, when opportunities are available
- Participating in campus parent organizations, such as Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) or Parent Teacher Associations (PTA)
- Serving on campus- or district-level planning and decision-making committees that support student achievement (see Board Policies **BQA** and **BQB or contact your campus**)
- Participating in the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to support student wellness (see Board Policies **BDF**, **EHAA**, and **FFA**)
- Supporting a safe and respectful school environment, including awareness of bullying and harassment prevention efforts
  Contacting school staff if you have concerns about your child's academic, social, emotional, or mental well-being

Families are also encouraged to stay informed about district initiatives and decisions by attending or viewing Board of Education meetings. Meeting information, agendas, and district policies are available on the HISD website. Regular board meetings are held on the second business Thursday of each month at 5 p.m. in the board auditorium at the Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center, 4400 W. 18th Street. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting on a bulletin board at the entrance of Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center and online at HISD Board Services.

-See policies BE and BED for more information-

HISD CONNECT

What is HISD Connect?

The district's Student Information System (SIS), HISD Connect by PowerSchool, includes student contact, enrollment, and demographic information, as well as grades and online resources.

- Students use their district login IDs to gain view access into their schedule and grades information.
- Parents can set up one account and link all of their students to their account. Each student is assigned a unique code or access ID, and parents can use that code to associate all those students with their profile account. Parents who haven't received their student's access ID should contact their school.
- Parents also use this portal access to complete the annual student verification forms — a practice that saves parents and campus staff a lot of time!
- Parents and students use this link to login: **HISD Connect**

HISD Connect Parent Portal: How-To Videos

· GETTING STARTED WITH HISD CONNECT PARENT PORTAL

How to create your account and associate your student's information:

· COMPLETING FORMS IN HISD CONNECT PARENT PORTAL

How to navigate to and complete forms after you are logged in to Parent Portal:

· STUDENT VERIFICATION IN HISD CONNECT PARENT PORTAL

How to complete the Student Verification steps after you are logged in to Parent Portal:

· HISD CONNECT PARENT PORTAL: A COMPLETE GUIDE

PARENT AND STUDENT 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.

Provide Mental Health Care Service

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student as part of the district's procedures except as permitted by law.

The district has established procedures for recommending a parent intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns or suicide risk. The school counselor or campus mental health liaison will notify the student's parents within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

The district has also established procedures for staff regarding a student who may need intervention. The mental health liaisons can be reached via the HISD Counseling Department.

The mental health liaison can contact the HISD crisis line at 713-923-8597 to 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.

Display of 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 certain personally identifiable student information such as first or last name but will not include number/letter grades or student ID numbers along with names. Student work includes:

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

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

Consent to Receive Parenting & Paternity Awareness Instruction

A student under age 14 must have parental permission to participate in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program. This program was developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE) to be incorporated into health education classes.

Video or Audio Recordings

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 co-curricular or extracurricular activity.
- Relates to media coverage of the school.
- 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, are prohibited from making video or audio recordings or taking photographs or other still images of students and/or student-work products without consent from campus administration (parents do not need permission to make video or audio recordings or take photographs or other still images of their student(s) only).

Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees

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

For example, a teacher may create a social networking page for his or her class to relay information regarding class work, homework, and tests. Parents should be granted permission to access such a page as well.

The district prohibits all inappropriate communications between educator/employee and individual students, including but not limited to text messages, emails, or other electronic communications, and

recommends that all electronic communication from district employees (educators/administrators/coaches/adult club and activity sponsors) takes place via group email distribution lists and/or group messaging apps (e.g., GroupMe or Remind) that includes students' parents who choose to participate in the group. However, if a district employee who has responsibility for an extracurricular activity needs to communicate with an individual student via electronic means (e.g., text or email) regarding that extracurricular activity or the student's participation in that activity, any text messages or emails sent to the individual student must include the parent of that student as a recipient.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee (educator/coach/club or activity sponsor) should state their objection in writing to the campus principal and the district employee who has responsibility for an extracurricular activity.

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent. "Directory information" is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy.

Examples include:

- A student's photograph (for publication in the school yearbook)
- A student's name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments)
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program)
- A student's name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and managed social media platform)
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period)

Directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. Please contact your local campus for more information. However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year.

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

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: student name, address, telephone listing, place of birth, photograph, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and the most recent previous school attended by a student. If a parent does not object to the use of his or her child's information for these school-sponsored purposes, the school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information:

- Public Officials: student name, address, telephone listing, place of birth, photograph, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of

athletic teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and the most recent previous school attended by a student.
- Alumni groups and reunion committees: student name, address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, and the most recent previous school attended by a student.

If a parent does not object to the use of the student's information for these purposes within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year, the school must release this information when requested by an outside entity
or individual.

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

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release his or her student's information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests from military recruiters or institutions of higher education for the student's name, address, and telephone listing.

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

Each student must elect to either allow or disallow the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to share their data with higher education institutions for participation in the Direct Admissions program. This form will be provided by the campus College Access Coordinator, high school Counselor, or CCMR Advising Specialist.

Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey

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

In accordance with PPRA, a district must obtain **prior written parental consent** before a student participates in any survey funded by the U.S. Department of Education that includes one or more 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, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, and ministers
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility for a program

Parents have the right to:

- Inspect the survey or other instrument prior to administration
- Review any instructional materials used in connection with the survey
- Receive reasonable notice of the survey and its purpose

These rights are provided in accordance with PPRA and applicable district procedures.

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

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) provides parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt their child out of participation in the following activities:

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

Exceptions are hearing, vision, spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. Parents have the right to inspect, upon request:

- Surveys that include protected information, including those developed by third parties
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
- Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum

The Department of Education provides extensive information about the **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment**, including a **PPRA Complaint Form**.

Human Growth and Development Instruction Annual Notification

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human growth and development. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for curriculum materials, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction. Before a student receives human growth and development instruction, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction. Houston ISD will provide growth and development instruction to district students in grades 4-12.

Health for High School Credit: all students enrolled in health classes will receive instruction about preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases using an abstinence-plus approach. The Houston ISD curriculum follows the state standard of teaching abstinence as the only 100% effective method of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and will also include abstinence-plus instruction.

- Abstinence Plus Education – Goodheart Wilcox – Texas Health Skills for High School
- P.A.P.A. Curriculum

Middle School: all students will receive instruction about the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease using abstinence-plus approach. The Houston ISD curriculum follows the state standard of teaching abstinence as the only 100% effective method of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and will also include abstinence-plus instruction.

- Abstinence Plus Education – Goodheart Wilcox – Texas Health Skills for Middle School

Elementary School: 4th and 5th grade students will receive instruction about puberty, body systems, and the reproductive system.

- QuaverHealth
- PE-Always Changing and Growing Up

By state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human growth and development instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings (See the campus principal for details.)
- Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint (FNG Local)

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

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice about all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age
- Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior
- Emphasize that abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity
- Direct adolescents to abstain from sexual activity before marriage as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases
- If included in the content of the curriculum, teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates

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

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

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

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

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

See policy EHBK (LEGAL) for more information.

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

While Texas law states that school districts shall require students, once during each school day, to recite the pledges of allegiance to the United States and Texas flags, federal law establishes that it is unconstitutional for school **districts to require** that students salute the United States flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. As a result, public school districts shall not compel students to participate in patriotic observances, which include standing, saluting, and reciting the pledge of allegiance (please see *HISD Board Policy ENA (LEGAL) · Student Rights And Responsibilities Student Expression*).

Therefore, as a matter of applicable laws and HISD Board policy, administrators, teachers, and other employees of HISD shall not compel or force students to participate in patriotic observances, including but

not limited to reciting pledges of allegiance, standing, and/or putting their hands over their hearts during the pledge, although the district will encourage student participation in patriotic observances. However, HISD will request that all students be respectful during the period in which the pledges are recited and not disrupt others who choose to participate in patriotic observances.

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

See policy EC(LEGAL), ENA(LEGAL), EHBK(LEGAL) for more information.

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

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
- Results from diagnostic assessments

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

In accordance with state law and policy EC, districts must obtain parental permission before removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than 10% 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 district offers these services. *See policies EC and EHBC for more information.*

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 the 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

In accordance with and under a valid court order (signed by a judge), 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 the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to his or her child's participation in required assessments.

Accessing Student Records

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

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

Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records

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

For the purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is anyone age 18 or older, emancipated under state law, or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and 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 confidential information from the student's records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent
- 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 studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint.

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

Before disclosing personally identifiable confidential information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student requesting the information. Virtually all information about student performance—including grades, test results, and disciplinary records—is considered confidential educational records.

Inspection and release of student records are restricted to an eligible student or a student's parent unless the school receives a copy of a valid subpoena or valid court order (signed by a judge) terminating parental rights, specifically the right to access 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 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 the written consent of the parent or eligible student to school officials within a school and/or school district, including teachers, under circumstances wherein the school officials have a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. A school official generally has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record to fulfill his or her professional duties and/or responsibilities.

Legitimate educational interests may include:

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

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff)
- A contractor, consultant, volunteer, or another party to whom a district has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a school official under this paragraph provided that the outside party:

  1. Performs an institutional service or function for which the district would otherwise use employees
  2. Is under the direct control of the district concerning the use and maintenance of education records
  3. Is subject to the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 99.33 (a) governing the use and redisclosure of personally identifiable information from education records

A district must use reasonable methods to ensure that school officials obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests.

