

# **Austin Independent School District Student Handbook**

2018–19 School Year

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact 512-414-1700.

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## Preface

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2018–19 school year! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) Student Handbook is designed to provide basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. The handbook is divided into two sections:

**Section I: Parental Rights and Responsibilities** offers information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

**Section II: Other Important Information for Students and Parents** is organized alphabetically by topic, and, where possible, further divided by applicability to ages and/or grade levels, for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “parent,” unless otherwise noted, is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, any person granted some other type of lawful control of the student, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the AISD Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found on [the district’s website](#) and is available in hard copy upon request.

The Student Handbook is a general reference guide only and is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that it is not a complete statement of all policies, procedures, or rules that may be applicable in a given circumstance.

In case of conflict between board policy (including the Student Code of Conduct) and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the provisions of board policy and the Student Code of Conduct are to be followed.

Please be aware that the Student Handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. The district encourages parents to stay informed of proposed board policy changes by attending board meetings and reviewing newsletters and other communications explaining changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.

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

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the school counselor or the principal.

## **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact 512-414-1700.

## Section I: Parental Rights

This section of the AISD Student Handbook includes information related to certain rights and responsibilities of parents as specified in state or federal law. In addition, this document provides parental notices required by law.

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

#### ***Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation***

A district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test or treatment without obtaining prior written parental consent unless the examination, test or treatment is required under state or federal law (regarding requirements for special education, Section 504), or by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (for child abuse investigations and reports).

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

Teachers may display students' work, which may include personally identifiable student information, in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement.

However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, original videos or voice recordings and other original works on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district, such as a campus or classroom website and in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos or other methods of mass communication.

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

A student under the age of 14 must have parental permission to receive instruction in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program; otherwise, the student will not be allowed to participate in the instruction. This program, developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the State Board of Education (SBOE), is incorporated into the district's health education classes.

#### ***Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Otherwise Permitted by Law***

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

- Classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity;
- Media coverage of the school; or
- The promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

The district will seek parental consent through a written request before making any other video or voice recording of your child not otherwise allowed by law.

[See **Video Cameras** on page 98 for more information, including a parent's right to request video and audio equipment be placed in certain special education settings.]

### ***Limiting Electronic Communications or Requesting No Contact with Students by District Employees***

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to use electronic communication with students within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class that has information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

An employee described above may also contact a student individually through electronic media to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests at reasonable times of the day and in any case not after 10 p.m. or before 6 a.m.

An employee who does not have a valid educational purpose to contact a student will not use electronic media to communicate with a student in the role of employee. Text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity needs to communicate with a student participating in the extracurricular activity.

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

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district or campus employee or if you have questions related to the use of electronic media by district or campus employees, please contact the campus principal.

### ***Objecting to the Release of Directory Information***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a student's education records without written consent. "Directory information" is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Examples include a student's photograph for publication in the school yearbook; a student's name and grade level for purposes of communicating class and teacher assignment; 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; and the names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of a student's directory information. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year. [See the "Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information" included in the forms packet.]

The district has identified the following as directory information:

- Student name
- Telephone listing
- Photograph
- Place of birth
- Honors and awards received
- Dates of attendance

- Grade level
- Enrollment status
- Most recent educational institution attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams

If you object to the release of the student information included on the directory information response form, your decision will also apply to the use of that information for school-sponsored purposes, such as the honor roll, school newspaper, the yearbook, recognition activities, news releases, and athletic programs.

The district has designated the following categories of information as directory information: student name, address, telephone listing, photograph, place of birth, honors and awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, most recent educational institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.

Unless a parent directs otherwise on a form provided by the district, the district shall release designated directory information to organizations or individuals who request the information and meet the specific purpose or group definition outlined below. Additionally, the district is required by law to release designated directory information to military recruiters and institutions of higher education for secondary students, unless a parent directs otherwise on a form provided by the district.

The district shall only release directory information:

- To organizations required by law, as stated above;
- For school-related purposes that support the district's mission; and
- To district-affiliated groups that require directory information to provide education services to the district's students.

For purposes of this policy, "school-related purposes" shall include the following: yearbook, school pictures, graduation-related services and products, campus directories, newsletters, school/district website (social media), awards, honors, local newspaper/media, artwork that is not considered an educational record, displays, extracurricular programs or events, school/district photos, school/district videos and other activities/events as necessary to accomplish the mission of the district. [FL(LOCAL)]

Also review the information at **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records** on page 12.

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

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. A form included in the forms packet is available if you do not want the district to provide this information to military recruiters or institutions of higher education.

## ***Participation in Third-party Surveys***

### **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis or Evaluation**

Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sex behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians 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 to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

As a parent, you will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis or evaluation.

#### Special Note on Student Surveys Administered by the District

By federal legislation, school districts are required to notify parents of all surveys regarding topics listed above.

The following paragraph serves as notification to our parents about district surveys of this type:

Students in grades six through 12 may be offered an opportunity in the spring to participate in an annual survey regarding student substance use, health and safety. Each year the Department of Research and Evaluation administers a survey that asks questions about student attitudes and behaviors that relate to substance use school safety. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. Within a week of the survey administration, more information regarding the survey, as well as a time frame during which it will take place, will be mailed to the parents/guardians of students who are randomly selected to participate. Parents/guardians will be given an opportunity to view the survey and to decline their child’s participation in the survey at that time. If you have questions regarding this survey, please contact the Department of Research and Evaluation at 512-414-1724. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

### **“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys, Screenings or Activities and the Disclosure of Personal Information**

As a parent, you have a right to receive notice of and deny permission for your child’s participation in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.

- School activities involving the collection, disclosure or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing, selling or otherwise disclosing that information.

**Note:** This does not apply to the collection, disclosure or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating or providing educational products or services for or to students or educational institutions.

- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

There are two ways you may deny permission:

- First, if AISD has approved the study under the FERPA research exception guidelines, AISD will automatically exclude your child if you have denied access to directory information release on the Student Registration and Data Verification form that is part of the student registration packet.
- Second, in cases where individual permission is required, you will receive notification that provides information about what your child will be asked to do, what data will be shared and how you may deny permission for your child's participation.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Research and Evaluation at 512-414-9804.

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

### ***Human Sexuality Instruction***

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for such instruction.

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

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

In accordance with state law, below is a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

The board shall select any instruction K-12 relating to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) with the advice of the local SHAC. The instruction must:

- Present abstinence as the preferred choice of behavior for unmarried persons of school age;
- Devote more attention to abstinence than any other behavior;
- Emphasize that abstinence is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, infection with HIV/AIDS and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- Teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates, if instruction on contraception and condoms is included in the curriculum;
- Prohibit the distribution or dissemination of contraceptive devices in district facilities;
- Be delivered in grades PreK through 12 in a developmentally and age-appropriate manner and include the most current and scientifically accurate information regarding child and adolescent health issues, contraception, and accurate information on failure rates and risk reduction of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV;
- Include communication, goal-setting, decision-making, assertiveness, limit-setting (including how to say "no"), anticipating circumstances of risk, anticipating consequences and the refusal skills necessary to support a student's ability to avoid, postpone and abstain from risk-taking behaviors prior to, and into, adulthood.
- Prior to the implantation of the sexuality education program, the principal shall conduct at least one orientation session for parents and guardians. The purpose of the session is to provide every parent or guardian an opportunity for informed consent for his or her child to participate in the program. Parents shall have ample opportunity to preview all instructional materials following a written request to the principal.
- As a parent, you are entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, you may remove your child from any part of the human sexuality instruction by submitting a written request to the principal. Students who are exempted shall be provided alternative instruction and shall not be punished or embarrassed in any manner for non-participation. Each school shall set and inform parents of the deadlines for requesting exemptions from the instruction. You may also choose to become more involved with the development of curriculum used for this purpose by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. Please see the campus principal for additional information.

For more information please consult policy EHAA(LEGAL and LOCAL), or contact Health and Physical Education at 512-414-9779.

### ***Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades Three through 12***

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades three through 12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless: (1)

you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity.

[See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

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

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 79 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

### ***Religious or Moral Beliefs***

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

### ***Tutoring or Test Preparation***

Based on informal observations, evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests or results from diagnostic assessments, a teacher may determine that a student needs additional targeted assistance for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills. The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible. In accordance with state law and policy EC, the school will not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than 10 percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent consents to this removal.

The school may also offer tutorial services, which students whose grades are below 70 will be required to attend.

[Also refer to policies EC and EHBC, and contact your student's teacher with questions about any tutoring programs provided by the school.]

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

### ***Instructional Materials***

As a parent, you have a 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 to your child.

You are also entitled to request that the school allow your child to take home any instructional materials used by the student. If the school determines that sufficient availability exists to grant the request, the student must return the materials at the beginning of the next school day if requested to do so by the student's teacher.

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

Noncustodial parents may request in writing that they be provided for the remainder of the school year a copy of any written notice usually provided to parents related to their child's misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.] Notwithstanding this requirement, the district shall comply with any applicable court order of which the district has knowledge.

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

You may request information regarding any state or district policy related to your child's participation in assessments required by federal law, state law or the district.

### ***Student Records***

#### **Accessing Student Records**

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

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

A federal law known as FERPA affords parents and eligible students certain rights with respect to student education records. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is age 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education. These rights, as discussed in this section as well as at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 6, are:

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

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person (including a parent or the student) requesting the information.

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

Inspection and release of student records is primarily restricted to an eligible student or a student's parent—whether married, separated or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that, as soon as a student reaches the age of 18, is emancipated by a court or enrolls in a postsecondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parent may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records, without written consent of the parent or eligible student, in the following circumstances:

- When district school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians and support staff (including district health or district medical staff); a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes 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 to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.

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

When the district discloses information it has designated it as directory information. [See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 6 for opportunities to prohibit this disclosure.]

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

The superintendent is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated. For additional information on access to student records, please see policy FL.

A parent or eligible student who wishes to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wishes to inspect. Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent's office is: Office of the Superintendent, 1111 West Sixth Street, Austin, Texas 78703; email at [openrecords@austinsd.org](mailto:openrecords@austinsd.org).

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the superintendent. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record 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 the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information 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 general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See Finality of Grades at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 81, and **Complaints and Concerns** on page 345 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the superintendent's office or at [this link](#).

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

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

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and whether the teacher is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child. Requests may be made by sending an email to [openrecords@austinisd.org](mailto:openrecords@austinisd.org).

### **Students with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances**

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

Children of military families will be provided flexibility regarding certain district requirements, including:

- Immunization requirements.
- Grade level, course or educational program placement.
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities.
- Graduation requirements.

In addition, a child is eligible for enrollment in a tuition-free pre-kindergarten if the child is the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces who is ordered to active duty by proper authority or who was injured or killed while serving on active duty.

Also, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from or is returning from continuous deployment of at least four months outside the locality where the parent, stepparent or legal guardian regularly resides will be excused by the district. The district is required to excuse up to five 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](#).

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

### **Multiple Birth Siblings**

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

### **Safety Transfers/Assignments**

As a parent, you may:

Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying, which includes cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for information.

Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus.

[See **Bullying** on page 26, and policies FDB and FFI.]

- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE.]
- Request the transfer of your child to another district campus if your child has been the victim of a 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 that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

### ***Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students***

A dog (or miniature horse) that is individually trained to work (perform disability-mitigating tasks) may act as a service animal to a child with a disability. The work must directly relate to the individual's disability. If the service animal meets the criteria as outlined by the Americans with Disability Act, the student is entitled to use the service animal in the school setting.

- "Work" is not defined as emotional support, well-being, comfort or companionship; such work does not qualify for public access rights.
- The animal must be under control of the handler and be housebroken.

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing 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.

### ***Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)***

A student who is currently in the conservatorship (custody) of the state and who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-examination opportunities outside the district's established testing windows, and the district will grant proportionate course credit by semester (partial credit) when a student only passes one semester of a two-semester course.

A student who is currently in the conservatorship of the state and who is moved outside of the district's or school's attendance boundaries, or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and who is moved outside the district's or school's boundaries, is entitled to continue in enrollment in his or her "school of origin" if it is determined to be in the child's best interest for the duration of the child's time in foster care.

School of origin is the school in which a child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care. School districts must ensure that a child in foster care enrolls or remains in his or her school of origin unless a determination is made that it is not in the child's best interest. If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.

In addition, 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 to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

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

[See also **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 36, **Course Credit** on page 35 and **Students in Foster Care** on page 91 for more information.]

### ***Students Who Are Homeless***

Children who are 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;
- The award of partial credit (awarding credit proportionately when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester course);
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 is homeless and transfers to another school district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

Federal law also allows a homeless student to remain enrolled in what is called the “school of origin” or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

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

[See also **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 36, **Course Credit** on page 35 and **Homeless Students** on page 66 for more information.]