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

- To authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Attorney General of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and State and local educational authorities for audit or evaluation of Federal or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs
- To individuals or entities, including law enforcement and other state and federal agencies, granted access in response to a valid 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, including but not limited to law enforcement agencies and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services/Child Protective Services, in connection with a health or safety emergency after consultation and approval from HISD Legal Services
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details

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

The campus principal and registrar/SIRS clerk are the custodians of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The manager of HISD's Student Records is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

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

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

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

You may contact the custodian of records for currently enrolled students at the school they are enrolled in. You may contact the custodian of records for students who have withdrawn or graduated at:

Houston Independent School District
ATTN: Student Records
4400 W. 18th St, Houston, Texas 77092
studentrecords@Houstonisd.org
713-556-6744

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 the grade is determined to bearbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with district grading policy.

See policy FNG (LEGAL) for more information.

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available at the principal's or superintendent's office, or on the district's website at HoustonISD.org.

Note: The parent's or eligible student's right of access to 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 outside of a Texas Public Information Act (TPIA) request through HISD's Public Information Office.

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
- 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.

COMMUNICATIONS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Parent Contact Information

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

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

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

A parent may update contact information by contacting the school registrar or filling out an online change of information form on Parent Connect.

The district will rely on contact information on file to communicate with parents in an emergency, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency 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.

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

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply. If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's principal.

Annual Student Update

All returning students must complete the Annual Student Update each year to stay enrolled. This update helps the school make sure we have the correct contact information, emergency contacts, and important student details. Families will receive instructions on how to complete the update online, and it should be submitted by the deadline shared by the school. Students who do not complete the Annual Student Update on time may have delays with their schedule, class placement, or start of school. If you need help, please contact your school for support.

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 HISD Policy. The complaint forms can be accessed online at or at the principal's or superintendent's office.

To file a formal complaint, a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form. In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in accordance with the timelines set forth in HISD Board policy FNG (LOCAL).

District Communication Platforms: ParentSquare and StudentSquare

ParentSquare and StudentSquare are the district's official communication platforms used to share information between the district, campuses, families, and, where applicable, students. These tools are used to deliver announcements, reminders, updates, and other important school-related communications.

Contact information for these platforms is managed through the district's student information system, PowerSchool. Parents and guardians should contact their campus to update any contact information to ensure accurate and timely communication.

ParentSquare

Overview and Purpose

ParentSquare is the district's primary communication platform for parents and guardians. It is used by the district, campuses, and teachers to share important information, including announcements, reminders, alerts, and campus updates. Parents can also use ParentSquare to direct message their child's teachers or administrators.

Access to ParentSquare is available to custodial parents and guardians based on contact information recorded in PowerSchool.

Expectations for Use

Parents and guardians are expected to review ParentSquare messages regularly to stay informed about district and campus communications. Notifications may be delivered through the mobile app, email, or text message, depending on user preferences and contact information in PowerSchool. Parents do not have to register for ParentSquare to receive messages or posts, though registration is highly encouraged.

Guidelines for Appropriate Use

ParentSquare is intended to support communication between families and the district. All communication should be appropriate, respectful, and suitable for a school and district audience.

Parents and guardians should use the platform as intended, respond to messages when a reply is requested, and follow campus and district expectations for communication. For assistance with access or contact information updates, families should contact their campus.

StudentSquare

Overview and Purpose

StudentSquare is a communication platform used by the district, as well as campus administrators and staff, to share information with students. It is used to deliver announcements, reminders, updates, and other school-related communications.

Not all campuses use StudentSquare. Participation is determined at the campus level, and access and features may vary. Students should check with their campus to confirm availability and usage expectations.

Expectations for Use

Where StudentSquare is available, students are expected to review messages regularly to stay informed about campus communications. Students should check messages at appropriate times as allowed by their campus. Accessing StudentSquare should follow campus and district guidelines for device use.

Guidelines for Appropriate Use

StudentSquare is intended to support communication between students and their campus staff. All communication should be appropriate, respectful, and suitable for a school and district audience.

Students should use the platform as intended, respond to messages when a reply is requested, and follow campus and district expectations for communication. Students are not able to direct message other students using the StudentSquare application. Students are expected to follow all district policies regarding the responsible use of technology.

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)
- Graduation requirements

The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is called to active duty, on leave, or returning from a deployment of at least four months.

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

Additional information may be found at Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency.

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.

See policy FDB LEGAL for more information.

Safety Transfers/Assignments

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

Campus administration, temporarily during the pendency of a bullying investigation or permanently after the completion of a thorough bullying investigation substantiates allegations of bullying, may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom. Campus administration will notify and consult with the parent of a child who has engaged in bullying before deciding to transfer the child to another campus.

The availability of district transportation to transfer to another campus under the afore-mentioned circumstances will be in accordance with relevant law and/or relevant HISD board policies and practices regarding student transportation.

See policies FDB and FFI for more information.

The district will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

See policy FDE for more information.

The board or its designee will honor a parent's request for the transfer of his or her child to another campus within HISD if the child has been the victim of sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed

on deferred adjudication for the assault. In accordance with policy FDE, if the victim does not wish to transfer, the board will transfer the assailant.

Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal

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

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

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

Under federal and state law, students in foster care are entitled to immediate enrollment when transferring to a new school or district — regardless of whether they have the necessary documentation and paperwork. Texas law requires DFPS to enroll a student in foster care in school within three (3) school days of the student either: a) being placed in DFPS conservatorship (state custody), or b) moving to a new school or foster care placement. DFPS then has up to 30 days to ensure the necessary enrollment paperwork is provided to the new school. ESSA requires the receiving district to immediately contact the sending district when a student in foster care enrolls in a new school. The district will assess the student's available records to determine the transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district. The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one-half of a two-half course.

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries—or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries—is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending before the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school. If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.
For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

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

A Student Who Is Homeless

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

- Proof of residency requirements
- Immunization requirements
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness)

- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules
- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one-half of a two-half course
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities
- Graduation requirements

Federal law (McKinney-Vento Act) allows a student classified as "homeless" under the act 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 McKinney-Vento eligible student continues to live in an area served by HISD, the student's transportation to and from the school of origin must be provided or arranged** by the district. If the student is attending an HISD campus but living outside of HISD boundaries, HISD and the neighboring district must share the cost of transportation. f 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 with the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG (LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution.

HOMELESS LIAISON

1417 Houston Ave.
Houston, Texas 77007
homelesseducation@HoustonISD.org
713-556-7237

FOSTER CARE LIAISON

1417 Houston Ave,
Houston, Texas 77007
Homelesseducation@houstonisd.org
713-556-7237

Students with Unique Learning Needs

For students experiencing difficulty in the general education classroom, school districts must consider a range of supports, including tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavioral interventions. These will be provided through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework and the school's intervention process to effectively address the needs of struggling learners.

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, parents may contact their child's home campus to learn more about the school's general education referral or screening system and the MTSS process. This system connects students to a variety of support options, including MTSS interventions, as well as referrals for special education or Section 504 evaluations. Parents may request an evaluation at any time.

Special Education Referrals

If a parent submits a written request for an initial special education evaluation to the director of special education services or any district administrative employee, the district must respond within 15 school days of receiving the request. At that time, the district must provide the parent with prior written notice stating whether it agrees to conduct the evaluation or refuses to do so, along with a copy of the Notice of

Procedural Safeguards. If the district agrees to move forward, it must also give the parent the opportunity to provide written consent for the evaluation.

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

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

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

Upon completing the evaluation, the district must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost. Additional information regarding special education is available from the school district in a companion document titled Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process. The designated contact person regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is:

SPECIAL EDUCATION
4400 W. 18th St.
Houston, TX 77092
713-556-7025

Transition Services

Students with disabilities transition throughout their school careers—from grade to grade, from early childhood programs to elementary school, elementary to middle school, middle to high school, or high school to college and employment. Transition is a coordinated set of activities that includes instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment, and other post-school adult-living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

HISD has several 18+ transition programs to help young adults with significant disabilities transition successfully from high school to productive adult life. HISD currently has four community-based and five campus-based programs. The community-based programs are:HISD/HEART at the Food Bank, HISD/HCC Transition, HISD/Project Search at Dow Chemical, and HISD/Project Search at Houston Dow Chemical.

The campus-based programs are: Sharpstown International High School, Barbara Jordan Career Center, Jones Futures Academy, Phyllis Wheatley High School, and Michael E. DeBakey High School. Please note that there is a referral/ application process for these programs.

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

TRANSITION SERVICES
4400 W. 18th St.
Houston, TX 77092

713-556-7025

Section 504 Referrals

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

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

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

504/ADA
4400 W. 18th St.
Houston, TX 77092
504concerns@HoustonISD.org
713-556-7055

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 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.
-See policy EB for more information-

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 the student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus—if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus.

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

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs before the student requests a transfer for other children in the home.

-See policy EDB (LOCAL) for more information-

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

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

A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English

A student who is an Emergent Bilingual will receive specialized services from the district. A Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC), consisting of both district personnel and at least one parent representative, will determine whether the student qualifies for services. The student's parent/guardian 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 student must be at least 3 years of age and will be assessed using the state required initial identification assessment; PreLAS or LAS Links . The LPAC will use the results of this assessment to determine if the student qualifies for services.
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 qualifies for 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 may be administered to an Emergent Bilingual student up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, the 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 annually to Emergent Bilingual students who qualify for services until they reclassify as English Proficient.
If a student is considered an Emergent Bilingual 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.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

Students enrolled in prekindergarten and kindergarten programs 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.

Age 19 and Older

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

Compulsory Attendance—Exemptions

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

- Religious holy days
- Required court appearances
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. 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 health care 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 of the state, any activity required under a court-ordered service plan or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours
- For children of military families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit a parent, step-parent, or legal guardian going to, on leave from, or returning from certain deployments.

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

The district will allow junior and senior students to be absent to visit a college, university, military, or trade school. Visits resulting in more than two absences in an academic year must be approved by the campus principal. 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 one of the following:

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

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

Compulsory Attendance—Failure to Comply

School employees must investigate and report violations of the compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school, any class, any required special program, or any required tutorial will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and may result in the implementation of truancy prevention measures and, when appropriate, disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

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.

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
- 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

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent who fails to require a school-aged student to attend school as required by law.. The district may file a complaint against the parent if a student under the age of 12 years old incurs 10 or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year. If a student age 12–18 incurs 10 or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

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

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

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels): 90% Rule

In order to receive credit or a final grade for a class, a student is required to attend class 90 percent of the days class is offered.

When a K-12 student's attendance drops below 90% but remains at least 75% of the days the class is offered, the student may earn credit for the class or a final grade by completing a plan approved by the principal.

If the student fails to successfully complete the plan, or when a student's attendance drops below the standards outlined above, the student, parent, or representative may request award of credit or a final grade by submitting a written petition to the appropriate attendance committee. *See policy FEC for more information.*

When a student earns a passing grade (70 or above) but does not meet the 90% attendance requirement, the student is issued the No Grade (NG*) designation on the semester report card. The Attendance Intervention and Appeal Process provides students the opportunity to restore the final grade or credit through successful completion of an approved Principal's Plan for attendance between 75-89% or through a formal Attendance Appeals Committee Review for students with attendance below 75%. All excused and unexcused absences may be held against a student's attendance requirement with the exception of serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment.

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels)

The district will take official attendance every day during the second instructional hour of the day. A student absent for any portion of the day should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

Documentation After an Absence (All Grade Levels)

A parent must explain any absence upon the student's arrival or return to school. The student must submit a note signed by the parent; an email from the parent is acceptable.

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. Acceptable reasons for excused absences include: personal illness, illness or death in the family, quarantine, weather or road conditions making travel dangerous, participation in school activities with permission of the principal, emergencies or any unusual circumstances recognized by the principal or person designated, any cause acceptable to the principal or superintendent of the school in which the person is enrolled.

A student who is absent for more than five consecutive days due to personal illness must provide a statement from a doctor or health clinic within three days of returning to school verifying the illness or condition. Failure to do so may result in the absence being marked unexcused and could constitute a violation of compulsory attendance laws.

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

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's 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.

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

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. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office.

A student who is 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 with at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

BULLYING (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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

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

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

- 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

These provisions apply to:

- 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;
- 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
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying: a) interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or b)

substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

If a student believes they have experienced bullying or witnessed the bullying of another student, they should notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible. Procedures for reporting allegations of bullying may be found on the district's website.

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by calling the Sandy Hook Promise See Something Say Something hotline at 1-844-5-SAYNOW or through the website SandyHookPromise.

The administration will thoroughly investigate any allegations of bullying and related misconduct in accordance with relevant district and campus policies. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim on or before the third district business day after the incident is reported and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.

If an investigation determines that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with guidelines set forth in the current version of HISD's Student Code of Conduct, 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 in accordance with relevant guidelines set forth in the current version of HISD's Student Code of Conduct. 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 administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying, as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of district policy and is prohibited.

Hazing (All Grade Levels)

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

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

The district will not tolerate hazing. Disciplinary consequences for hazing will be in accordance with HISD's 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 policies EFI and ENCC for more information.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, TRAFFICKING, AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district has established a plan for addressing allegations of child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children. 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.

Any person who suspects or has reasonable cause to believe 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 Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or law enforcement.

Any professional who suspects or has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected shall make a report as required by law. The report must be made within 48 hours after the professional first has reasonable cause to believe that the child has been or may be abused or neglected or is the victim of an offense of indecency with a child.

A professional may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report. A "professional" is a person who is licensed or certified by the state or who is an employee of a facility licensed, certified, or operated by the state and who, in the normal course of official duties or duties for which a license or certification is required, has direct contact with children. The term includes teachers, nurses, doctors, day-care employees, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

Family Code 261.101(b)

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

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

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 (e.g., manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology)
- Tattoos or branding
- Refillable gift cards
- Frequent runaway episodes
- Multiple phones or social media accounts
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone
- Unexplained injuries
- Isolation from family, friends, and community
- Older 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
- 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

District employees who suspect or have reasonable cause to believe 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) within 48 hours after the employee suspects or has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected. District employees are also required, pursuant to Title IX and relevant HISD Board policy, to report suspected sex discrimination, which includes sexual abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, sexual harassment, and stalking, to HISD's District Title IX Coordinator or the appropriate Title IX Administrator.

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 at1 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
- KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse
- Office of the Texas Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team
- Human Trafficking of School-aged Children
- Child Sexual Abuse: Resource Library from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault
- National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking
- Title IX

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, RETALIATION, AND TITLE IX (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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

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

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly address inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expression, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or at HoustonISD.org.

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

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

- Physical or sexual assaults
- Name-calling
- Put-downs
- Threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household
- Destroying property belonging to the student
- Threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship
- Threats to harm a student's past or current dating partner
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family
- Stalking
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors

A flyer 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.

Discrimination

Discrimination against a student is defined as conduct directed at a student based on race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression, or any other basis prohibited by law, that adversely affects the student.

Harassment

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

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

- Offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation
- Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors
- Physical aggression or assault
- Graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes
- Other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property

Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment Other Than Title IX

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited.

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

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature
- Sexual advances
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature
- Other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact

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

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

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

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

Retaliation

The district prohibits retaliation by a student or district employee against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report of harassment or discrimination, files a complaint of harassment or discrimination, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

The definition of prohibited retaliation under this policy also includes retaliation against a student who refuses to participate in any manner in an investigation under Title IX.

Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances. A person who makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

Reporting Procedures Other than Title IX

Any student who believes they have experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parents.

-See policy FFH (LOCAL) and EXHIBIT for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report-

Any district employee who suspects or receives direct or indirect notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate district official listed in this policy and take any other steps required by relevant HISD Board policy.

District officials are the Title IX coordinator, the ADA/Section 504 coordinator, and the superintendent. Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, or dating violence, may be directed to the designated Title IX coordinator for students.

-See FFH EXHIBIT-

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the designated ADA/Section 504 coordinator for students.

-See FFH EXHIBIT-

The superintendent shall be coordinator for district compliance with all other nondiscrimination laws.

An individual shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX coordinator or ADA/Section 504 coordinator, may be directed to the superintendent.

Upon receiving a report, the district will conduct a thorough investigation to 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.

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

Investigation of Report Other than Title IX

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

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

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

During an investigation and, when appropriate, the district will take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct. If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct in accordance with HISD's Student Code of Conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

A student or parent dissatisfied with the investigation's outcome may appeal in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

Title IX Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex or gender against students and employees of HISD, including sex discrimination, sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, or discrimination based on pregnancy-related conditions, and other sexual misconduct (such as sexual assault, stalking, and dating or domestic violence) in an educational program or activity. The district shall take all allegations of Title IX violations seriously and will make every reasonable effort to handle and respond to every Title IX complaint filed by students or employees in a prompt, fair, thorough, and equitable manner.

Under Title IX, "sexual harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex or gender that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. An employee of the district conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the district on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct
2. Unwelcome conduct that is subjectively and objectively offensive as determined by a reasonable person and is so severe or pervasive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the district's education program or activity
3. "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30)

Title IX Reporting

Any person may report alleged Title IX sex-based or gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation, regardless of whether the person is the alleged victim of the conduct. The report may be verbal or written. If the person reporting the Title IX violation has cause to believe that the he or she witnessed child abuse per HISD board policy FFG, then the reporter shall notify Child Protective Services of the Department of Family and Protective Services and local law enforcement within 48 hours.

A student who has been or is being subjected to any form of Title IX discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or retaliation may bring the matter to the attention of a campus employee, including but not limited to a teacher, the campus nurse, counselor, principal or other campus administrator, district Title IX coordinator, or appropriate Title IX administrator [see HISD Title IX website or HISD board policies FB (Exhibit) or FFH (Exhibit)]. The student may report the sex discrimination verbally, in writing (including but not limited to email) and/or through the district's Title IX Incident Report Form. Campus employees shall report the allegation to the district's Title IX coordinator or appropriate Title IX administrator within 48 hours of receiving the report.

An employee who suspects or knows that a student has been subjected to Title IX discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or retaliation shall inform their campus principal or work location supervisor, the district's Title IX coordinator, or the appropriate Title IX administrator. The employee may report the sex discrimination verbally, in writing (including but not limited to email) and/or through the district's Incident Report Form.

For additional information regarding the district's response to sex discrimination/sexual harassment complaints under Title IX and Title IX Complaint Process, which includes investigations, grievance processes and procedures, as well as an informal resolution process and procedure, please refer to HISD board policy FFH (LOCAL) - STUDENT WELFARE, FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION and/or HISD's Title IX website at https://www.houstonisd.org/title-ix.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM GUIDELINES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Grading

HISD Board Policy EIA (LOCAL) provides that "the superintendent or designee shall ensure that each campus or instructional level develops guidelines for teachers to follow in determining grades for students." These guidelines shall ensure that grading reflects student achievement and that enough grades are taken to support the average grade assigned.

This policy also provides that "assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, and other instructional activities shall be designed so that the student's performance indicates the level of mastery of the designated district standards. The student's mastery level shall be a major factor in determining the grade for a subject or course".

To these ends, each teacher will be responsible for:

- Having fair, valid, and consistent grading procedures
- Ensuring that conduct grades are maintained separately from academic ones
- Using those procedures to encourage student success
- Exercising a high degree of professional judgment in evaluating student achievement
- Documenting the resulting grades in the grade book or class record book

The District Grading Policy, HISD Board Policy EIA (LOCAL), includes the following provisions:

- A classroom teacher shall be required to assign a grade that reflects the student's relative mastery of an assignment.
- A classroom teacher shall not be required to assign a minimum grade for an assignment without regard to the student's quality of work.
- A student shall be allowed a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade.

Makeup Work

MAKEUP WORK BECAUSE OF ABSENCE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

A teacher may assign makeup work to a student who misses class based on instructional objectives and the needs of the student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or meeting subject or course requirements. The student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work within the time specified by the teacher.

The student is encouraged to speak with their teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90% threshold regarding the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit or final grade."

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify their teachers ahead of time about any absences. A student will be permitted to make up tests and turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with timelines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

Alternative Means to Receive Coursework

While a student is in ISS or OSS, the district will provide the student with all course work for the student's foundation curriculum classes that the student misses as a result of the suspension.

Opportunity to Complete Courses

A student removed from the regular classroom to ISS or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district.

See policy EO (LEGAL) for more information.

DAEP MAKEUP WORK

Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels

If an elementary or middle school student is sent to DAEP, that student is not academically penalized. The DAEP provides the same curriculum of the core subjects in accordance with state and district scope and sequence requirements.

Grades 9–12

If a high school student is enrolled in a foundation curriculum course at the time of removal to a DAEP, he or she will have an opportunity to complete the course before the beginning of the next school year. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district.

See policy EOCA (LEGAL) for more information.

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 and 90% attendance requirement has been met. For a two-part (two-semester, one-credit course), the student's grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. If the student's combined average is less than 70, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

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

A student who has previously taken a course or subject but did not receive credit or a final grade for it may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's school board 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 non-accredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an examination.

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

See policy EHDB (LOCAL) for more information.

Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration (Grades K-8)— If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject

A student will be permitted to earn credit by examination for an academic course or subject area for which the student had no prior instruction for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level.

The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's school board. Testing windows for these examinations will be published in district publications and on the district's website. A student may take a specific examination only once per testing window.

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

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. If a student plans to take an examination, they must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days before the scheduled testing date.

See policy EHDC for more information.

Promotion and Retention

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

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

PREKINDERGARTEN-GRADE 8

A parent may submit a written request for a student to repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or grades 1–8. Prior to approving the request, the district may convene a retention committee to review it and will invite the parent to participate in the meeting.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE/JUNIOR HIGH GRADE LEVELS

In grades 1 & 2 promotion is based on:

- Students must pass with at least 80% mastery on the High Frequency Word Exam, recognizing and reading words that appear very often in written and spoken language.
- Students must meet state requirement of overall yearly average of 70 or above and the local requirement of an average of 70 or above in four core courses: reading, other language arts, mathematics, and science or social studies.
- Students must have sufficient attendance.

In grades 3-5 promotion is based on:

- Students must meet state requirement of overall yearly average of 70 or above and the local requirement of an average of 70 or above in four core courses: reading, other language arts, mathematics, and science or social studies.
- Students must have sufficient attendance.

In grades 6-8 promotion is based on:

- Students must meet state requirement of overall yearly average of 70 or above and the local requirement of an average of 70 or above in three of the four core courses: language arts (average of reading and English), mathematics, science, social studies.
- Students must have sufficient attendance.

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. Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments.

Credits Earned	Classification
6	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
12	Grade 11 (Junior)
18	Grade 12 (Senior)

Remote Instruction

The district may offer remote instruction in accordance with TEA guidelines.

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

Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences (All Grade Levels)

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every six weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in any course/subject area is near or below 70 or is below the expected level of performance. If a student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be asked to schedule a conference with the teacher.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy. Grading guidelines are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy.

See policy EIA (LOCAL) for more information.

Questions about grade calculation should first be discussed with the teacher. If the question is not resolved, the student or parent may request a conference with the principal in accordance with FNG (LOCAL).

The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within three days. The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature will be accepted by the district, but parents are entitled to request a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Students in grades 9–12 may earn college credit while enrolled in high school through several district-approved options, including:

- Courses offered on the high school campus, such as **Advanced Placement (AP)**, **International Baccalaureate (IB)**, **dual credit**, and **UT OnRamps**
- Courses offered through college partners, including **Houston City College**, **Texas Southern University**, and other higher education partners, which may be held on or off campus
    - These courses may be taught by an HISD teacher approved by the higher education partner, by an instructor from the higher education institution, or through an approved online instructional modality
- Courses taken directly through other approved colleges or universities

Eligibility requirements vary by course and program and may include minimum test scores (such as TSIA2, SAT, or ACT), grade point average (GPA), and course prerequisites. Academic dual credit courses typically require students to meet college readiness standards in reading, writing, and/or mathematics, though enrollment standards might vary by course.

Students may also earn college credit through certain **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** courses, depending on program partnerships and course-specific requirements.

All college credit courses must be approved by the school prior to enrollment. Students and families should consult with the school counselor before registering for any college-level course.

Earning college credit **does not guarantee** that the credit will be accepted by all colleges or universities.

- **AP and IB credit** is awarded based on qualifying exam scores and the policies of the receiving institution.
- **Dual credit and UT OnRamps** transferability varies by college or university.

Dual credit grades are generally entered on both the student's high school academic record and the college transcript and may impact the student's GPA in both institutions.

UT OnRamps students receive both a high school grade and an associated college grade; however, students may decline the college grade, in which case it will not appear on the student's college academic record or college GPA.

Students and families are encouraged to confirm how earned credits will apply to the student's intended college, university, or degree plan.

Some college credit programs may include tuition, fees, or exam costs. Financial assistance may be available for eligible students; however, availability and eligibility vary by program. Families should review potential costs, eligibility requirements, and postsecondary goals with the school counselor before enrollment.

Depending on the course, a state end-of-course (EOC) assessment may be required for graduation.

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

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

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

- Social Studies in grade 8

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

STAAR Spanish for grades 3-5 is available to students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

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 district will provide accelerated instruction for the student. A student who does not attend accelerated instruction may violate school attendance requirements.

As described in HB1416, for a student who does not perform satisfactorily on the math or reading assessment in grades 3, 5, or 8, the 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 district will document the educational plan in writing and provide a copy to the student's parent. A parent or guardian may request adjustments to these instructional requirements by submitting a written request to the campus administrator where the student is enrolled. **In addition, students who do not perform satisfactorily on the same subject assessment for two consecutive years must have an accelerated education plan to support academic performance (as outlined in HB1416).**

See policy ENG (LOCAL) for more information.

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 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 OR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

For a middle-school student who does not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated examination, a school official will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP).

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

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

See 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
- U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments is required for graduation, unless waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules.

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment. The windows occur in the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, they must retake the assessment.

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 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 PGP.

FAILURE TO PERFORM SATISFACTORILY ON AN EOC

If a student does not perform satisfactorily on an EOC, the district will provide accelerated instruction. Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

Student Acceleration

KINDERGARTEN ACCELERATION

A child who is five years old as of September 1 shall be assigned initially to grade 1 rather than kindergarten in accordance with the following:

- If the child completed one year in a preschool or kindergarten instructional program, a written recommendation from the program director;
- A joint request made by the parent, teacher, and principal, as well as the teacher's anecdotal records of the student's classroom performance, both social and academic;
- Submission by the parent to the teacher and the principal of a signed form requesting an age waiver for enrollment in grade 1; or
- Availability of space and staff.

The principal and teacher shall evaluate the student's performance at the end of the first grading period to determine whether the student should continue in grade 1. Additional criteria for acceleration may include:

- A district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated; and
- Scores on readiness tests or achievement tests that may be administered by appropriate district personnel;
- Recommendation of the kindergarten or preschool the student has attended;
- Chronological age and observed social and emotional development of the student; and
- Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal and superintendent.

ACCELERATION FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 1–5

A student in elementary school is eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if:

- The student scores at least an 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies;
- A district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated; and
- The student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

ACCELERATION FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 6–12

A student in grade 6 or above is eligible to earn course credit with:

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

A student may take an examination to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

ACCELERATED MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH

HISD automatically enrolls 6th and 7th grade students into accelerated middle school math courses. The purpose for this automatic enrollment is to expand access to Algebra 1 in eighth grade to more students. Because of HISD's commitment to expanding advanced math opportunities for students, there is no course opt-out. The 6th and 7th grade accelerated math courses are locally developed and contain all math standards from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. The concepts are bundled and scaffolded so that every learner can access the curriculum.

Academic Counseling

HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS

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

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

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. School-based counseling services are short-term in nature and will not exceed six (6) weeks.

A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should contact the school counselor or the front office. If a student requires ongoing or more intensive counseling beyond this timeframe, they will be referred to an outside provider for continued support.

As a parent, after the completion of the six (6) week sessions. You are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please contact the school counselor for a list of community resources that may be of assistance.

Families are required to provide campuses consent for their students to receive individual or group counseling.

DISTANCE LEARNING (Grades 3 - 12)

Distance learning and correspondence courses allow students to earn course credit outside of the regular classroom. These courses teach the required Texas standards and use online or other technology.

HISD offers distance learning through approved programs such as:

- Edgenuity (through campus Graduation Labs)
- Texas Tech K–12
- University of Texas High School (UT K–12)
- Houston Community College Adult Night High School
- Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN)

Approval is required before enrolling in any course. Courses taken without prior approval may not count toward graduation or course credit.

- Students must get approval from their **principal or school counselor**.
- Parent permission is also required.
- If a course is not from an HISD-approved provider, **written approval from the principal is required before enrollment**.

Programs may have different costs, schedules, and expectations.

Once school and parent approval is given and the course begins, the final grade will be added to the student's **Academic Achievement Record (AAR)**.

TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district 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, as directed by the teacher. The district may also provide electronic textbooks and technological equipment to students, depending on course objectives.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is paid for by the parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

HISD uses educational AI-powered educational tools to help students learn more effectively. These include writing assistants, research tools, and creative platforms designed specifically for educational use. These technologies are designed to encourage students to brainstorm solutions to various problems alongside teachers and faculty, fostering a spirit of innovation and teamwork.

In accordance with the Texas Education Code, §32.1021, informed parental consent is required for a student's use of certain software applications. By acknowledging the receipt of this student handbook document, parental consent according to the guidelines below has been obtained. A parent or eligible student may object to the use of these software tools. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year.

In the context of this section, consent includes:

- independent access and supervised use of software for this school year
- permission to disclose your student's name or other necessary information obtained through the student's record, to facilitate the enrollment required for use of the Software. Any information that the HISD provides is regulated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).
    - Any entity that HISD provides disclosed information about a student, whether by consent or operation of law, is informed by HISD of the following: i.) information may only be used for the purpose for which the disclosure was made, ii.) further use or disclosure to other parties is prohibited, and iii.) violation of federal law restricting disclosure may result in a fine of not more than $1,000 or imprisonment of not more than 1 year, or both.
- This consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time by informing HISD, in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year.
- My student's use of the Software is voluntary and not a required part of HISD's educational program.
- HISD will make available upon request, the terms and conditions and privacy policies of the Software offered.
- I understand that if my student fails to abide by the expectations stated in the Student Code of Conduct and HISD Acceptable Use Policies and Procedures, it may result in discipline, at the discretion of the school.
- By allowing my student to utilize the Software in an educational setting, I agree to assume any risk, hold HISD, its employees and agents, harmless, and waive any liability that may arise from student use of such Software, including but not limited to student data privacy rights found in the traditional educational setting such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

Please contact your local campus for more information. A district published AI Guidebook can be found online using the link here.

A parent or eligible student may object to the use of these software tools. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM GUIDELINES (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

Class Rank

- Students are ranked based on all courses recognized for credit by TEA or HISD. These courses have a value of 0.50 or more indicated in the HISD Master Course Catalog. Any loss of credit resulting from a student's failure to meet HISD's attendance requirement has no bearing on the individual's GPA or rank.
- Local credit courses must be included in figuring class rankings. These courses will appear in the HISD Master Course Catalog with a designation of "Local Credit."
- Grades earned in high school credit courses taken in grades 6, 7, and 8 are no longer used to determine GPA and class rank. Effective for incoming grade 9 students as of the 2017–18 school year, the GPA shall only include semester averages of courses taken and completed in grades 9–12 for credit.
- Grades earned through Correspondence Courses and Credit by Exam —and which are recorded on the Academic Achievement Record/SIS Historical File —will be included when calculating a student's GPA and class rank. Grades below 70 on CBE are not recorded on the AAR.
- All students with disabilities shall be included in the 12th grade class.
- To be eligible for school honors based on academic achievement (i.e., top 15%, School Board Award, etc.) a student must earn his or her last five credits at the school in which the awards are presented. *HISD Board Policy EIC Local:*
- Only those students who qualify for the spring commencement exercises will be eligible for the academic honors of valedictorian or salutatorian. A summer school graduate, even though ranked with the general senior class, will not be eligible for these two honor designations.

Valedictorian, Salutatorian, Top 15% Ranking and Highest Honor Certificate Eligibility for Incoming 9th and 10th Graders in 2021-22 and Beyond

- To be ranked within the top 15%, a student must be enrolled in the school from which he or she is graduating from the first day of the junior academic year, except for students classified as migrant, homeless, in foster care, or with a parent who was relocated due to military service after the first day of the junior academic year. Students who do not fall in these categories but with exceptional circumstances may appeal to the District Registrar in the Office of Counseling and Compliance for consideration no later than 10 calendar days after the rankings have been issued. The decision of the Registrar's Office is final.
- The determination of which a student is named "highest ranking graduate" at each high school is a decision which rests strictly with the district. The ranking is based on the final GPA calculated in February of the student's senior year. In the case of a tie, no high school can award more than two highest ranking graduate certificates and tuition waivers. If more than two students tie for highest-ranking graduate, the district registrar will calculate the average of all grades on the AAR earned in high school for each student in the tie. The two students with the highest grade average will be awarded the highest-ranking certificate and tuition waiver.

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

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates as valedictorian or in the top 10% 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% of a graduating class, the provisions above will also apply to a student ranked in the top 25% of his or her class.

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of automatically admitted students to 75% of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. Additional applicants will be considered by the University 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.

Final Exam Exemptions (High Schools)

Final exam exemptions are limited to **Grade 12 students during the Spring (Semester 2) only** and are intended to reinforce strong attendance, academic performance, and college, career and military readiness. To be eligible for a final exam exemption, a student must meet all of the following criteria in the specific course for which the exemption is requested:

- **Enrollment Status**: Student must be classified as a Grade 12 student
- **Semester:** Exemptions apply to Spring (Semester 2) only
- **Attendance:** No more than three (3) absences in the course during the semester
- **Academic Performance**: Minimum 85 semester average in the course
- **College Readiness:** Student must have met TSI requirements (TSIA, TSIA2, or qualifying substitute)
- **Conduct**: Maintain an "S" or better conduct rating

Students who do not meet **all criteria** are not eligible for exemption.

Associate Degree Pathway

All comprehensive high schools and Early College High Schools offer an Associate Degree Pathway. This program allows students to graduate from high school with up to 60 college credit hours and enter a Texas university as a college junior.

Students in this pathway can save up to two years of college tuition, fees, and books. Houston Community College estimates the total cost of earning an associate degree is about $40,000 when including tuition, fees, and instructional materials. These pathways are available to all HISD students who attend schools that offer the program.

What parents and students should know:

1. **Choosing the Pathway:**
   Parents who want their student to participate must complete:
   • An opt-in form
   • A Houston Community College waiver
   • An ApplyTexas application

2. **Family Commitment:** Parents and guardians are expected to support their student by helping them meet academic expectations and maintain regular attendance.

3. **Course Requirements:** Students will take required advanced courses beginning in 9th grade. If students fall behind, they may be required to attend Saturday classes or summer school.

4. **TSI Readiness:** Students enrolled in the Associate Degree Pathway must be college ready in English and Math by the end of 10th grade. This is called TSI Readiness. TSI Readiness shows that a student is prepared to take college-level classes. Students can demonstrate TSI Readiness by meeting required scores on one of the following assessments:
   - TSIA (Texas Success Initiative Assessment)
   - SAT
   - ACT

   Being TSI Ready allows students to enroll in the college courses required to earn an associate degree while in high school. Students who are not TSI Ready by the end of 10th grade may have limited access to advanced college courses. Schools will provide guidance and support to help students prepare for TSI-related assessments.

5. **Attendance Expectations:** Students must maintain at least 90% attendance in every class.

6. **Grade and GPA Expectations:** Students must earn a C or higher in all courses and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 to stay in the program.

Students who meet the requirements listed above may earn an associate degree while in high school. Students who do not meet these requirements may not earn the associate degree; however, they may still be eligible to take some college credit courses that count toward their high school diploma. This pathway is designed for motivated students who are ready for college-level work and the responsibilities that come with it.

Advanced Course Enrollment & Opt Out

HISD uses different types of student information, such as grades and test results, to decide which students are ready for advanced high school courses. These courses may allow students to earn college credit.

What parents and students should know:

1. **Automatic Enrollment:** If a student is identified as ready, they will be automatically enrolled in advanced courses.

2. **Review the Placement:** Parents are encouraged to talk with their student about the course placement and review how it supports future college or career goals.

3. **Option to Opt Out:** Parents may choose to opt their student out of advanced courses if they believe it is not the best fit.

4. **Meet with the School Counselor:** Before opting out, the parent must meet with the school counselor to discuss the student's plans after high school and the courses needed to support those plans.

5. **Annual Decision:** The opt-out process must be completed each school year.

Texas First Early High School Completion Program

The eligibility requirements for the Texas First Diploma are contained in 19 TAC §21.52. Students earning a Texas First Diploma must meet subject area mastery and minimum criteria requirements. If you have dual credit on your transcript, or are currently enrolled in dual credit, talk to your Counselor about how that dual credit academic history helps fulfill Texas First Diploma requirements.

In addition to the core subject area mastery required, minimum criteria for receiving a Texas First Diploma include:

- Earning 22.0 state credits on the high school academic achievement record (transcript)Earning a 3.0 or higher unweighted grade point average
- Earning an 80th percentile or higher score on a qualifying assessment of college readiness (i.e. ACT/SAT/PSAT/NMSQT/TSIA/TSIA2)
- Scoring at the "meets" level or higher on the Algebra I, Biology, and either English I or English II EOC assessments (or earning a qualifying substitute assessment score result)

Please note that it is the parent/guardian and student's responsibility to provide test score reports to their campus Counselor or administrator to verify related requirements.

GRADUATION (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

Requirements for a Diploma

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

- Achieve passing scores on certain 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;
- 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).

- A student must specify upon entering grade 9 which endorsement he or she wishes to pursue.
- Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on EOC assessments in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.
- A student who does not achieve a sufficient score will have opportunities to retake an assessment.
- State law allows a student to meet EOC requirements by substituting satisfactory performance on approved national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities. [See the school counselor for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.]
- If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation in the applicable content area. This may require the student's participation outside normal school operating times.
- In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on 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.

Foundation Graduation Program

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

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

Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student's transcript. A student can complete the foundation graduation program with a "distinguished level of achievement," which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

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 the distinguished level of achievement, including an endorsement, by

successfully completing courses in the core curriculum of a public Texas institution of higher education. Please see your counselor for more information.

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

Course Area	Number of Credits Foundation Graduation Program	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social Studies, including Economics	3	3
Physical Education	1	1
Language other than English	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Health	.5	.5
Electives	4.5	6.5
Total	**22**	**26**

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

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

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

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

1. 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.
2. 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.

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).

School Counselors and Central Office Advising Specialists assist seniors and their parents with the financial aid process. The district's Counseling & Advising also provides financial aid resources on its website. In addition, campuses host a financial aid nights, called "roadshows", allowing families to complete their FAFSA/ TASFSA in person with the assistance of a knowledgeable staff member. A student is not required to complete and submit a FAFSA or TASFA if:

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

Please contact the school counselor or the district's Central Office Counseling & Advising Department for more information.

The district will confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA in accordance with TEA guidance. Since the TASFA application is submitted directly to a college's financial aid office, the process for verification is for a student to bring in his/her completed TASFA to the campus college access coordinator (CAC) or the campus assigned central office college and career readiness advisor (CCRA). The CAC or CCRA will certify the TASFA has been completed and submit a signed TASFA verification form to the school's counselor as documentation.

Personal Graduation Plans

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student.

The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement 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.

A student may amend his or her personal graduation plan 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 district will update students on the courses required or offered in each curriculum area so students can enroll for the upcoming school year.

Note: The district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation. Not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at 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 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 may 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 or distinguished level of achievement. 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 or distinguished level of achievement. The ARD committee must also determine whether the student must perform satisfactorily on any end-of-course assessment to earn an endorsement or distinguished level of achievement.

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 EMH (LEGAL) for more information.

Graduation Ceremonies

See your campus for a list of graduation activities, students, and student groups who will be recognized at the graduation ceremony.

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to speak at graduation ceremonies. A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. If confirmed as a student speaker, the student must provide the remarks/speech prior to the graduation (event) to the principal or designee.

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

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.

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 Tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, technical schools, and 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.

STUDENT CONDUCT AND STUDENT LIFE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Applicability of School Rules

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

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

Each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is available on the district's website at http://www.houstonisd.org/public-postings.

Distribution of Literature, Published Materials, or Other Documents (All Grade Levels)

SCHOOL MATERIALS

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, newspapers, yearbooks, brochures, flyers, etc. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS FROM STUDENTS

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than 20 copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. Approval will be granted or denied within two school days.

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

-See policy ENAA for more information-

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

-See policy FNG (LOCAL) for student complaint procedures-

NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS FROM OTHERS

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

To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal 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 will designate the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection. Prior review will not be required for:

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

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

Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)

The district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, minimizes safety hazards, and maintains a positive learning climate.

If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time. Repeated or severe offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct.

Electronic Devices and Technology Resources (All Grade Levels)

POSSESSION AND USE OF PERSONAL DEVICES, INCLUDING CELL PHONES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In accordance with Texas law and district policy, students may not use personal communication devices during the instructional day (from arrival on campus through the final class period).

Personal communication devices include cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, and any device capable of digital communication.

All devices must be powered off and kept out of sight (e.g., in a backpack) at all times during the instructional day. Devices may not be used, visible, or audible for any purpose unless specifically authorized by school staff for instructional use.

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

If a device is seen, heard, or used during the instructional day, it will be confiscated and secured in the school office. A parent or guardian must retrieve the device and sign required documentation. Confiscated communication devices that are not retrieved by the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. *[See policy FNCE for more information.]*

School personnel may search devices when permitted by law. Violations will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

The district is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged devices.

INSTRUCTIONAL USE OF PERSONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In accordance with Texas law and district policy, students are not permitted to use personal communication or electronic devices during the instructional day.

All personal devices must remain powered off and out of sight while on school property during the instructional day. The use of personal devices for instructional purposes is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by campus administration in accordance with applicable law and district policy.

This prohibition does not apply to the use of devices that are necessary for:

1. Disability-related accommodations under federal law (e.g., IEP or Section 504 plan)
2. A documented medical need based on a directive from a qualified physician
3. Compliance with health and safety requirements imposed by law or as part of district or school safety protocols

ACCEPTABLE USE OF DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

District-owned technology resources may be issued to individual students for instructional purposes. Use of the district's network systems and equipment is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents may be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding the use of these district resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

UNACCEPTABLE AND INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether on district-owned or personally owned equipment, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

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

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

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

Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations (All Grade Levels)

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships.

Some extracurricular activities may include off-campus events. Students are required to use transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor.

Eligibility for many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL), a statewide association overseeing interdistrict competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students and parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at UIL Parent Information Manual. A hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

To report alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or curriculum@tea.texas.gov.

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. Parents are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks. However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved course that requires demonstration of the mastery of an essential knowledge and skills in public performance and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of the grading period, the student may participate in a performance so long as the general public is invited. If a student is enrolled in a state-approved music course that participates in UIL Concert and Sight reading Evaluation, and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of a grading period, the student may perform with the ensemble during the UIL evaluation performance, but is ineligible for other extracurricular activities for at least three weeks.

In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will be considered an unexcused absence.

Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by board policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

Fees (All Grade Levels)

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

- Materials for a class project that the student will keep
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities
- Security deposits
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance when uniforms are provided by the district
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student
- Parking fees and student identification cards
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books
- Fees for driver training courses
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year

In limited circumstances and as permitted by law, the district may charge:

- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within three miles of the school.
- A fee not to exceed $50 for an educational program offered outside regular school hours to restore credit or a final grade when a student fails to meet attendance requirements, only if the parent or guardian elects this option and submits a district provided request form

Some courses offered through Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) may include tuition or course-related fees, depending on the provider. **Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal.** ***See policy EP for more information.***

Fundraising (All Grade Levels)

Board Policies FJ (LEGAL), (LOCAL), and (REGULATION) address fundraising activities. All fundraising projects shall be subject to the approval of the principal, executive director/division superintendent, and superintendent.

Fundraising activities by student groups and/or for school-sponsored projects are allowed, with prior administration approval and under the supervision of the student group/project sponsor. All fundraisers require prior approval via submission of the appropriate fundraisers request form to the principal and appropriate division leadership representative. This includes fundraisers held by organizations whose 501(c)(3) nonprofit status is based on the support and benefit of the campus and students, as approved by the Internal Revenue Service. Funds raised must be receipted, deposited, and disbursed in accordance with CFD (LOCAL). No outside organizations of any sort may solicit contributions of any type from students within the schools without prior approval as noted above.

School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes. A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip. The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

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 parental consent before any student leaves campus for any part of the school day.

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

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

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

Unless the parent directs district personnel to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures listed above. If a student is permitted by his or her 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. Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the principal's permission. Students

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

Recess

Senate Bill 530 and Texas Education Code 28.02 state that a school district shall require students enrolled in kindergarten or a grade level below sixth grade to participate in moderate or vigorous daily physical activity for at least 30 minutes throughout the school year as part of the district's physical education curriculum or through structured activity during a school campus's daily recess. If a school district determines, for any grade level below sixth, that this requirement is impractical due to scheduling concerns or other factors, students in that grade level may participate in moderate- or vigorous-intensity physical activity for at least 135 minutes each school week.

Senate Bill 530 further requires the local school health advisory council (SHAC) to consider and make policy recommendations to the district concerning the importance of daily recess for elementary school students. The council must consider research on unstructured and undirected play, academic and social development, and the health benefits of daily recess when making recommendations. The council shall ensure that local community values are reflected in any policy recommendation made to the district under this subsection."

Therefore, the Houston Independent School District recess guidelines are:

- All elementary schools will provide at least 30 minutes of daily, unstructured, and undirected outdoor play in grades PK-5.
- The withholding of recess will not be used as punishment or to have students complete classwork or attend tutorials.
- Each school should determine the time of day for recess and collaborate with the Physical Education teacher to develop building-level guidelines to ensure adequate supervision and safety precautions.
- A certified educator must be responsible for monitoring students to prevent accidents.
- Recess will be held outside if the weather permits. In the case of inclement weather, each school will develop an alternative plan for recess.
- Building principals will ensure that recess will be separate from the Physical Education program.
- Recess will not replace the structured physical activity provided through physical education.
- The building principal will ensure that both recess and physical education will be part of the daily program and scheduled as separate activities. Recess will not replace the structured physical activity provided through physical education.

Definitions

- **Physical Education:** A physical fitness lesson that adheres to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives that is planned, monitored, and assessed by a certified educator.
- **Structured Physical Activity**: Supporting lessons, recess, and other fitness opportunities that adhere to the Physical Education guidelines stipulated by the state of Texas, to ensure that students receive a minimum allotment of 135 minutes of weekly exercise.
- **Structured Recess**: A physical fitness recess where students are to participate in an independent activity that is guided by a certified educator.
- **Unstructured Recess**: "Free Recess" where students are allowed the opportunity to use time for instructional reflection, peer interaction, and activity of choice that is monitored by a certified educator.

RECESS DOES NOT REPLACE PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

Parking and Parking Permits (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student must present a valid driver's license and proof of insurance to be eligible for a parking permit. Students must request a parking permit and pay the required fee to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits may be issued throughout the year. Students will not be permitted to:

- Speed
- Double-park
- Park across a white or yellow line
- Park in a fire lane
- Sit in parked cars during school hours

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these rules. The district may tow cars that are parked in violation of these rules.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Student Health Services, Consent, and Emergency Care

Each school year, parents/guardians are asked to complete the Annual Student Enrollment Update. This update includes several important health-related forms that allow the school to safely care for students during the school day.

Annual Health Forms and Consent

As part of enrollment, parents/guardians complete:

- Parent/Guardian Consent for Student Health Services
- Medical Conditions and Allergies Form

These forms provide written parental consent for:

- Routine health services provided by the campus nurse during the school day
- State-mandated screenings for students in certain grade levels, including:
    - Vision
    - Hearing
    - Acanthosis Nigricans (Type 2 diabetes risk screening)
    - Scoliosis (spinal screening)

Parents/guardians may choose to opt out of state-mandated screenings by indicating their preference on the consent form.

Parents/guardians are also provided a form to notify the school of any chronic medical conditions or allergies, including:

- Asthma
- Severe allergies (including food or medication allergies)
- Seizure disorders
- Diabetes
- Other ongoing medical conditions

Keeping this information up to date helps school staff respond appropriately to your child's health needs.

Emergency Care Without Returned Consent Forms

If a campus does not receive a completed health consent form, the school may still provide:

- Basic first aid
- Emergency medical care, when required by law or when necessary to prevent a life-threatening situation

In all emergency situations, parents/guardians are contacted as soon as possible by campus personnel if emergency care is provided to their student.

Student Illness (All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to tell us they will not attend that day. State rules require schools to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, if a child has a fever at or over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. For more information, please contact your school nurse or Health and Medical Services at 713-556-7280.

The district is required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from DSHS on these notifiable conditions. The school nurse can provide a list of conditions which require the student to be excluded from attendance and the readmission criteria.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, and the school nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent or guardian. The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether or not their child should stay home.

Immunization (All Grade Levels)

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

For immunization exemptions based on reasons of conscience or for those that are medically necessary, an official immunization exemption form issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained **online** or by sending a written request via us mail to Texas DSHS Immunization Section, Mail Code 1946, PO BOX 149347, Austin, TX 78714-9347.

Medication at School

If a parents needs for a school nurse to administer non-prescription, over the counter, medication to a student during the school day, the following conditions must be met.

- Over the counter medication must be presented to the nurse in the original manufacturer's packaging, new or unopened container and unexpired, and will only be administered in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines that are age/weight appropriate for the student.
- A written request to administer medication dated for the current school year signed by the parent/legal guardian or other person(s) having legal authority of the student or completion of the Parent Request for Administration of Over-the-Counter Medication in School form.

- Parents/Guardians of students requesting daily medication administration for more than 10 school days or requesting medication more frequently than manufacturer's guidelines will be referred to their doctor for reevaluation.
- The principal may designate a trained Houston ISD staff to administer medication(s) in absence of a campus nurse

If a parent needs a nurse to administer a prescription medication to a student during the school day the following is required:

- An active prescription for the student's medication
- A written request to administer medication dated for the current school year signed by the parent/legal guardian or other person(s) having legal authority of the student or completion of the Parent Request for Administration of Medication in School form.
- Written doctor's orders

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.

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)

In order to address mental and behavioral health, the district has implemented programs:

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

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the district has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the Counseling Department for guidance regarding the student re-entry process.

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

a disease or as a component of a medication that is intended to alter perception, emotion, mood, or behavior.

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, within the parameters of Senate Bill 12, if appropriate.

See policy FFEB for more information.

For related information, see the following sections in this handbook:

- **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation** and **Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service** for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information
- **Counseling** for the district's comprehensive school counseling program
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** for campus and community mental and physical health resources
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health

Physical Education Requirements

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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

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

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL

The district will ensure that students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters or at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters, in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

TEMPORARY RESTRICTION FROM PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will not actively participate in skill demonstrations but will remain in class to learn the concepts of the lessons.

Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3–12)

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

Physical Health Screenings/Examinations

ATHLETICS PARTICIPATION (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit certification from an authorized health care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

- A district athletics program
- District marching band
- Any district extracurricular program identified by the superintendent

This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

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

SPINAL SCREENING PROGRAM

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

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

OTHER EXAMINATIONS AND SCREENINGS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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

Special Health Concerns

BACTERIAL MENINGITIS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Please see the district's website at Bacterial Meningitis for information regarding meningitis.

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

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 EFAF (LEGAL) for more information.*

FOOD ALLERGIES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Parents should notify the school nurse and/or principal 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. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis" found on the DSHS website at Allergies and Anaphylaxis.

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, an individual care plan will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at Food Allergy Management Plan. *See policy EFAF 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.

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.

Students shall not:

1. possess or use e-cigarettes or vaping devices
2. sell, give, or deliver e-cigarettes or vaping devices to another individual

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

HEALTH RELATED RESOURCES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels)

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the campus nurse, counselor, or social worker and the community resources listed below:

- The local public health authority is Houston Health Department (HHD). For areas outside Houston's city limits, Harris County Public Health serves as the public health authority.

  Houston Health Department: 832-393-4220

  Harris County Public Health: 713-439-6000

- The local mental health authority is The Harris Center for Mental Health and Intellectual Developmental Disability (IDD).

  The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD: 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 **Board Policies**.

- Food and nutrition management: **CO**, **COA**, **COB**
- Wellness and Health Services: **FFA**
- Physical Examinations: **FFAA**
- Immunizations: **FFAB**
- Medical Treatment: **FFAC**
- Communicable Diseases: **FFAD** & **Communicable Diseases**
- School-Based Health Centers: **FFAE**
- Care Plans: **FFAF**
- Crisis Intervention: **FFB**
- Trauma-informed Care: **FFBA**
- Student Safety: **FFF**
- Child Abuse and Neglect: **FFG**
- Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation: **FFH**
- Freedom from Bullying: **FFI**

In addition, the **District Improvement Plan** details the district's strategies to improve student performance through evidence-based practices that address physical and mental health. The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels)

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 7 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's SHAC is available from the website.
Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings will be posted on **district website** at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings, meeting minutes, and a recording of each meeting will be posted on the district website at **SHAC**.

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)

To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at **FFA (LOCAL)** and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES & SCHOOL SAFETY (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 or notification if law enforcement or other lawful authorities advises against notifying the parent. In other circumstances, the principal will:

- Verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question the student at school
- Make reasonable efforts to obtain parental consent, if required in accordance with district practice, and/or notify the parents
- Be present for the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection

Searches - General (All Grade Levels)

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct lawful searches of students and/or their personal belongings, as long as they have reasonable cause, which includes individualized suspicion, to conduct the search.

District officials may search students, their personal belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and relevant district policies, including but not limited to the current Student Code of Conduct. Searches of students will be conducted in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and relevant district policies, including but not limited to the current Student Code of Conduct.

If there is reasonable cause, which includes individualized suspicion, to believe that searching a student's person, personal belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and/or the law, a school official, excluding teachers and other non-administrative faculty and staff, may conduct a reasonable search of the student's person, personal belongings, or vehicle in accordance with law and relevant district policies and regulations. School Officials are prohibited from conducting strip searches of students.

Additionally, as a matter of law, school officials may conduct lawful searches of student personal electronic devices and social media accounts when they have reasonable cause, which includes individualized suspicion, that such devices or accounts will reveal that they have been used to bully, harass, or threaten an individual or group of individuals or that may contain lewd or embarrassing photographs of a targeted individual or group of individuals in violation of the law and/or district policy. Devices may be confiscated subject to investigation.

DISTRICT PROPERTY (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice. Students have no expectation of privacy in district property.

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

METAL DETECTORS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

To maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when entering a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district.

See policy CQ for more information.

Any searches of personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

See policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.

TRAINED DOGS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district, specifically HISD Police Department Officers, may utilize trained dogs to screen for concealed, prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

VEHICLES ON CAMPUS (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the district will contact the student's parents. If the parents also refuse to permit the vehicle to be searched, the district may turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

Students Taken into Custody

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

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

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

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

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

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

See policy GRAA (LEGAL) for more information.

Safety (All Grade Levels)

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

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow all behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by district employees.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member, and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by calling the Sandy Hook Promise, See Something Say Something hotline, at 1-844-5-SAYNOW or through the website Sandy Hook Promise.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

Gun-Free Schools Act

In adherence to the Gun-Free Schools Act, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) prioritizes the safety and well-being of all students, faculty, and staff within its educational community. The following guidelines outline the district's commitment to maintaining a firearm-free environment on school grounds:

POLICY OVERVIEW

The Gun-Free Schools Act mandates the expulsion of any student found to be in possession of a firearm while on school premises. This policy applies to all firearms as defined by federal law, including but not limited to:

- Any weapon designed to expel a projectile through the action of an explosive
- Firearm mufflers or silencers
- Destructive devices, encompassing explosive, incendiary, or poison gas-based weaponry, among others

DEFINITION OF "FIREARM"

For clarification purposes, a "firearm" within the context of this policy refers to:

- Any weapon, including starter guns, capable of expelling a projectile through explosive means
- Firearm accessories such as mufflers or silencers
- Destructive devices, including but not limited to bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, mines, or any similar explosive device
- Any device designed for projectile expulsion via explosive or propellant means, with a bore diameter exceeding 1/2 inch

ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES

Upon confirmation of a student's possession of a firearm on school grounds, HISD shall recommend expulsion from the regular school program. However, the district retains the discretion to modify expulsion terms or impose comparable penalties on a case-by-case basis, ensuring compliance with legal mandates while considering individual circumstances.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

Parents and guardians play a crucial role in maintaining a safe school environment. HISD emphasizes the importance of open communication with parents regarding student conduct policies, including those related to firearm possession. Any incidents involving firearms will be promptly communicated to parents, along with relevant information and support resources.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- HISD maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards firearm possession on school premises.
- Students are encouraged to report any suspected firearm-related activities to school authorities or trusted adults.
- The district provides educational initiatives and support services aimed at promoting firearm safety and conflict resolution.

CONCLUSION

The Gun-Free Schools Act serves as a cornerstone of HISD's commitment to fostering a secure and conducive learning environment for all stakeholders. By adhering to these policies and fostering a culture of vigilance and responsibility, we strive to ensure the safety and well-being of our school community.

Additionally, safe guns storage information is provided by the district annually to all students. Visit safegunstoragetexas.com for helpful information.

There are three steps to safe gun storage:

- Safely store firearms by storing them unloaded and secured by a trigger lock, biometric lock, gun case, strongbox, gun cabinet, or gun safe.
- Safely store ammunition by locking it away safely.
- Restrict access to stored firearms at all times. This includes family, friends, children, or other visitors.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies

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

PREPAREDNESS TRAINING: CPR AND STOP THE BLEED

The district will annually offer instruction in CPR 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 district will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control techniques and materials found in each campus' bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see Stop the Bleed Texas.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION

All parents are asked each year to complete the annual student enrollment update which includes a parent/guardian consent form for students health services, which provideswritten parental consent for student health services during the school day, state-mandated vision, hearing, acanthosis, and scoliosis screenings for students in certain grade levels, and emergency treatment,

Additionally, a form is provided for parents/guardians to notify their students' campus of any chronic health conditions and allergies their students may have.

If a student requires medication administration during the school day, written consent must be provided by the parent, and the medication and instructions must be provided to the campus nurse. All prescription medications require an active prescription, parental consent, and doctor's orders to be submitted to the campus nurse if medication administration must occur during the school day.

In the case that a campus received no parent/guardian response to the student health consent forms, basic first aid and emergency medical treatment, when required by law of when deemed necessary to avoid a life-threatening situation. may be provided to any Parents/guardians are always contacted by campus personnel if emergency care must be rendered to their student.

Emergency School Closing Information

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

The district will rely on contact information on file to communicate with parents in an emergency, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes. State law requires parents to update contact information within two weeks after the date the information changes. If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways: automated calls, ParentSquare messages, the district website (HoustonISD.org), and news releases.

School Facilities

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's asbestos management plan is available in the central administrative office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact the district's designated asbestos coordinator:

Manager, Environmental Services (FMO)
250 McCarty St.
Houston, TX 77029-1138
ddavis3@HoustonISD.org
713-676-9464 (office) | **713-676-9761** (fax)

PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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

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

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the district's IPM coordinator:

Pest Control, Playgrounds, Irrigations, Bleachers
228 McCarty bldg. 22 suite 102
Houston, Texas 77029
713 556-1585 (office) **| 832 891-3836** (cell)

USE BY STUDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place. Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus. Students must leave campus immediately after dismissal of school in the afternoon, unless the student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult.

MEETINGS OF NONCURRICULUM-RELATED GROUPS (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

Student-organized, student-led non-curriculum-related groups are permitted to meet during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements of policy FNAB (LOCAL). A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

VANDALISM (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

VIDEO CAMERAS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

For safety purposes, the district uses video and audio recording equipment to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The principal will review the video and audio recordings as needed and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain self-contained special education classrooms. The district will provide notice before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which a child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, speak with the principal or Executive Director of Special Education, who the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.
See policy EHBAF (LOCAL) for more information.

Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)

GENERAL VISITORS

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools in accordance with current district and/or individual campus policies and practices. 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 comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. All visitors should be prepared to show identification. Individuals may visit classrooms or observe virtual instruction during instructional time only with approval of the principal and teacher.

Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted.

UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, school resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry to or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

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

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG (LOCAL) or GF (LOCAL).

VISITORS PARTICIPATING IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

Business, Civic, and Youth Groups

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

Career Day

On Career Day, the campus invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students.

VOLUNTEERS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact: vips@houstonisd.org, 713-556-7206 (office).

The district requires that all prospective volunteers complete volunteer training, application and a state criminal history background check. **Parents or guardians not cleared through the background check process can appeal against the decision subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures.**

See policy GKC, GKG, GKGI for more information.

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.

Buses And Other School Vehicles
Who Is Eligible for Transportation?

HISD provides school bus transportation to students who meet specific eligibility criteria. Transportation is provided at no cost to families. A student who meets one or more of the following criteria is eligible for transportation to and from school:

- Attend their zoned campus and reside 2 or more miles from campus
- Attend a school of choice on an approved transfer code (magnet, CTE) and reside 2 or more miles from campus
- Travel a pedestrian route deemed hazardous by the HISD transportation department and approved as such by the HISD school board
- Attend a school other than their zoned school due to campus over enrollment ("capping") and reside 2 or more miles from campus
- Attend a school to access a specialized program (e.g., language of instruction, unique special education program) and reside 2 or more miles from campus
- Has Transportation as a Related Service as a part of their IEP or 504 plan or is experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney Vento Act

Please note that pre-k students as well as students who attend a school of choice on a space-available or hardship transfer are not eligible for transportation.

METRO Partnership Option for High School Students

Eligible high school students may choose:

- A traditional HISD school bus, or
- A free METRO Ridefare Card funded by HISD.

This option increases mobility for after-school activities, employment, and community access.

How Families Request Transportation

Parents must complete the HISD Transportation Request Form. Requests are processed within 10 business days. Eligibility is verified before a bus assignment is made.

Route Designations

Bus routes and stops are designated annually. Any changes made during the school year will be communicated to families through ParentSquare.

Student Safety and Behavior Expectations

For the safety of all passengers, students must board and exit district vehicles only at authorized stops. For route information, contact the Transportation Department at 713-613-3049.

Students are expected to help maintain a clean and safe environment on all district vehicles. When riding in district vehicles, students must follow the behavioral expectations outlined in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Always follow the driver's directions
- Use their bus identification badge when entering and exiting the bus
- Enter and exit the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop

- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs outside the window, hold objects outside the window, or throw objects inside or outside the vehicle
- Not possess or use tobacco products or e-cigarettes
- Follow all standard classroom rules
- Remain seated while the vehicle is moving
- Fasten seat belts, if available
- Wait for the driver's signal before crossing in front of the vehicle
- Follow any additional rules established by the driver

Misconduct will be addressed in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and may result in the loss of transportation privileges.

New for the 2026–2027 School Year: SMART Tag Technology

Beginning in summer 2026, HISD Transportation will implement SMART Tag, a secure mobility and authorized ridership system designed for K–12 transportation. Each bus will be equipped with a tablet, and each student will receive an RFID card, creating a fully digital, real-time ridership system.

- **Stronger Student Safety & Accountability**
  - Ensures only authorized students board the correct bus and exit at the correct stop
  - Real-time ridership logs support quick response during incidents, emergencies, or parent inquiries
  - "No-student-left-behind" checks help prevent students from remaining on buses
  - RFID cards provide a secure and consistent method of student identification
- **Improved Operational Efficiency**
  - Live bus location and ridership data improve communication between dispatch, campuses, and drivers
  - Digital seating charts, referrals, and route information reduce paperwork and errors
  - Routing integration allows HISD to update routes in real time and push changes directly to driver tablets
- **Better Support for Drivers**
  - Drivers receive turn-by-turn directions, student lists, stop details, and safety alerts on the bus tablet
  - Substitute drivers can confidently run unfamiliar routes with all route and student information available
- **Benefits of SMART Tag for Parents**
  - Real-Time Notifications
  - Parents receive alerts when:
  - Their child boards the bus
  - Their child exits the bus
  - The bus is approaching the assigned stop
- **Live Bus Tracking**
  - Through the SMART Tag Parent App, families can:
  - View the bus location in real time
  - See if the bus is running late
  - Reduce uncertainty during weather delays, traffic, or route changes
- **Increased Safety & Peace of Mind**
  - Parents know their child is on the correct bus and at the correct stop
  - Digital records allow concerns to be resolved quickly and accurately
  - Reduces the "I don't know where my child is" panic during delays or miscommunication
- **Better Communication with HISD**
  - Parents receive consistent, automated updates rather than relying on phone calls

- The system reduces call volume to terminals and improves response times

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%, or in some cases 75%, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

CPS stands for Child Protective Services.

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

DFPS stands for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

DPS stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

DSHS stands for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

ED stands for the U.S. Department of Education.

EOC (end-of-course) assessments are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments 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, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP stands for individualized education program and is the written record prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services.

IGC is the individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, to determine a student's eligibility to graduate when the student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory performance on no more than two of the required state assessments.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the Student Code of Conduct. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

PGP stands for personal graduation plan, which is required for high school students and for any student in middle school who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

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

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

SHAC stands for School Health Advisory Council, a group of at least five members, a majority of whom must be parents, appointed by the school board to help ensure that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, as well as assist with other student and employee wellness issues.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

STAAR is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state's system of standardized academic achievement assessments.

STAAR Alternate 2 is an alternative state-mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR Spanish is an alternative state-mandated assessment administered to eligible students for whom a Spanish version of STAAR is the most appropriate measure of their academic progress.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Except under limited circumstances, students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle; sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a 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.

FREEDOM FROM BULLYING POLICY

Note: School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy,
visit FFI (LOCAL) Below is the text of Houston ISD's policy FFI (LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized
for this school year.

Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying

"Bullying":

1. Means 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 satisfies the applicability requirements below and that:
    a. 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;
    b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
    c. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom
       or school; or
    d. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school; and
2. Includes cyberbullying. "Cyberbullying" means 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.

These provisions apply 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:
    a. Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
    b. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

The board shall adopt a policy, including any necessary procedures, concerning bullying that:

1. Prohibits the bullying of a student;
2. Prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying;

3. Establishes a procedure for providing notice of an incident of bullying to:

    a. A parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
    b. A parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident;

4. Establishes the actions a student should take to obtain assistance and intervention in response to bullying;

5. Sets out the available counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying or who engages in bullying;

6. Establishes procedures for reporting an incident of bullying, including procedures for a student to anonymously report an incident of bullying, investigating a reported incident of bullying, and determining whether the reported incident of bullying occurred;

7. Prohibits the imposition of a disciplinary measure on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying; and

8. Requires that discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.).
   The policy and any necessary procedures must be included annually in the student and employee handbooks and in the district improvement plan under Education Code 11.252. [See BQ]

The procedure for reporting bullying must be posted on a district's Internet Web site to the extent practicable.
A district may establish a district-wide policy to assist in the prevention and mediation of bullying incidents between students that:

1. Interfere with a student's educational opportunities; or

2. Substantially disrupt the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Education Code 37.0832
Policy EFI (LOCAL) adopted on EI, IQ, AS10

HOUSTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT