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

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

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including making a referral for a special education evaluation or for a Section 504 evaluation to determine whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

#### **Special Education Referrals**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services, contact the campus principal.

### **Section 504 Referrals**

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts must also implement a system of procedural safeguards that includes notice, an opportunity for a parent or guardian to examine relevant records, an impartial hearing with an opportunity for participation by the parent or guardian and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.

### **Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals**

Regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services, contact 512-414-6645.

[See also Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504 on page 20.]

The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

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

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

Campuses will notify parents annually that campuses provide assistance to students, other than those already enrolled in a special education program, who need assistance for learning difficulties, including

intervention strategies. Notification may occur through methods such as parent-teacher and -staff conferences, meetings, phone calls, emails, and written communication. A student who receives an intervention through 504 services will be notified annually through the 504 plan.

### ***Students Who Receive 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, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. However, the district is not required to provide transportation to the other children in the household. The parent or guardian should speak with the principal of the school regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for any other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

### ***Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other Than English***

Every student who has a primary language other than English and who is identified as an English learner will be provided a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL) program to ensure equal educational opportunity. Such programs are integral parts of the total school program and use instructional approaches designed to meet the specific language needs of English learners. The programs' basic curriculum content is based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and the English language proficiency standards required by the state.

Upon initial enrollment, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will:

1. Designate the language proficiency level of each English learner;
2. Designate the level of academic achievement of each English learner;
3. Designate, subject to parental approval, the initial instructional placement of each English learner in the required program;
4. Facilitate the participation of English learners in other special programs for which they are eligible.

### ***Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected Under Section 504***

A student determined to have 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 if the student needs services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law. Please contact the campus 504 coordinator, campus principal or district 504 coordinator regarding a referral for evaluation. [See policy FB.]

[See also **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 18 for more information.]

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

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student's age or grade level.

### **Absences/Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children in school (i.e., compulsory attendance), the other with how a student's attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

### ***Compulsory Attendance***

#### **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 a student age 19 or older has 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.]

#### **Between Ages Six and 19**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 19 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of a diagnostic reading instrument.

A student will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and/or applicable subject area.

#### **Prekindergarten and Kindergarten**

Students enrolled in prekindergarten and kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled. Prekindergarten and kindergarten build a great foundation for first grade. Good attendance in the primary grades helps to develop good attendance habits for future years.

## ***Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance***

### **All Grade Levels**

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

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus; and
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state:
  - An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
  - Any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

As described in **Children of Military Families** on page 15, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

### **Secondary Grade Levels**

In addition, a junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided this has been authorized by the board under policy FEA(LOCAL), the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit and makes up any work missed.

An absence will also be considered an exemption if a student 17 years of age or older is pursuing enlistment in a branch of the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the absence does not exceed four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school and the student provides verification to the district of these activities.

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for:

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

An absence of a student in grades six through 12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran will also be excused by the district.

## ***Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance***

The academic success of every student in AISD is important to us; daily school attendance and arrival on time are critical to this success. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor his or her child's attendance and require the child to attend school and arrive on time.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed "accelerated instruction" by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

Chapter 25 of the Texas Education Code requires your child's attendance. According to this law, AISD:

- Shall initiate truancy prevention measures for the student, if a student fails to attend school without an excuse on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period; and request a conference with parent/guardian.
- May file a complaint against the parent/guardian in a county, justice or municipal court and/or make a referral for a student to a truancy court for truant conduct (under Sec. 65.003 (a), Family Code), if a student fails to attend school without an excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year and truancy prevention measures have not been effective.

At the secondary level, "parts of days" is defined as missing more than one-half of any class period without an approved excuse. At the elementary level, it is defined as missing part of the instructional day without an approved excuse.

### **Students with Disabilities**

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

### **Age 19 and Older**

After a student age 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district will send the student a letter as required by law 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.

### **All Grade Levels**

When a student incurs unexcused absences for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student's parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service or referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the district will also be initiated.

If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the campus attendance improvement facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a student's parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student is absent without excuse from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student aged 12–18 incurs unexcused absences on ten or more days or parts of days 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).]

### ***Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (Kindergarten through Grade 12)***

The district is exempt from provisions in state law denying credit or a final grade to a student in kindergarten through grade 12 who has not attended class 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, Austin ISD adopted an innovation plan that applies to students in grades six through 12 attending a middle or high school campus. To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student attending a middle or high school campus and is enrolled in grades six through 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan approved by the principal, who allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class.

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

In accordance with the district's innovation plan, the following absences are considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days: home school suspension, illness with a parent note, immunization/non-compliant and unexcused absences. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.

- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

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

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

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

The district must submit attendance of its students to the TEA reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Policy allows each campus to determine the official attendance taking time.

Official attendance is taken every day at the official attendance time designated by the campus. Campuses offering a.m. and p.m. prekindergarten will have an additional time in the p.m. for those students.

A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

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

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. All notes should be provided within two days of returning to school. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is age 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note. An electronic (emailed) note with or without an attachment is also considered an acceptable note.

The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused.

**Note:** Unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

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

For a student under 18 years of age to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student's attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student's attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

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

AISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of the accountability requirements is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, which include:

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

This information can be found at [this link](#) on the district's website. Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division](#) and the [TEA homepage](#).

### **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test**

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

Please contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

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

Bullying is defined in Section 37.0832 of the Education Code as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means or physical conduct that:

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

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined by Section 37.0832 of the Education Code as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website or any other Internet-based communication tool.

The district is required to adopt policies and procedures regarding:

- 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 interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by filling out the AISD Student Complaint Form and filing a confidential complaint with a campus administrator.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that the student be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 16.]

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the [district's website](#).

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). For students with a disability receiving special education services involved in bullying, harassment and/or making hit lists, an ARD committee must review the conduct to determine if the behavior is a manifestation of the disability prior to a school administrator making a placement decision. (TEC 37.001(b-1))

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 16, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 38, **Hazing** on page 55, policy FF1, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Vision: All AISD Career and Technical Education students will graduate college-, career- and life-ready from high-quality, standards-based, industry-aligned programs of study that provide work experience, academic knowledge, technical and professional skills, leadership development and postsecondary credentials.

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas:

Cluster Areas:

- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, AV Technology and Communications
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Business Management and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Human Services
- Health Sciences
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Other Career Courses:

- Military Science Education
- Additional Middle School Career Related Courses

Admission to these programs is based on interest and aptitude, age appropriateness and class space availability. AISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and CTE programs.

It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 74 for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator, who will address certain allegations of discrimination.]

## Celebrations (All Grade Levels)

There are no federal or state restrictions for foods or beverages provided but not sold to students during the school day. However, each school district must set its own standards. The district will comply with state law, which allows a parent or grandparent to provide a food product of his or her choice to classmates of the person's child or grandchild on the occasion of the student's birthday or to children at a school-designated function. [See CO(LEGAL)]

Birthday and/or school celebrations will not occur in the cafeteria during meal serving time. Such events may take place at the end of the school day after the last scheduled class or after school.

A campus may develop additional guidelines concerning birthday celebrations, such as number of celebrations per month and certain time to celebrate, so as not to interfere with instructional time.

In addition, the district has established the following local standards for foods and beverages made available to students:

All food and beverages provided to students will meet Smart Snack standards. Healthy options, fruits, vegetables, and water for example, are preferred and should be offered.

Elementary school campuses may not:

- Allow food or beverages to be provided to students at any time during the school day with the exception of a healthy snack and water.
- Use food as a reward, unless documented in a student's individualized education program (IEP).

Middle school campuses may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students anywhere on campus 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after meal serving times.

High school campuses may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students during meal times where meals are served or consumed.

Foods and/or beverages will not be used as rewards for academic performance, except when provided in a specific student's IEP or behavior intervention plan (BIP).

Food should not be used for instructional purposes, unless the food is required for teaching students about nutrition, gardening, the food system, or foods of different cultures. If foods are used for instructional purposes, the foods may not be FMNVs or candy at any time (including chocolate). Food given during a classroom lesson is to be for a taste only, and not be in the place of a meal provided during the student's breakfast or lunch period.

[See **Food Allergies** on page 58.]

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

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be initiated by contacting the AISD Police Department at 512-414-1703. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility under state law for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include 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. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders and problems in school.

A child who has experienced sexual abuse or any other type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware as a parent or other trusted adult that disclosures of sexual abuse

may be more indirect than disclosures of physical abuse and neglect, and 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.

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the campus counselor or principal will provide information regarding 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](#).]

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation (All Grade Levels)** on page 38.]

The following websites might help you become more aware of child abuse and neglect:

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet](#)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents: Child Abuse](#)
- [Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Resources](#)
- [Texas Attorney General, Crime Victims](#)
- [Texas Attorney General, Resources for Crime Victims](#)

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the DFPS (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#)).

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

The purpose of the district's class rank policy is to promote rigorous academic standards and readiness for college, career and life in a globally competitive economy. Class ranking shall be used to determine district honors and awards and will be submitted to colleges.

In order to encourage students to take more challenging courses and to reward those students who complete more challenging courses, grades earned in Advanced Placement (AP), Pre-AP, International Baccalaureate (IB), magnet courses, Texas Education Agency (TEA)-identified advanced courses, articulated Tech-Prep courses and dual credit courses at designated colleges or universities shall be weighted. The grades earned in these courses shall be assigned weighted grade points in accordance with the Integrated Grading Scale set out in EIC(REGULATION). Grade points shall be used to compute grade point average (GPA), to determine honor roll status and to calculate rank in class for academic honor positions as specified in this policy.

Scores earned through credit by examination, with or without prior instruction, shall be used in computing a student's GPA and class rank. [See EHDB and EHDC]

Pass/fail scores, whether earned in the district or transferred from a sending district, shall not be used in computing GPA and class rank. [See EIC(REGULATION)]

## **Rank**

For students entering grade nine during the 2011–12 school year and thereafter, class rank shall be determined by descending order of students' weighted GPAs earned in courses that satisfy the students' graduation plans in the following curriculum categories:

- English/Language Arts;
- Mathematics;
- Science;
- Social Studies; and
- Languages Other Than English (LOTE).

If a student exceeds the required number of courses necessary to satisfy the graduation requirements in one or more of the disciplines listed above, then the courses that yield the highest grade points within those disciplines that satisfy the graduation requirements will be included in calculating class rank. Elective courses are not included in calculating class rank. The required number of credits/courses will vary according to the student's intended graduation.

## ***Valedictorian/Salutarian, Highest Ranking Senior***

For purposes of identifying local honors positions of the valedictorian, the salutarian and the highest-ranking graduate, class rank shall be calculated at the end of the sixth six weeks using the grades from courses that satisfy graduation requirements within the following disciplines: English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and LOTE.

If a student exceeds the required number of courses necessary to satisfy the graduation requirements in one or more of the disciplines listed above, then the courses that yield the highest grade points within those disciplines that satisfy the graduation requirements will be included in calculating class rank. Elective courses are not included in calculating class rank. The required number of credits/courses will vary according to the student's intended graduation plan. [See FG(LOCAL) for Trustees' Scholar Awards and FG(REGULATION) for District Recognition Scholar Awards]

The valedictorian and the salutarian shall be the eligible students with the highest and second-highest class ranking as determined by this policy who have:

1. Completed the Recommended High School Program, the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program, or the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement;
2. Met all course requirements or demonstrated subject mastery (course proficiency) through state-approved placement examinations; and
3. Been continuously enrolled in and attending classes at the same district high school for two regular school years immediately preceding the students' graduation.

In case of a tie for the position of valedictorian, the students who tie shall be recognized as coaledictorians, and the position of salutarian shall remain vacant.

In case of a tie for the position of salutarian, the students who tie shall be recognized as cosalutatorians.

District honor graduates shall include students whose class rank is within the:

1. Top two percent of the graduating class. These students shall be designated "Graduates with Highest Honors."
2. Next three percent of the graduating class. These students shall be designated "Graduates with Higher Honors."
3. Next five percent of the graduating class. These students shall be designated "Graduates with High Honors."

A student who completes the high school program requirements in fewer than four years shall be ranked with the class in which he or she actually graduates.

An out-of-school tester shall be ranked with the respective graduating class in which he or she completes all coursework requirements, regardless of when he or she masters state-mandated end-of-course (EOC) assessments.

For purposes of awarding the state certificate entitling a student to receive a college tuition grant under Education Code 54.201, the highest-ranking graduate shall be the eligible student who graduates with the highest ranking in his or her graduating class.

### ***Transcripts***

A student's class rank shall be reported on the student's transcript as required by TEA and made available in accordance with the application deadline when requested by the student. [See EIC(LEGAL)]

For an approved campus, a student's class rank shall not be automatically reported, except for the top ten percent of a given class. Class rank for students outside the top 10 percent shall not appear on any student's academic achievement record (transcript). The district shall provide to each student in the top 10 percent of his or her class, and any student who requests it, a certification of class rank containing the student's numerical rank in class. [See EIC(REGULATION)]

For the purpose of applications to institutions of higher education, the district shall also calculate class ranking as required by state law. The district's eligibility criteria for local graduation honors shall apply only for local recognitions and shall not restrict class ranking for the purpose of automatic admission under state law. [See EIC(LEGAL)]

[For further information, see policy EIC.]

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

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades nine through 12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day's schedule.

[See **Schedule Changes** on page 84 for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

## College and University Admissions and Financial Aid (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

For two school years following graduation, a district student who graduates in the top 10 percent and, in some cases, the top 25 percent, of his or her class is eligible for automatic admission into four-year public universities and colleges in Texas if the student:

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

In addition, the student must submit a completed application for admission in accordance with the deadline established by the college or university. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that he or she meets the admission requirements of the university or college to which the student applies.

The University of Texas at Austin (UT) may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University during the summer or fall 2019 term, UT will admit the top six percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by UT through a holistic review process.

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

Upon enrolling in their first course that is eligible for high school credit, the district will provide written notice concerning automatic college admission, the curriculum requirements for financial aid and the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid.

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

[See **Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student** on page 30 for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation** on page 51 for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** on page 17 for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

## College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

Students in grades nine through 12 have opportunities to earn college credit through the following methods:

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

- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities; and
- Certain CTE courses.

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

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

## **Communications: Automated**

### ***Emergency***

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency purpose may include early dismissal or delayed opening because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

[See **Safety** on page 82 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

### ***Nonemergency***

Your child's school will request that you provide contact information, such as your phone number and e-mail address, for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child's school or the district. If you consent to receive such information through a landline or wireless phone, please ensure that you notify the school's administration office immediately upon a change in your phone number. The district or school may generate automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or e-mail communications that are closely related the school's mission, so prompt notification of any change in contact information will be crucial to maintain timely communication with you. Standard messaging rates of your phone carrier may apply. If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, please contact your child's principal. [See **Safety** on page 82 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

## **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 handled so easily, the board has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy and complaint forms may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at <http://archive.austinisd.org/inside/policy>.

Should a parent or student feel a need to file a formal complaint, the parent or student should file a district complaint form within the timelines established in policy FNG(LOCAL). In general, the student or parent should submit the written complaint form to the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

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

### ***Applicability of School Rules***

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus as well as on district vehicles—and 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 any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

### ***Campus Behavior Coordinator***

By law, 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.

### ***Disruptions of School Operations***

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

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

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

A student in grades nine through 12, or in a lower grade when a student is enrolled in a high school credit-bearing course, will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (one credit) course, the student's grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will

be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

### **Credit by Examination: If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (All Grade Levels)**

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit or a final grade by passing an examination approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

Prior instruction as defined by the district shall include:

- Enrollment in a non-accredited public, private, parochial school or homeschooling program as verified by an official school transcript/record or as evidenced by a student work portfolio that may include: course syllabus, work samples, completed culminating exam and list of resources (e.g., textbooks, websites);
- For a semester course (18 weeks), proof of at least nine weeks of classroom instruction; or
- Proof of completion of half of the required lessons of a correspondence course.

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If the student is granted approval to take an examination for this purpose, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

Credit by examination registration forms, study guides and district test administration dates may be obtained from the school counselor—parental signature is required. The district pays for one administration of CBE tests for students required to validate credits from non-accredited public, private or homeschool programs. CBE testing must be completed by the end of the semester upon enrollment. The district does not pay for credit by exam for credit recovery. Students must make their own arrangements to recover credit for a failed course.

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

[For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).]

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

A student will be permitted to take an examination to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction (i.e., for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level). The examinations offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees, and state law requires the use of certain examinations, such as College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, when applicable. The dates on which examinations are scheduled during the 2018–19 school year will be published in appropriate district publications and on the district's website. The only exceptions to the published dates will be for any

examinations administered by another entity besides the district or if a request is made outside of these time frames by a student experiencing homelessness or by a student involved in the foster care system. When another entity administers an examination, a student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. During each testing window provided by the district, a student may attempt a specific examination only once.

If a student gains credit through credit by exam the school district must enter the examination score on the student's transcript, and the student is not required to take an applicable end-of-course assessment instrument for the course.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student (or parent) must register with the counselor by the registration deadline. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam. Systemwide Testing and/or campuses are not required to provide textbooks to prepare for credit by exam. [For further information, see policy EHDC(LOCAL).]

### ***Kindergarten Acceleration***

Parents of a kindergarten student may request that their child be considered for acceleration to first grade. Students considered must score at or above the 90th percentile on a district-approved, nationally recognized norm-referenced test. [See EHDC(REGULATION)]

### ***Students in Grades One through Five***

A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least 80 on each examination in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies, a district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated and the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

### ***Students in Grades Six through 12***

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the examination, a scaled score of 50 or higher on an examination administered through the CLEP, or a score of three 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.

### ***With Prior Instruction in a Foreign Language (Language Other Than English [LOTE])***

Students entering the district with prior instruction in a foreign language that is documented by a grade report or documentation from a school of record, but have not had the actual course, may take a CBE for that foreign language and pass with a score of 70 or higher if they desire high school credit for that course. The 70 percent passing standard would also still apply to those students missing a semester of a LOTE course in which they have had prior instruction. Eligibility to test for acceleration or with prior instruction must be verified by the campus counselor or registrar and indicated on the CBE registration form.

Native speakers may be scheduled for upper level courses based on the results of a proficiency placement level exam. The proficiency placement exam is for placement purposes only, and will not constitute credit in the lower level course(s).

AISD Cabinet approved the following two choices for LOTE proficiency placement exams:

- National exam (available exams: Spanish, French, German and Latin) or
- Placement exam provided with the Native Speakers textbook

Students still have the option of testing if they desire to accelerate or to attain credits for skipped lower level LOTE course(s). As always, students are encouraged to continue their LOTE studies and attain at least three LOTE credits, thereby possibly qualifying for the Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP).

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

The district believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they are free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, age, immigration status 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. [See policy FFH.]

### ***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. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it: affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to: physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; threats to hurt the student, 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 current dating partner; attempts to isolate the student from friends and family; stalking; or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

## ***Discrimination***

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

## ***Harassment***

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

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

In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

## ***Sexual Harassment and Gender-based Harassment***

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

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

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

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

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

## ***Retaliation***

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

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

### ***Reporting Procedures***

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

Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, 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***

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

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

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

If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action and, in some cases, corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under FERPA.

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

### ***Discrimination***

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation** on page 38.]

## **Distance Learning**

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

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

The distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to district students are DELTA, Twilight, Garza Online and Virtual School programs.

If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), as described below, to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

### ***Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) (Secondary Grade Levels)***

The Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN) has been established by the state as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TXVSN to earn course credit for graduation. In limited circumstances, a student in grade 8 may also be eligible to enroll in a course through the TXVSN.

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs and Organizations** on page 46.] In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment. All requirements related to the incorporation of the EOC score into the student’s final course grade and the implications of these assessments on graduation will apply to the same extent as they apply to traditional classroom instruction.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TXVSN course, please contact the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course. The additional non-AISD distance learning opportunities students may opt to participate in are through University of Texas High School and Texas Tech High School (students must contact their high school counselor for information).

A copy of policy EHDE will be distributed to parents of middle and high school students at least once each year.

## **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, brochures, flyers, etc.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor and the principal. The campus principal is responsible for all matters pertaining to the organization, issuance and sale of such publications.

## ***Non-school Materials***

### **From Students**

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written 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. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

Examples of non-school materials that will not be accepted for distribution include, but are not limited to materials that are: obscene or vulgar, defamatory, endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students, or hate literature that scurrilously attacks ethnic, religious or racial groups.

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

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 FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

### **From Others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, 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 superintendent's designee for prior review. The superintendent's designee 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 at DGBA or GF.]

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.
- Of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL).
- For electioneering purposes during a time when 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 is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards and teach respect for authority. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others. Shoes should be worn at all times. The district prohibits any clothing or grooming that, in the principal's judgment, may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations.

The district prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that:

- Are lewd, offensive, vulgar or obscene.
- Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs or any other substance prohibited under policy FNCF(LEGAL).

Examples of inappropriate dress at each level shall include, but are not limited to:

### **Elementary-level Inappropriate Dress**

- Improperly fitting clothing; baggy pants, oversized shirts, elongated armholes, overly tight garments and clothes that improperly expose body parts;
- Tops that are strapless or backless, that have spaghetti straps or low-cut necklines;
- Shorts and skirts that are short enough to be distracting;
- Makeup and artificial nails;
- Gang-associated clothing or colors; and
- Hats or caps worn inside the building (except for religious requirements).

### **Middle-school/high-school-level Inappropriate Dress**

- Improperly fitting clothing; baggy pants, overly tight clothes or clothes that improperly expose body parts;
- Halter tops, tank tops, bare midriffs, low cut necklines, strapless or backless tops, spaghetti straps, sheer or see-through clothing;
- Skirts or shorts that are short enough to be distracting;
- Boxer shorts or athletic shorts worn outside of physical education;
- Undergarments, pajamas or other clothing not designed to be worn as an outer garment;
- Gang-associated clothing or colors; and
- Hats or caps worn inside the building (except for religious requirements).

Individual campuses may adopt additional clothing requirements with review and approval of their Campus Advisory Council and associate superintendent. They may also require a formal uniform with

review and approval of their Campus Advisory Council, associate superintendent and the Board of Trustees. [For further information, see policy FNCA(REGULATION).]

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. If not corrected, the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

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

The use of the district's computer technology is a privilege intended for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. This policy can be found at the front of this document. Violations of the Acceptable Use Policy may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

The district makes every effort to filter inappropriate websites from students. However, please be aware that students may access some sites our filter did not catch. Additionally, any deliberate attempt to circumvent this filter is forbidden and may result in disciplinary action.

Students may be given a user ID and password to access our technology resources. These passwords must be kept in the strictest confidence. The use of other students' and teachers' passwords is strictly forbidden.

### ***Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Mobile Telephones***

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. A student may not gain approval to use a personal telecommunications or other electronic device during any periods of testing or assessment. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets or other portable computers.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. See campus policy pertaining to who may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 88 and policy FNF.]

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

### ***Possession and Use of Other Personal Electronic Devices***

Except as described below, students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as MP3 players, video or audio recorders, DVD players, cameras, games, e-readers or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Those devices must remain turned off and out of sight during the instructional day, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 88 and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost or stolen electronic device.

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

In some cases, students may find it beneficial or might be encouraged to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must obtain prior approval before using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional use. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes, all devices must be turned off during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

### ***Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources***

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

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

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, 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 according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child ["Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course](#), a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of

engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology. In addition, AISD has more information regarding safe and appropriate use of technology at [Cyber Safety in Austin ISD](#).

In addition, 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 and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

### ***Cell Phone Sexting Prohibited***

Students are prohibited from taking, sending or forwarding sexual pictures, including pictures of oneself. Students found to have engaged in sexting may lose privileges to participate in school activities, may receive disciplinary consequences and may face legal charges. Students are urged to remember that they should never take pictures that they would not want their classmates, teachers, families or employers to see. Students are reminded that once a picture is sent, it can be forwarded to anyone. To ensure safety, the district urges any student who receives a nude picture on their cell phone to take the following steps: do not delete the picture and immediately report the picture to a trusted adult.

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

[See **Graduation** on page 51 and **Standardized Testing** on page 89.]

### **English Learners (All Grade Levels)**

Students identified as English learners (ELs) by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be provided a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education or English as a second language (ESL) program. The LPAC includes an appropriately certified bilingual educator, an appropriately certified English as a second language (ESL) educator, a parent of an English learner participating in a bilingual or ESL program, and a campus administrator. The LPAC will designate the language proficiency level of every student that has a primary language other than English and give written notice to the student's parent or guardian, advising that the student has been classified as an English learner. Pending parental approval, the LPAC will place the student in the required bilingual education or ESL programs.

Before the administration of the state-mandated assessments (STAAR, TELPAS) each year, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee will determine the appropriate assessment option for each English learner. In limited circumstances, the LPAC may exempt an English learner from an otherwise required state mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment.

For English learners who are also eligible for special education services, the decision for entry into a bilingual education or ESL programs will be determined by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) in conjunction with the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee.

### **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 with other students; participation, however, is a privilege not a right. Students may be suspended from participation for on or off-campus violations of athletic code or team rules.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [See **Transportation** on page 96.]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in 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 involved in UIL athletic activities and their 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 a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at 512-463-9581 or [curriculum@tea.texas.gov](mailto:curriculum@tea.texas.gov).

[See [UIL Texas](#) for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. The equipment used in football is no exception. As a parent, you 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.

In addition, the following provisions apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than 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 language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- 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.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

### ***Standards of Behavior***

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

### ***Physical Examinations/Health Screenings***

A student who wishes to participate in, or continue participation in, the district's athletics program governed by the UIL must submit certification from a health-care provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program.

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

## **Fees (All Grade Levels)**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and 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, if offered.
- Administrative fees not to exceed \$15 upon reclaiming a confiscated cell phone or other telecommunications device, according to the guidelines in policy FNCE.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See Buses and Other School Vehicles on page 95.]
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay. Application for such a waiver may be made to the campus principal. [For further information, see policy FP.]

## **Food Permits**

Individuals and/or organizations who sponsor events at which food will be served, sold or offered to the public are legally required to obtain temporary food service permits from the Austin/Travis County

Health and Human Services Department. For further information on safety requirements and obtaining a temporary food service permit, please contact AISD Food Services at 512-414-0251.

### **Fundraising (All Grade Levels)**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. An application for permission for student fund-raising must be made to the campus principal prior to the event, regardless of when or where the event occurs. Parent groups must submit an application for permission to conduct the event on campus or during a school-sponsored activity prior to the event. Additionally, organizational sales in schools will be limited to two per year per organization, and may not exceed 10 consecutive school days in duration. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.] The sale of food and/or beverages during the school day is not allowed by the campus, parent groups, and/or student groups. [For further information, see the **Student Wellness Policy** on page 61.]

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

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

### **Gender-based Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation** on page 38.]

### **Grade-level Classification (Grades Nine through 12 Only)**

<b>Credits Earned</b>	<b>Classification</b>
5-9.5	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
10-14.5	Grade 11 (Junior)
15	Grade 12 (Senior)

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

Grade-level advancement for students in grades nine through 12 shall be determined by course credits and the number of years completed in high school [see EIE(LOCAL)]. Promotion, grade-level advancement, and course credit shall be based on mastery of the curriculum.

High school students are classified according to the following criteria:

- Ninth grade (freshman) requires promotion/placement of eighth grade and 0 to 4.5 credits.
- 10th grade (sophomore) requires completion of one year of high school and a minimum of 5.0 credits.
- 11th grade (junior) requires completion of two years of high school and a minimum of 10.0 credits.
- 12th grade (senior) requires completion of three years of high school and a minimum of 15.0 credits.

Additionally, the following considerations are adhered to for determination of credit totals for promotion and grade-level placement.

- Denied credit(s) (due to excessive absences) are not included when factoring credit totals;

- Credit totals are based on all awarded credits, including local credits and repeated credits.

## Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed to students and their parents by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by each applicable curriculum department and have been approved by the campus principal. These guidelines establish the minimum number of assignments, projects and examinations required for each grading period. In addition, these guidelines establish how the student’s mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.). Grading guidelines also outline in what circumstances a student will be allowed to redo an assignment or retake an examination for which the student originally made a failing grade. Procedures for a student to follow after an absence will also be addressed. Students shall not receive academic credit for any activity that does not directly relate to the district curriculum. Grades shall reflect academic progress and achievement and shall not be based on nor adjusted for nonacademic criteria, such as discipline, attendance, tardies or participation in extracurricular activities, except as provided by state law. If nonacademic assessment is to be documented, it shall be documented separately on all reports to parents.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 81 for additional information on grading guidelines.]

## Grade Reporting

In PK through second grade student progress in each subject area is reported on the nine-week elementary Report to Parents as:

- 4 – Advanced
- 3 – Skilled
- 2 – Basic Understanding
- 1 – Needs Improvement

In grades three through five, letter grades A, B, C, and F are used on the report to parents to reflect academic achievement in each subject area. Plus (+) and minus (-) may also be used with A, B, and C. Translation of these letter grades to a numerical score is shown in the Translating Letter Grades in Grades 3-5 to Numerical Grades table, at right.

The district also utilizes the following rubric to reflect progress in specified areas of personal development at all elementary grade levels:

- 4 – Consistently
- 3 – Frequently
- 2 – Occasionally
- 1 – Rarely

Translating Letter Grades in Grades 3-5 To Numerical Grades		
A: Excellent (90-100)	A+	98-
	A	94-97
	A-	90-93
B: Good (80-89)	B+	88-89
	B	84-87
	B-	80-83
C: Fair (70-79)	C+	78-79
	C	74-77
	C-	70-73
F: Failing	F	0-69

In grades six through 12, academic achievement in each course is reported to parents in numerical grades of 0 to 100 with the exception of courses taken on a pass/fail basis. Academic achievement in courses taken on a pass/fail basis is reported as a P (pass) or F (fail). Once a student achieves a minimum passing standard, they may not retake a course for a higher grade.

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

### ***Requirements for a Diploma Beginning with the 2014–15 School Year***

Beginning with students who entered grade nine in the 2014–15 school year, a student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma from the district:

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

### ***Testing Requirements for Graduation***

Students are required, with limited exceptions and regardless of graduation program, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology and U.S. History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment, should a student choose this option. [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 to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

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

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 89 for more information.]

### **Foundation Graduation Program**

Every student in a Texas public school who entered grade nine in the 2014–15 school year and thereafter will graduate under the “foundation graduation program.” Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of

achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. A **Personal Graduation Plan** will be completed for each high school student, as described on page 53.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and 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 anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this will satisfy the admission requirements of the student’s desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn “performance acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student’s 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 state recognized or nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules and the school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

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 tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges and technical schools, as well as to private institutions.

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

### **Credits Required**

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

<b>Course Area</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program</b>	<b>Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement</b>
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social Studies, including Economics	3	3
Physical Education	1	1
Language Other Than English	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Health	0.5	0.5

Electives	4.5	6.5
Total	22 credits	26 credits

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

- Mathematics. To obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, which will be included on a student’s transcript and is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the four mathematics credits.
- 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.
- Language 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. In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

**Available Endorsements**

A student must specify upon entering grade nine the endorsement he or she wishes to pursue:

- Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
- Business and industry
- Public services
- Arts and humanities
- Multidisciplinary studies

**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 nine and his or her parent. Before the end of grade nine, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education. The student’s personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student’s choice of endorsement.

For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP. The IEP process that serves as PGP would include the counselor in the ARD committee and/or counselor input in the development of the student's IEP through ARD committee.

Please also review [TEA's Graduation Toolkit](#).

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

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

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area will be distributed to students each spring to enroll in courses 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.

Please be aware that 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 those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or career and technical education (CTE), the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested. Please refer to the online Secondary Student Information Guide (SSIG) for course option details.

### ***Certificates of Coursework Completion***

A certificate of coursework completion will not 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. [See Board Policy EIA(Local).]

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

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review and dismissal (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 and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies to receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony. [See policy FMH(LEGAL).]

Please also be aware that if an ARD committee places a student with a disability on a modified curriculum in a subject area, the student will be automatically placed on the Minimum Program, in accordance with state rules.

ARD committees for students with disabilities who receive special education services will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. To earn an endorsement under the foundation program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the end of course (EOC) assessments and receive no modified curriculum in the student's chosen endorsement area. A student may still be awarded an endorsement when the student fails to perform satisfactorily on no more than two EOC assessments but meets the other requirements for graduation under state law.

## ***Participation in Commencement Ceremonies***

Students must meet all state and local graduation requirements, including passing all exit-level exams, to be eligible to participate in commencement ceremonies. A student who is subject to mandatory removal for disciplinary reasons during the final three weeks of the school year immediately preceding graduation shall not be eligible to participate in commencement exercises. [See policy FMH(LOCAL).]

## ***Graduation Speakers***

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies. A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer.

[See FNA(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct. For student speakers at other school events, see **Student Speakers** on page 91.]

## ***Graduation Expenses***

Because students and parents will incur expenses to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Fees** on page 48.]

## **Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation** on page 38.]

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

Hazing is defined as any intentional, knowing, or reckless act occurring on or off campus directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or the safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated to, affiliating with, holding office in or maintaining membership in any organization whose members are or include other students. Examples include any:

- Type of physical brutality;
- Type of physical activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of physical or mental harm, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces or calisthenics;
- Activity involving consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances that subjects the student to unreasonable risk of physical or mental harm;
- Activity that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student, such as ostracism, shame or humiliation; and
- Activity that induces, causes or requires the student to violate the Penal Code.

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person: engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids or attempts to aid another in hazing; has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[See **Bullying** on page 26 and policies FFI and FNCC(Legal).]

## **Health-related Matters**

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

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever of 100 degrees or greater, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. If the nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

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

Contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether or not your child should stay home.

### ***Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels)***

State law requires the district to provide information about bacterial meningitis:

#### **What is meningitis?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical and life support management. It is an uncommon disease but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

#### **What are the symptoms?**

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

Children (over two years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

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

### **How serious is bacterial meningitis?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases, it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

### **How is bacterial meningitis spread?**

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. They are spread when people exchange respiratory or throat secretions (such as by kissing, coughing, or sneezing).

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

### **How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?**

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

There are vaccines available to offer protection from some of the bacteria that can cause bacterial meningitis. The vaccines are safe and effective (85 to 90 percent). They can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

### **What should you do if you think you or a friend might have bacterial meningitis?**

You should seek prompt medical attention.

### **Where can you get more information?**

Your school nurse, family doctor and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the websites for the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), particularly the CDC's information on [bacterial meningitis](#), and the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#).

**Note:** DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after the student's 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization** on page 66 for more information.]

### ***Food Allergies (All Grade Levels)***

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly 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, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at <https://www.austinisd.org/student-health>.

[See policy FFAF and **Celebrations** on page 28.]

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

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats and headphones. Students diagnosed with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill crawling lice. Head lice can be a nuisance but they have not been shown to spread disease. Personal hygiene or cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) advocate that "no-nit" policies should be discontinued. "No-nit" policies that require a child to be free of nits before they can return to schools should be discontinued for the following reasons:

- Many nits are more than ¼ inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice, or may in fact be empty shells, also known as 'casings'.
- Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to other people.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to the students, families and communities far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.
- Misdiagnosis of nits is very common during nit checks conducted by nonmedical personnel.

As of September 1, 2017, Texas Education Code, Chapter 38, Section 38.031, Notice of Lice, states the following: "The board of trustees of an independent school district shall adopt a policy requiring a school nurse of a public elementary school who determines or otherwise becomes aware that a child enrolled in the school has lice shall provide written or electronic notice of that fact to the parent of:

- The child with lice as soon as practicable but not later than 48 hours after the administrator or nurse, as applicable, determines or becomes aware of that fact; and

- Each child assigned to the same classroom as the child with lice not later than the fifth school day after the date on which the administrator or nurse, as applicable, determines or becomes aware of that fact.”

[See policy FFAA.]

## ***Physical Activity Requirements***

### **Elementary School**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in full-day prekindergarten–grade five engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week through classroom and PE teachers using the Working Out for Wellness (WOW) activities and physical education curriculum.

For additional information on the district’s requirements and programs regarding elementary school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal or view the [Physical Education/Health website](#).

### **Middle School**

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, 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. AISD students must be enrolled in at least one semester of physical education in sixth, seventh and eighth grade. Schools are encouraged to offer the additional fourth semester during their sixth-grade year.

For additional information on the district’s requirements and programs regarding middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal or view the [Physical Education/Health website](#).

## ***Classification for Physical Education***

All students enrolled in the district are mandated to take a required amount of physical education and physical activity depending on their grade level. Students in third through 12th grade are also required to be physically assessed using FITNESSGRAM. Students must be classified as Non-Restricted (no physical limitations), Restricted (some physical limitations), or Adapted (cognitive and/or physical limitations) before entering a physical education class. [See policy EHAA(LEGAL).] If a student is classified as Restricted or Adapted with physical limitations, it is recommended that a member of the healing arts provide specific documentation regarding the student’s physical limitations after the third day of being excused from physical activity to ensure the safety of the student. A copy of the Restricted Physical Activity Report form may be requested through the physical education teacher or by visiting the [Physical Education/Health website](#).

The Restricted program excludes the more vigorous activities. The Restricted program has two types of classifications:

- Permanent: A member of the healing arts licensed to practice in Texas shall provide written documentation to the school as to the nature of the impairment and the expectations for physical activity for the student. The student shall continue to learn the concepts of the lessons but shall not actively participate in the skill demonstration.

- Temporary: Students may be restricted from physical activity of the physical education class. A member of the healing arts licensed to practice in Texas shall provide written documentation to the school as to the nature of the temporary impairment and the expected amount of time for recovery. During recovery time, the student shall continue to learn the concepts of the lessons but shall not actively participate in the skill demonstration.

### ***Fitnessgram Assessments***

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades three through 12 as stated in district policy FFA(LEGAL). Students in grades three through 12 that are enrolled in a general physical education class will have a pre-assessment and a post-assessment. Students will be assessed on their body compositions, aerobic endurance, muscular strength and endurance and their flexibility. Modifications will be provided for students with various restrictions. Students shall not be graded on their fitness assessments. 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. Fitnessgram scores can be accessed online by clicking on the Fitnessgram tile in the Parent Cloud.

### **Questions Related to Fitnessgram Assessments**

*Why is fitness testing important to me?*

The FITNESSGRAM physical fitness assessment is based not on athletic ability but on good health. No matter what your career path, you will live a happier, more productive life if you are healthy—and physical fitness is vital to overall health. FITNESSGRAM provides accurate and reliable information about your physical condition and how it can be improved.

*Can I "fail" the FITNESSGRAM test?*

No. FITNESSGRAM is a tool to help you determine your fitness needs and guide you in planning a personalized physical activity program. The test will not affect your grades in any way.

*Will my scores be posted or be made public?*

No.

*Will my results be compared to other students?*

No. FITNESSGRAM uses Healthy Fitness Zones (HFZ) to determine your overall physical fitness. HFZs are not based on class averages or any other peer comparisons. The standards are set specifically for boys and girls of different ages using the best available research. If your score falls within the HFZ, it means you have achieved the recommended level of fitness for your age. If your score falls below the HFZ, you should engage in activities that will help you improve.

*What are the FITNESSGRAM assessments?*

There are six assessments:

1. PACER (20 meter shuttle runs; measures aerobic capacity)
2. Push-ups (measures upper body muscular strength/endurance)
3. Curl-ups (measures abdominal muscular strength/endurance)
4. Back saver sit and reach (measures flexibility)

5. Trunk lift (measures trunk extensor strength and flexibility)
6. Body Mass Index (measures body composition: appropriateness of weight relative to height)

*What can I do to prepare for the fitness test?*

- Actively play or move at least 60 minutes at least five days during the week. Walk, jog, play tennis, play racquetball or participate in any physical activity you enjoy.
- Do strength-training activities such as sit-ups, push-ups, modified push-ups or climbing activities two-three days each week.
- Begin doing as many repetitions as possible and try to increase repetitions gradually.
- Eat a healthy diet by including more fruits and vegetables and reducing fats and sugars.

Ask a physical education teacher or coach on your campus for specific tips on ways you can prepare not only for the FITNESSGRAM test but also for a lifetime of good overall health.

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

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held eleven meetings. Additional information regarding the district's SHAC is available at [this website](#).

SHAC duties range from recommending curriculum to developing strategies for integrating curriculum into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns and employee wellness.

[See policies at BDF and EHAA. See **Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 9 for additional information.]

### ***Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)***

AISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and FFA(REGULATION) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You are encouraged to contact the Director of Health at 512-414-9778 with questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan.

## ***Nutrition***

### **District Nutrition Policy**

All district campuses participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Federal law requires that the district establish nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages sold to students during the school day on each campus that promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

The district's nutrition guidelines are to ensure all foods and beverages sold or marketed to students during the school day adhere to all federal regulations and guidance and are designed to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.

## **Foods and Beverages Sold**

The district will comply with federal requirements for reimbursable meals. For other foods and beverages sold to students during the school day, the district will comply with the federal requirements for competitive foods. Competitive foods and beverages are not part of the regular meal programs and occur through sales such as a la carte options or vending machines. For purposes of this plan, these requirements will be referred to as "Smart Snacks" standards or requirements. The following websites have information regarding meal and Smart Snacks requirements:

- [Nutrition Standards](#)
- [Smart Snacks](#)
- [Square Meals](#) (see the *Complete Administrator Reference Manual [ARM]*, Section 20, Competitive Foods)

No sale of competitive foods from any organization or vendor other than the district food service department or approved vending machine contracts is permitted during the school day.

The district has also incorporated the following stricter standards that are not prohibited by federal or state law:

- The sale of sodas or other caffeinated beverages to students is prohibited, with the exception of coffee or tea provided at meal services on high school campuses.
- No preparation of food by deep-fat frying.

The district will promote the procurement of clean label products free of the Harmful 7: trans fats and hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup, hormones and antibiotics, processed and artificial sweeteners, artificial colors and flavors, artificial preservatives and bleached flour.

### **Exception**

All campuses, prekindergarten–grade 12, will not be involved in the sale of food or beverages for any fundraising activity during the school day. Fundraising activities that involve the sale of food and/or beverages will take place outside the school day, which is defined as 30 minutes before the first bell and after the last bell.

## ***Foods and Beverages***

There are no federal or state restrictions for foods or beverages provided, but not sold, to students during the school day. However, each school district must set its own standards.

The district will comply with state law, which allows a parent or grandparent to provide a food product of his or her choice to classmates of the person's child or grandchild on the occasion of the student's birthday or to children at a school-designated function. [See CO(LEGAL)]. Birthday and/or school celebrations will not occur in the cafeteria during meal serving time. Such events may take place at the end of the school day after the last scheduled class or after school. A campus may develop additional guidelines concerning birthday celebrations, such as number of celebrations per month and certain time to celebrate, so as not to interfere with instructional time.

In addition, the district has established the following local standards for foods and beverages made available to students:

- All food and beverages provided to students will meet Smart Snack standards. Healthy options—fruits, vegetables and water, for example—are preferred and should be offered.
- Elementary school campuses may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students at any time during the school day with the exception of a healthy snack and water.
- Middle school campuses may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students anywhere on campus 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after meal serving times.
- High school campuses may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students during meal times where meals are served or consumed.
- Foods and/or beverages will not be used as rewards for academic performance, except when provided in a specific student's individualized education program (IEP) or behavior intervention plan (BIP).
- Food should not be used for instructional purposes, unless the food is required for teaching students about nutrition, gardening, the food system, or foods of different cultures. If foods are used for instructional purposes, the foods may not be FMNV's or candy at any time (including chocolate). Food given during a classroom lesson is to be for a taste only, and not be in the place of a meal provided during the student's breakfast or lunch period.
- Students may consume any food or beverage item that is provided by his/her parent/guardian. [See policies CO, FFA(LOCAL), and FFA(EXHIBIT).]

### ***Vending Machines (All Grade Levels)***

Vending machines are provided by Healthy Vending by h.u.m.a.n (Clint Capps, 512-740-3174). Healthy foods are provided in all vending machines district-wide for student and staff access. There are no student accessible vending machines in elementary schools; however, campuses may request a vending machine for the staff lounge by contacting the vendor. In middle school, vending machines must be turned off during meal times. In high school, vending machines located in areas where reimbursable meals are served and/or consumed must be turned off during meal periods.

### ***Questions Related to AISD's Nutrition Policy***

*Can we have pizza parties and/or parties in which food is served during the school day?*

Elementary schools may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students at any time during the school day, with the exception of a healthy snack and water. Middle schools may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students anywhere on campus 30 minutes before to 30 minutes after meal serving times. High schools may not allow food or beverages to be provided to students during meal times where meals are served or consumed.

*Are campuses required to adhere to the Wellness Policy for fundraising?*

Yes. All campuses must adhere to the Wellness Policy as it relates to fundraising. No food or beverages can be sold during the school day to raise funds. Campuses may have a non-food fundraiser during the school day.

*Can parents bring food to celebrate their child's birthday?*

Parents may bring items to celebrate their child's birthday; however, they cannot be provided to students in the cafeteria during meal service times. Birthday food items may only be shared after the

last scheduled class of the day. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks for birthday celebrations.

*Can a parent bring food for other students to consume during the school day?*

No. A parent can only bring food and/or beverages for consumption by their child. A parent cannot bring any food item to another child even with parent permission. A parent can only provide food and/or beverage for their child.

### ***Summary of Student Health Services***

The AISD Department of Health Services is committed to providing care for students during school hours through a partnership with Seton Healthcare Family. The Dell Children's Student Health Services at AISD is a unique and nationally recognized collaboration that has been in place since 1996. Student Health Services staffing includes registered nurses and Clinical Assistant II's. The medical director serves as a consultant with Student Health Services, developing procedures and services which promote health, wellness and safety. Services are provided for students ages three to 22 and include:

- Illness and injury care
- Illness and minor injury care, emergencies and referrals
- Chronic health conditions
- Behavioral health conditions
- Medication administration
  - Medication administration during the school day, documentation and reconciliation
  - Training of AISD staff to administer medication
- Immunization compliance
  - Monthly identification of students needing immunizations
  - Parent notification
  - Immunization clinics
  - Referral to community services
- State-mandated screenings
  - Hearing
  - Vision
  - Risk Assessment for type 2 diabetes
  - Spinal
  - Case management
  - Allergy/anaphylaxis
  - Asthma
  - Diabetes
  - Seizure

- Pregnancy
- Other chronic health conditions
- Health education
  - Student/individual or group (hand washing, growth and development, health, nutrition, etc.)
  - Parent
  - AISD staff (Bloodborne pathogens, AED, MRSA, heat-related illness, medical procedures, emergency medications and procedures, allergy/anaphylaxis)
- Communicable disease outbreak
  - Reportable communicable disease
  - Collaborate with local health department
  - Influenza
  - Staphylococcal infections
- Collaboration
  - Parent/guardians
  - Medical providers
  - School staff
  - Community agencies
  - AISD support services
- Crisis intervention
  - Behavioral health
  - Other threats to student or staff health on campus

### ***Other Health-Related Matters***

#### **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 cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property at any time or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

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

#### **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 superintendent's

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 program manager at 512-414-3218.

### **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, pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and 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 further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the district's IPM coordinator, at 512-414-3213.

### **Homeless Students (All Grade Levels)**

You are encouraged to inform the district if you or your child are experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources with you that may be able to assist you and your family.

Please also check the campus website for information related to services available in the area that can help families who are homeless.

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's homeless education liaison at 512-414-3690.

[See **Students Who Are Homeless** on page 17.]

### **Homework (All Grade Levels)**

Teachers may assign homework for students to complete as part of their coursework and may grade the work to include it in the calculation of the grade for the class. Homework is typically assigned after a standard is taught to reinforce or extend learning, provide extra practice or as a form of assessment. However, homework may also be assigned before a standard is taught to generate interest in the topic for the student. Concerns about the length, content or purpose of a homework assignment should be directed to the teacher. After consultation with the teacher, additional concerns about homework assignments should be addressed with the principal.

### **Illness**

[See **Student Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 56.]

### **Immunization (All Grade Levels)**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that the student will not be immunized for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#). The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is

seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The list of required immunizations can be found at AISD's [Department of Health Services website](#) or by contacting the campus nurse.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis; rubeola (measles), mumps and rubella; polio; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; varicella (chicken pox); and meningococcus. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

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

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 56, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement.

[For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the DSHS website: [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements.](#)]

## **Law Enforcement Agencies (All Grade Levels)**

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, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances the principal:

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

The following procedures will apply when enforcement officers outside district jurisdiction or an investigator with Child Protective law Services (CPS) make a request to question a student or to transport a student off campus.

- Law enforcement officers or CPS investigators are requested to contact the campus School Resource Officer (SRO) or, if the SRO is not available, the principal or designee. District police should be notified. District PD will determine if it is necessary for an AISD PD officer to be dispatched to act as a liaison.
- The SRO will escort the law enforcement officer or CPS investigator to the office of the principal or principal's designee.
- The principal or designee will:

- Check the officer or investigator's credentials, including a picture ID, and record the information.
- Inform the officer or investigator that the student's parent or guardian will be notified unless he or she objects that such notice will impede the lawful investigation.
- If the officer or investigator states that such notice will impede the lawful investigation, request an acknowledgement of the statement in writing on the District record form.
- Ask whether questioning must take place at the school and/or at that time.
- If the officer or investigator states that not doing so will impede the lawful investigation, request an acknowledgement of the statement in writing on the district record form.
- Inform the officer or investigator that the principal or designee will be present during the interview unless the officer or investigator objects that the presence of the principal or designee will impede the lawful investigation.
- If the officer or investigator states that the school official's presence will impede the lawful investigation, request an acknowledgement of the statement in writing on the district record form.
- Summon the student to the office by using only the following statement: "Please advise (name of student) to come to the office." No other statement is to be used.
- If the investigator states that he or she will transport the student off campus and that not doing so will impede the lawful investigation, the principal or designee will request an acknowledgement of the statement in writing on the district record form and shall allow the investigator to take the student.

### ***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.
  - To obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
  - 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 law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student.

The principal will immediately notify the superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other 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 law enforcement officer, 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.
  - Regular contact with a student who is thought to have committed certain offenses or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[For further information, see policy FL(LEGAL).]

### **Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)**

Please remember that student attendance is crucial to learning. We ask that appointments be scheduled outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible. Also note that picking up a student early on a regular basis results in missed opportunities for learning. Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the school day.

State rules require that parental consent be obtained before any student is allowed to leave campus for any part of the school day. The district has put the following procedures in place to document parental consent:

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once

the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse 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 directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, 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 by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

### ***At Any Other Time During the School Day***

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

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

### **Lost and Found (All Grade Levels)**

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

### **Makeup Work**

#### ***Makeup Work Because of Absence (All Grade Levels)***

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

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

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold regarding the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit or final grade." [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 24.]

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

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

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

### ***DAEP Makeup Work***

A high school student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or other adjudicated program (Gardner Betts, Phoenix Academy) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the course through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, another distance learning option or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA(LEGAL).]

### ***In-School Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels)***

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

### ***Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)***

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent along with a signed Medication Authorization Request to the student health services team. All medication must be in the original, properly labeled container, including prescription unit dose containers. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student. District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:

- Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container provided by the parent along with a written request.

- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

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

For students at the elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student is capable of doing so.

For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse.

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

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to 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 physician or health-care provider and to 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.

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

### ***Asthma Inhalers***

Asthma inhalers may be self-administered by all students if the following are in place:

- The completed "Parent/Guardian Authorization of Medication at School" form is on file in the health room, with the "Self-carry section" completed by parent/guardian.
- The asthma inhaler is in the original, properly labeled container (name of student, medication name, dosage and directions, name of prescribing physician who is licensed in Texas, current date).
- The physician's statement indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills to safely use and possess an asthma inhaler at school.
- The assessment by the school nurse indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills to safely use and possess the asthma inhaler at school.

### ***Diabetes Medication***

Diabetes medication may be self-administered by certain students if the following are in place:

- The completed "Parent/Guardian Authorization of Self-Administration of Injected Insulin at School" form is on file in the health room.
- The medication is in the original, properly labeled container (name of student, medication name, dosage and directions, name of prescribing physician who is licensed in Texas, current date).
- The physician's statement indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills to safely use and possess diabetes medication at school.
- The assessment by the school nurse indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills to safely use and possess the diabetes medication at school.

### ***Anaphylaxis Medication***

A student with anaphylaxis is entitled to possess and self-administer prescription anaphylaxis medicine while on school property or at school related events or activities, if the following are in place:

- The completed "Parent/Guardian Authorization of Self-Administration of Epi-Pen at School" form is on file in the health room.
- The medication is in the original, properly labeled container (name of student, medication name, dosage and directions, name of prescribing physician who is licensed in Texas, current date).
- The physician's statement indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills to safely use and possess anaphylaxis medication at school.
- The assessment by the school nurse indicates that the student has the knowledge and skills to safely use and possess the anaphylaxis medication at school.
- The district authorizes school personnel and volunteers who have been adequately trained to administer an epinephrine auto-injector in accordance with law and FFAC(LOCAL). Administration of epinephrine shall only be permitted when an employee or volunteer reasonable believes a person is experiencing anaphylaxis.

### ***Nonprescription Medication***

The district will not maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, except in accordance with the guidelines in policy FFAC(LOCAL), summarized below.

For elementary and middle school students, nonprescription medications must be provided to and administered by a member of the student health services team or, in their absence, the trained designated district administrative staff, upon receipt of a parent's written request, and when properly labeled and in the original container. A written request by a physician or other health-care professional with authority to write prescriptions shall be required when the medication must be administered daily for a period exceeding ten school days.

High school students may possess and self-administer nonprescription medications, in properly labeled, original containers. Students shall not share their nonprescription medications with others.

### ***Distribution of Medication***

All injectable and controlled substances must be picked up by parent/guardian. Students may bring home all other medications with written parental permission.

## ***Dietary Supplements***

Employees authorized by the principal or designee and/or contracted student health services teams may administer dietary supplements provided by the parent and only if required by the Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan of a student with disabilities.

## ***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. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district (or contracted) 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 district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policy FFAC.]

## **Nondiscrimination Statement (All Grade Levels)**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, AISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, immigration status or any other basis prohibited by law, including bullying or harassment carried out via electronic forms of communication, when providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The district also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The following contacts have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: Ylise Janssen, 1111 W. 6th St., Austin, TX 78703; 512-414-9812.
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Leandra Trevino, Assistant Director for 504, 1111 W. 6th St., Austin, TX 78703; 512-414-6645.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (special education programming and activities): Special Education, 1111 W. 6th St.; 512-414-1731.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Dr. Paul Cruz, Office of the Superintendent, 1111 W. 6th St, Bldg. A, Austin, TX 78703; 512-414-2482.

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD.]

## Nontraditional Academic Programs (All Grade Levels)

### ***Diversified Education through Leadership, Technology and Academics (DELTA)***

DELTA is an academic program available to students enrolled in each AISD high school. DELTA is an open-entry, open-exit program available at all traditional and alternative high schools in the district. It employs individualized and self-paced instruction through the use of an online web-based curriculum program. Its goal is to help students accrue or recover academic credits and graduate from high school. The school counselor has additional information on the program.

### ***Homebound Program***

Homebound Program provides home-based instructional services for students confined to home or a hospital for medical reasons. A student qualifies if he/she is expected to be confined at home or hospital bedside for four weeks and has a medical condition documented by a physician licensed to practice in the U.S.

### ***Pregnancy Related Services (PRS)***

PRS provides a student, during pregnancy and after delivery, instructional support in order to stay on track in their academic courses. Services are provided when a student is: (1) pregnant and attending classes on a campus; (2) confined to home due to medical complications; and (3) confined during the six weeks postpartum period.

### ***Twilight Evening School***

Twilight Evening School provides all AISD secondary students, grades six through 12, options for regaining lost credits/grades. This program assists students who are at risk of dropping out, not meeting grade promotion standards, and/or graduation requirements. Students have the option to participate in a range of academic offerings on their home campus before school and after school on Monday through Thursday or on Saturdays. For more information, contact the home school counselor.

### ***Virtual School Program (VSP)***

VSP is an online, home-based academic program that is available to high school juniors and seniors. The goal of the program is to provide academic opportunities for students who are unable to participate in a traditional classroom setting, most often because they are parents and/or must work full-time for economic reasons. Students in the VSP program may earn academic course credits and graduate from high school. This program utilizes an online web-based curriculum program.

### ***Virtual Education for Teen Parents Program (VETP)***

VETP is a non-traditional, home based program for parenting teens in grades nine through 12 whose child/children are on the child-care waiting list at one of the AISD's Parent Education Program (PEP) sites. The goal of the program is to allow these teens to continue to accrue academic credits through VETP until space is available at one of the child-care sites, thus allowing the teen the ability to return to school. VETP utilizes an online web-based curriculum program.

## Parent and Family Engagement: Strengthening Family and School Partnerships

Ongoing research shows that family engagement in schools improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism and restores parents' confidence in their children's education. Students with engaged parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores. Your involvement and engagement in this partnership may include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring that your child comes to school every day on time.
- Developing a relationship with children's teacher(s) and keeping in touch.
- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Meeting and discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Accessing and monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed by signing up for the Parent Cloud. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 85.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 81.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and **Volunteers** on page 101.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: Parent Teacher Association (PTA), parent booster clubs and other organizations. Contact the school office for additional information.
- Serving as a parent representative or leader on district-level or campus-level planning and decision-making committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact your campus principal.]
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)** on page 61.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts. The district's anti-bullying webpage is located here.

- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]
- Signing up for the Parent Cloud that will allow you to view your child's grades and attendance. Please contact your child's school for assistance.
- Participating in SchoolMessenger. SchoolMessenger is the primary tool used by AISD to communicate with families. It is an automated phone system that campuses and the schools district use to keep students and families well-informed and connected. The system is a valuable outreach tool for use in alerting families to campus events and emergencies, such as bad weather delays or school closings. The SchoolMessenger system is also used to support student attendance and parental involvement, and to gather input from parents on critical issues. For more information, visit the SchoolMessenger page on AISD's website.

### ***Parent Engagement & Support Office***

The Parent Engagement & Support Office, which provides parent involvement and engagement connections, strategies and support for parents and families of all district students, can be reached by calling 512-414-0726 or by visiting [this link](#).

### **Physical Examinations/Health Screenings**

#### ***Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

A student who wishes to participate in, or continue participation in, the district's athletics program governed by the UIL must submit certification from a health-care provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program. This examination is required to be submitted annually to the district.

#### ***Spinal Screening Program***

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature and refer them for appropriate follow-up by their physician. Screening can detect scoliosis 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 following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening.

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. For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, see policy FFAA(LEGAL) or contact the superintendent.

In compliance with Health and Safety Code Chapter 37, and per new rules effective September 1, 2018, children in public and private schools shall undergo screening for abnormal spinal curvature in accordance with the following schedule:

- Girls will be screened twice, once at age 10 and again at age 12.
- Boys will be screened once at age 13 or 14.

Trained screeners will check the student for signs of spinal problems like scoliosis. Screeners will look at the student's back while the student stands and bends forward. Parents/legal guardians will receive an electronic reminder notification prior to the actual screening date.

#### Important Recommendations

- Students should bring shorts to school for the exam.
- Girls should wear a thin T-shirt or a sports bra or a two-piece swimsuit top underneath their shirt on exam day.
- If girls are wearing a sports bra or a two-piece swimsuit top underneath their shirt, it is recommended that they remove their shirt for the screening.
- Boys and girls will be screened separately and one-at-a-time.

Parents/legal guardians may exempt their student from spinal screening by providing documentation that spinal screening has been or will be performed by the student's doctor when the student is at the ages specified in the rules above, or that the screening is being declined based on religious tenets. Documentation includes an affidavit from a licensed professional or the parent/guardian as described below:

1. Documentation from a licensed professional that the individual is actively under medical care for one or more spinal problems [25 TAC §37.143(c)]; or
2. A signed form from the parent, guardian or managing conservator that screening for abnormal spinal curvature was or will be performed during a professional examination [25 TAC §37.144(d)]; or
3. A signed form from the parent, legal guardian or managing conservator in lieu of the screening record(s) stating that the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a church or religious denomination of which the affiant is an adherent or member [25 TAC §37.144(e)].

If you do not wish to have your child screened for abnormal spinal curvature, you must submit the documentation listed above no later than October 1 of the school year. Please contact your school health office 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 FFAA.]

#### **Acanthosis Nigricans (AN)**

In accordance with Health and Safety Code 95, children in public and private schools will be assessed for risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This is accomplished by visual screening for AN. All first, third, fifth and seventh grade students will be screened.

AN is a recognizable skin feature that can indicate high levels of insulin in the body. Elevated insulin puts a person at risk for type 2 diabetes. AN is a light brown or black, velvety, rough or thickened area on the back of the neck.

If a student has this skin condition, the district also weighs and measures them and takes blood pressure readings. Student Health Services will notify a parent(s)/legal guardian(s) by phone or letter if their student has this skin condition. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will be asked to make an appointment with the student's doctor for a checkup.

If a parent/legal guardian does not wish to have their student screened for AN because the risk assessment conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the parent/legal guardian is an adherent or a member, that adult must submit an affidavit stating the objections to the risk assessment to the School Health Team on or before October 1 of the school year.

### **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence (All Grade Levels)**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 12.]

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

[See policy EC for more information.]

### **Prayer (All Grade Levels)**

Each student has a right to pray individually, voluntarily and silently or to meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not encourage, require or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity. [See also FNA(LEGAL) and AISD's [Religion in Schools Guide](#).]

### **Promotion and Retention**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level, the recommendation of the student's teacher, the score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment and any other necessary academic information as determined by the district. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student, with limited exceptions, will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR.

### ***Elementary and Middle School Grade Levels***

In kindergarten, promotion to grade one shall be based on a comprehensive assessment of academic indicators, as well as other areas of development.

In grades one and two, promotion is based on the level of reading in the language of instruction and mastery of sufficient mathematics to be successful at the next grade level.

In grades three through five, promotion is based on an overall average of 70 (C-) on a scale of 100 for language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In addition, the student shall be required to maintain an average of 70 (C-) in language arts and mathematics.

To be promoted to grade six, students enrolled in grade five must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade five assessment in English or Spanish.

In grades six through eight, promotion is based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in three of the following areas: language arts, mathematics, science and social studies.

To be promoted to grade nine, students enrolled in grade eight must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade eight assessment in English. If a student in grade five or eight is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade five or eight assessment. The student will instead take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If a student in grades three through eight 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.

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 89.]

A student in grade five or eight will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. For the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policy EIE.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some classified as English learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. An admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting will be convened if a student receiving special education services in grade five or 8 fails to meet satisfactory performance after the first STAAR administrations in reading or math. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

Parents of a student at or above grade level three who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated examinations, will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

A personal graduation plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student at the middle school or junior high level who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in

grade nine. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a school counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the school counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL).] 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.

[For information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students, see **Personal Graduation Plans** on page 53.]

### **High School Grade Levels**

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

A student in grades nine through 12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade-Level Classification** on page 49.] In grades nine through 12, promotion shall be earned by course credits and the student's original year of entry to ninth grade.

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page 51 and **Standardized Testing** on page 89 for more information about EOC assessments.]

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

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 69.]

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

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

At the end of the first three weeks of a six-week grading period or during the fourth week of a nine-week 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 the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the superintendent pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester or course. 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) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 50.]

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 in a class or subject.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within 10 days. The district may use an electronic program to communicate academic information about your child, including for report card and progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature of the parent will be accepted by the district, but you are entitled to request the option to provide a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

## **Retaliation**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation** on page 38.]

## **Safety (All Grade Levels)**

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

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, campus behavior coordinator, teachers or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

## **Accident Insurance**

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child (for injuries only, not for sore throats and other ailments). Parents will receive information on how to sign up for this coverage through school communication. Information is also available on this [AISD webpage](#) under the Campus and Parent Resources & Forms section of the Student Health page.

Parents are reminded that Texas school districts have been granted immunity by the Texas legislature per the Texas Torts Claims Act. This means AISD has no legal liability for damages that may be attributable to personal injuries or property damage.

Please note that AISD does obtain a limited accident insurance policy which covers students while participating in UIL-sanctioned activities (e.g., football, track, cheerleading, vocational training), which can be used as secondary coverage.

## **Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs**

The same student accident insurance coverages mentioned under Accident Insurance above also apply to CTE.

Students practicing under health professions are covered under a Student Blanket Policy purchased by the district which covers any damages that the student may cause to others while in the practice of medical professional duties. If the board purchases any additional accident, liability, or automobile

insurance coverage for students or businesses involved in the district's CTE programs, the district will notify the affected students.

### ***Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Shelter-in-Place, Severe Weather and Other Emergencies***

All AISD school facilities have an emergency operations plan. The specifics of each plan differ for each location. The response to each situation will differ based on the specifics of that situation. The flexibility of the plan is key to the success of the response. In general, each plan involves: the designation of an emergency incident management team; development of evacuation, reverse evacuation, shelter-in-place and lockdown procedures; preparation of a portable emergency go-kit that contains key information and supplies; designation of appropriate evacuation sites; provisions for training personnel and exercising the plan; action guides for dealing with specific types of incidents; and resources for help before, during and after an event. All AISD school plans have been reviewed within the last twelve months.

Occasionally, students, teachers and other district employees will participate in 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. [For more information, see CKC(REGULATION).]

#### ***Evacuation Drills***

Facilities have automatic fire alarm systems and are required by code to utilize that system when conducting fire-related evacuation drills. For those buildings or parts of buildings not connected to the main automatic fire alarm system, warnings will be made by public address announcement and door-to-door notification. Students, visitors and staff members are expected to follow the direction of the administrative incident management team, maintain accountability of personnel and report any issues identified.

#### ***Shelter-in-place Drills***

Shelter-in-Place is a short-term protective action designed to use a facility and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate people from hazards. Shelter-in-place procedures may be initiated as a result of severe weather or the accidental release of hazardous materials near a district facility. Students and employees may be moved to interior corridors and rooms or may be asked to remain in the classrooms. Both actions are examples of sheltering-in-place. Shelter-in-place drills will be conducted periodically to educate students and staff members of the safest locations to seek refuge within the school.

#### ***Other Protective Action Procedures***

All students and employees should also be familiar with two other protective actions---lockdowns and reverse evacuations. In a lockdown situation, all students are kept in classrooms or other designated locations that are away from the danger. Faculty members are responsible for accounting for students and ensuring that no one leaves the safe area. School personnel will also secure building entrances, ensuring that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building. Parents will only be permitted access to the building and to their children if it is safe for them to do so. Protective actions for lockdowns, shelter-in-place, bus evacuations and additional exercises as identified will be practiced at each campus.

## ***Emergency Medical Treatment and Information***

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, all parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to submit emergency care information to AISD with up-to-date emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). If your child takes medication regularly, you, the parent, should make sure that the school has an appropriate amount of additional medication on hand. Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know. If a student is transported via EMS for an emergency, it is the parent/guardians' financial responsibility.

## ***Emergency School-closing Information***

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that school is dismissed early or opening is delayed because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

In the event of an emergency that causes the district to close school, the district will attempt to contact parents through SchoolMessenger (for this reason, it is important to maintain current phone numbers with your child's school). In addition, please listen to announcements from the local media (television, radio, etc.), via social media and watch the AISD Cable Channel 22. If public safety officials require that a school building be evacuated, students and staff members will be safely transported to a designated parent-student reunification center. Parents will be informed of the reunification location via the local media. At the reunification center, students will be released to their parents upon presentation of proper identification. Children will not be released to individuals who are not authorized on the student's emergency care/contact card or who do not have written parent authorization. The district will make every effort to ensure the safety of students and assist them in returning to their homes.

[See **Communications: Automated, Emergency** on page 34 for more information.]

## **SAT, ACT and Other Standardized Tests**

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 89.]

## **Schedule Changes (Middle and High School Grade Levels)**

If you need to change a course—transfer from one course to another—read the following guidelines carefully and make an appointment with your counselor to discuss your needs. It is strongly recommended that students and parents carefully select courses to be taken the following year in order to minimize the need for schedule changes. Seek the advisement of current teachers and the counselor to best determine the appropriate courses that are aligned with post-secondary plans.

- Students may not withdraw from a semester course after the fourth week of the semester. For a yearlong course, a student may not withdraw from a course after the fourth week of the first

six weeks of the fall semester. However, to meet individual student needs, the principal may use his or her discretion to approve a course change.

- Students who withdraw from a course before the deadlines stated above will have the grade from the dropped course applied to the grade average for the new course. It is highly recommended that students transfer from one course to another in the same discipline.
- For UIL eligibility, a student can withdraw with no penalty regardless of grade in a course before the end of the fourth week of the first six weeks and remain eligible. A student who withdraws with a passing grade at any time and maintains the minimum number of required course enrollments remains eligible. Dropping an honors (weighted) class that is exempted for no pass no play does not cause loss of eligibility at any time if the student has a grade of 60 or above. Please see a counselor for a list of exempted courses.
- Receiving teachers will describe the knowledge and skills essential for success in the course and suggest ways to learn them. Students who request and receive a course change assume responsibility for the content of the entire course on the final exam.
- A middle school student may withdraw from a high school credit course for which a state EOC exam is required by the end of the fourth week of the fourth six weeks of the course. A middle school student may withdraw from any other high school credit course by the end of the fifth week of the last six weeks of the course. The final semester report card must reflect the new course to which the student transferred.

## School Counseling

### ***Academic Counseling at Elementary, Middle and High School Levels***

The school counselor is available to students and parents to talk about the importance of postsecondary education and how best to plan for postsecondary education, including appropriate courses to consider and financial aid availability and requirements.

Each student will receive instruction related to how the student can best prepare for high school, college and a career.

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 spring, secondary students entering grades six through 12 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university or training school or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing and scholarships.

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

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who

wishes to meet with the counselor should contact the counselor's office or the main office at his/her school.

## ***Mental Health***

If you have questions or concerns about your child's mental health, contact your child's school counselor and ask for information about District and community resources; or dial 211 (United Way Capital Area, available 24/7).

State-wide and national informational resources include the following:

- [National Institute of Mental Health](#) (NIMH).
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) (NAMI), 512-693-2000; 1-800-633-3760.
- [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#); crisis line: 1-800-273-TALK (8255); crisis text line: Text "TALK" to 741741; information line: 1-888-333-AFSP (2377).

[Also see **Suicide Awareness** on page 92.]

Campus Based Counseling Referral Centers (CBCRC) are where students and families can receive mental health services provided by a full-time licensed therapist—a clinical social worker, professional counselor or psychologist—conveniently located at school. CBCRC's are overseen by AISD Department of Comprehensive Health, operating in collaboration with Seton Healthcare and Austin Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC).

CBCRC therapists use evidence-based practices to help students and families identify and treat behavioral issues and mental health concerns. Working with the family, therapists complete a thorough clinical assessment, create therapeutic goals with the student and provide on-going therapy throughout the year. The treatment approach is strengths-based, rooted in therapeutic models such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Trauma Informed Care and Motivational Interviewing. All services are confidential and student health information is protected under the law. CBCRC therapists work collaboratively with other school-based programs, such as Communities in Schools, Council on At-Risk Youth and Safe Place to create a wraparound model for the whole child.

Students can be referred for CBCRC services through the campus Child Study Team, parent/guardian or community referrals. Parent/guardian consent is required in order for a student to receive services. CBCRC's offer a variety of payment options for both insured and uninsured, which help meet the range of needs of AISD families. To inquire about services at a particular campus, contact an administrator, the school nurse or the CBCRC therapist on that campus.

[See **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 91, **Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support** on page 92, **Child Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children** on page 28 and **Dating Violence** on page 38.]

## **School Facilities**

### ***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.

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, students must leave campus immediately unless a student is involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or other authorized employee or adult, or unless students are granted permission to remain on campus in accordance with policy FNAB.

### ***Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)***

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

### ***Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)***

Loitering in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### ***Cafeteria Services (All Grade Levels)***

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program, and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price meals at [SchoolCafe.com](http://SchoolCafe.com), or to complete a paper application available at each campus.

Students who do not qualify for meal benefits may purchase a meal at the following rates: Breakfast \$1.50 (all schools); elementary lunch price: \$2.90; and secondary lunch price: \$3.05.

If students exhaust their meal account, there is a grace period during which the student can charge meals to his/her account. Elementary and middle school students may charge up to three meals. High school students may charge up to two meals. Students may not charge à la carte items.

Charges shall be paid in full before a menu-ed meal is offered. Once the charge limit is reached, if the account is not replenished, the student shall receive a courtesy meal at the beginning of the lunch line. There is no limit to the number of courtesy meals a student may receive. Food service staff shall not pull a tray from a student who has reached the charge limit.

Cafeteria staff will work with campus staff to identify students' eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

The district shall notify the household of a student with a low and negative meal balance and request payment by letter and email. Automatic phone calls shall also be administered no more than once per week.

The district does not allow foods of minimal nutritional value to be served or sold on school premises during the school. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

For more information, please visit [the AISD Nutrition and Food Services webpage](#) or contact the Nutrition and Food Services Office at 512-414-0251.

### ***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.

### **Searches**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may occasionally conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

### ***Students' Desks and Lockers (All Grade Levels)***

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable suspicion to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

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

### ***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 telecommunications or other 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) and **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources** on page 44 for more information.]

### ***Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle parked on district property and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See the Student Code of Conduct.]

Vehicles parked on district property are under the jurisdiction of the district. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable suspicion to do so, with or without the permission of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the student's parent will be contacted.

### ***Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)***

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

### ***Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)***

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL).]

### ***Drug Testing (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see **Steroids** on page91.]

### **Sexual Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation** on page 38.]

### **Special Programs (All Grade Levels)**

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

### **Standardized Testing**

#### ***Secondary Grade Levels***

#### **SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)**

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the school counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the school counselor.

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

#### **TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are

to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also substitute for certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

### **THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment)**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA). The purpose of the THEA is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This test may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through the district as well.

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

#### **Grades Three through Eight**

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 three through eight
- Reading, annually in grades three through eight
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades four and seven
- Science in grades five and eight
- Social Studies in grade eight

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades five and eight is required by law for the student to be promoted to the next grade level, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level. Exceptions may apply for students enrolled in a special education program if the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee concludes the student has made sufficient progress in the student's individualized education plan (IEP). [See **Promotion and Retention** on page 78 for additional information.]

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

#### **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 will be required for graduation, unless otherwise 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, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

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

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

[See **Graduation** on page 51 for additional information.]

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

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only and only a physician can prescribe use.

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.

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the [UIL Athletics Health & Safety website](#).

### **Students in Foster Care (All Grade Levels)**

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care) with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

Please contact Rosie Coleman, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at 512-414-0114 with any questions.

[See **Students in the Conservatorship of the State** on page 17 for more information.]

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

[See policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities and **Graduation** on page 51 for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies.]

### **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention (All Grade Levels)**

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website: [Services for Children and Adolescents](#).

## Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access the following resources or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention and to find mental health services available in your area:

- If it is an emergency, call 911.
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
- Crisis TEXT line: Text "HELLO" to 741-741 (free and confidential, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week).
- Austin Travis County Integral Care: 512-472-4357.
- <https://texasuicideprevention.org>
- Contact your child's pediatrician or doctor.

Schools have an important role in preventing youth suicide, and being aware of potential warning signs is vital. **Warning signs of suicidal ideation include, but are not limited, to the following:**

- Talking or joking about suicide.
- Making suicide threats.
- Seeking out weapons, pills, or other ways to die.
- Making statements about feeling hopeless, helpless, or worthless.
- Saying things like, "I'd be better off dead," "I wish I could sleep forever" or "People would be better if I died."
- Apathy or loss of interest in things one cares about.
- Taking unnecessary risks or exhibiting self-destructive behavior.
- Writing social media posts about death, dying or suicide
- Giving away prized possessions.
- Saying goodbye to friends and family as if for good.

A change in behavior can also be a warning sign:

- Changes in eating habits (eating too little or too much).
- Changes in sleeping habits (sleeping too little or too much).
- Changes in school attendance or grades.
- Increased use of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Isolation-change in friendships or withdrawing from friends and social activities.
- Out of character behavior.
- Mood swings or personality changes.
- Loss of interest in activities or things one cares about.

- Engaging in reckless behavior.
- A deepening depression and increased anxiety.

Seek help immediately if you have any concerns about your child.

### **Summer School (All Grade Levels)**

Please contact the Department of School, Family and Community Education at 512-414-0112 regarding AISD summer school and summer programs.

### **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)**

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

### **Transfers (All Grade Levels)**

The general rule in AISD is that students will attend the school in the attendance zone in which the student resides.

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

### ***Transfers Under Local Transfer Policy FDB (LOCAL)***

Local District Policy FDB(LOCAL) allows any student to request a transfer to another school based on available space. The three board-approved transfer priorities are: sibling, tracking and majority to minority transfers. Transfer requests must be received by the established deadline stated in the policy. More details on these transfer options are below. Students entering magnet programs (LASA, Kealing and Fulmore) and application programs (Ann Richards, Fine Arts Academies at McCallum and Lamar, IB at Anderson, Dual Language, etc.) are accepted on an application basis and coded in the transfer file as curriculum transfers.

### ***Continuation Transfers***

Once a K-12 transfer is approved, it is good through the highest grade at that level. For example, an elementary transfer is good through the fifth grade or sixth grade (for those schools with sixth grade); a middle school transfer is good through the eighth grade; and a high school transfer is good through the 12th grade. AISD students/parents do not need to reapply for a transfer each year that their children remain in the same school. Transfers can be revoked at the end of a semester if expectations for behavior, grades, or attendance are not met. See FDB (REGULATION).

### ***Sibling Transfers***

The board has designated through District Policy FDB that students with a sibling at the same school will be given priority "sibling" transfer approval. One of the students must be on a transfer for the sibling

to receive the priority. The students must be attending the school at the same time, and one must be at the school at the time of the transfer request. For example, a sibling priority is not given if a parent applies for two students to attend an elementary school at first and third grades. The third grader is approved because there is available third grade transfer space, but the first grader is not approved, because there is no transfer space. The parent cannot appeal to receive sibling consideration, as one child was not in attendance at the school when the parent applied for the transfer. A sibling transfer will not be approved to a frozen school.

### ***Tracking Transfers***

The board has designated through District Policy FDB that students who have attended a school for two or more years at the highest grade, with at least one year on a transfer, will be given priority “tracking” transfer approval. A tracking transfer will not be approved to a frozen school.

### ***Majority-to-minority Transfers***

The board has designated through District Policy FDB that Black (not of Hispanic origin) or Hispanic students who are coming from a school with more than 50 percent Black (not of Hispanic origin) and Hispanic students and requesting a transfer to a school with less than 50 percent Black (not of Hispanic origin) and Hispanic students will be given priority “Majority-to-Minority” transfer approval. A Majority-to-Minority transfer will not be approved to a frozen school.

### ***Magnet Program Transfers***

A magnet application to the Liberal Arts and Science Academy, the Fulmore Middle School magnet program or the Kealing Middle School magnet program shall be submitted directly to the request program’s director/administrator. Approval of an application, through meeting application requirements, shall be subject to the general provisions of the transfer policy and depend on availability of space and class-size caps at the specific school.

### ***Curriculum Transfers***

A transfer may be requested when a student’s desired program of study is not offered at the student’s school of residence. A “program of study” is a continuous sequence of courses designed to allow a student to pursue a specific area of learning (e.g., ROTC). All of these programs have limited space and students must apply to the program. Behavior, attendance and grades are often considered when a student applies for a particular program. A transfer shall require approval by the appropriate associate superintendent and shall be contingent on availability of space.

An application to the Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders, the Anderson High School International Baccalaureate program, the McCallum High School Fine Arts Academy and other specific programs designated by the superintendent shall be submitted directly to the requested program’s director/administrator. The approval of an application, through meeting application requirements, shall be subject to the general provisions of the transfer policy and depend on availability of space and class-size caps at the specific schools.

### ***General Transfers***

A general transfer may be requested when the student does not qualify for one of the other types of transfers and shall be approved if space is available. A general transfer will not be approved to a frozen school.

### **Public Education Grant (PEG) Transfers**

Students from PEG-identified schools are allowed to transfer to another district. The PEG Program mandated by the Texas Legislature identifies schools at which 50 percent or more of the students did not pass TAKS or were rated as Academically Unacceptable under the statewide accountability system in any two of the preceding three years. Students may not transfer from a PEG identified school to another PEG identified school. Each district makes individual determinations of whether to accept PEG transfers, as state law does not require districts to accept PEG requests. Students from PEG identified schools wishing to transfer within the district to another non-PEG identified AISD school may request a transfer under the Local Transfer Policy FDB(LOCAL).

### **Diversity Choice School Option**

District policy FC(LOCAL) allows students residing in specified elementary attendance areas (see FDA (LOCAL)) to choose to attend the secondary schools designated in the policy with transportation provided by the district. Eligible students and parents are notified of this diversity choice option through letters sent home by the Office of Student Services/Records. Once the diversity choice is made, the chosen school becomes the student’s home school through the highest grade in the school. A student who has attended a selected campus through diversity choice and who has a history of at least two unbroken years of attendance in the two highest grades offered at the school may request a tracking transfer to the next level as specified in FDA (LOCAL).

[See **Safety Transfers** on page 16, and **Bullying** on page 26 for other transfer options.]

Campus principals and counselors will be able to answer most of your questions about your child’s options under this Diversity Choice Program. They can provide information about schools’ academic performance, class scheduling and curriculum. Please feel free to contact them. You are also welcome to visit campuses. Please call ahead for an appointment so that a staff member is available to meet with you.

### **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Choice Transfers**

[See **Safety Transfers** on page 16, and **Bullying** on page 26 for other transfer options.]

### **Grade Translation for Students Transferring In**

Courses completed in out-of-district schools, both foreign and domestic, which can be aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), shall be considered eligible for transfer of credit. Foreign transcripts and supplemental documents should be translated in English and presented to the campus registrar with the original foreign transcript.

A uniform grading system for translating letter grades to a numerical score, shown at right, is used in all high schools unless the sending school provides an alpha to numeric grading scale.

<b>Translating Letter Grades in Grades 3-5 To Numerical Grades</b>		
A: Excellent (90–100)	A+	98–100
	A	94–97
	A-	90-93
B: Good (80-89)	B+	88-89
	B	84-87
	B-	80-83
C: Fair (70-79)	C+	78-79
	C	74-77
	C-	70-73
F: Failing 0-69		F

Please refer to the following: EI(LOCAL), EIA(LOCAL) and (REGULATION), and FEC.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 16, **Bullying** on page 26, and **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 18, for other transfer options.]

## **Transportation (All Grade Levels)**

### ***School-sponsored Trips***

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

### ***Buses and Other School Vehicles***

School bus service is provided to students based upon eligibility criteria as set forth by district policy. Students are eligible for transportation if the following criteria are met:

1. Students reside two or more miles from their campus of regular attendance (i.e. home school, Magnet school or AISD Academy) measured along the shortest route to school. The "home school" campus is determined by the student's residential address and the assignment boundary of each school.
2. Students living within two miles of their home school, Magnet school or AISD Academy who would be subject to hazardous traffic conditions if they were to walk to school.

[See **Transfers** on page 93 and FDB(LOCAL) regarding transportation for students on transfer.]

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, including buses, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.

Further information may be obtained on [AISD's Transportation Department homepage](#) or at the [Where's the Bus webpage](#).

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

### ***Guidelines Governing Student Conduct on AISD School Buses***

A pupil riding on an AISD school bus is under the supervision of the Austin schools the same as if he/she is in the school building or on the school grounds and therefore is subject to the student disciplinary policies of the district.

#### **Students' Rules for Behavior: Respect self, others, and property!**

Students must:

- Behave appropriately with no loud noises.
- Cooperate with the bus driver and others.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Stay in your assigned seat, facing forward, and wearing seat belt.

- Keep hands, head, and feet inside the bus.
- Not drop or throw objects inside or outside the bus.
- Not eat or drink on the bus. (Students are allowed to drink water.)
- Not litter on the bus.
- Not use inappropriate language.
- Not possess weapons, alcohol, or drugs including tobacco.
- Not engage in physical or verbal altercations.
- Not have skateboards.
- Buckle up at all times.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

### **Consequences for Violations**

If any of the above student behavior rules are broken, the bus driver will make a referral of the violation to the principal and the following disciplinary actions will be considered:

- First violation: Principal or assistant will conference with student. Suspension from the bus may occur with this violation. Parents or guardians will be notified.
- Second violation: Student will be suspended from the bus for three school days. Parents or guardian will be notified.
- Third violation: Student will be suspended from the bus for an extended period of time until an agreement can be reached among parents, guardians, administrator, bus driver, transportation supervisor and student.

Serious offenses may warrant more serious disciplinary measures, up to and including removal to a disciplinary alternative education program or expulsion from school. Incidents will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Read and discuss with your child(ren) the responsibilities, behavior rules and violation consequences covered by the Transportation Guidelines.
- Inform your child(ren) of the location of bus stop, the time and to wait in a single line.
- Require your child(ren) to arrive five minutes prior to scheduled time and to conduct themselves appropriately on school buses.
- Support the school officials in their efforts to operate a safe and efficient transportation system.

**IMPORTANT:** Parents are responsible for providing transportation for the student to attend school during suspension from the bus. This is not a suspension from class. If student does not attend school during suspension from the bus, the absence is unexcused.

### **Driver Responsibilities**

- Safely operate the bus.
- Be on the bus to supervise the daily boarding and de-boarding of students and follow campus procedures.
- During orientation or within the first two weeks of school discuss safety, evacuation procedures and guidelines governing student conduct on AISD school buses with students.
  - After the first verbal warning to the student, write a referral for any subsequent violations and submit to Transportation so it can be sent to the campus principal.
- Assign seats, maintain a current seating chart and give a copy to school official and to the transportation department.
- Call the dispatcher for any needed guidance.

### **Principal Responsibilities**

- Inform parents and students of school bus rules and consequences of violations.
- Investigate and respond to complaints and referrals.
- Confer with students, parent and bus driver when appropriate.
- Be present or appoint a designated representative to be at the campus-loading zone during arrival and departure times.
- Meet with the drivers at the beginning of each school year and as needed throughout the year to discuss loading procedures, safety concerns, and discipline procedures.
- Maintain in the school office current schedules and rider information of all buses assigned to the campus. This information should be current by the end of the first week of school.
- Provide students with auxiliary rider forms as needed.

### **Vandalism (All Grade Levels)**

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. Littering, defacing or damaging school property is not tolerated to ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended, both for this year and for years to come. 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, video and audio recording equipment is used to monitor student behavior, including on buses and in common areas on campus. Signs stating that students may be video or audio recorded shall be posted in district buildings and on school buses. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

Recordings shall remain in the custody of the district or Department of Transportation and shall be maintained as required by law. The principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Upon written request of 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, state law requires the district to place video and audio recording equipment in a classroom in which the student spends at least 50 percent of his or her instructional day, referred to in the law as a self-contained classroom. The majority of students in this type of classroom must also be students who receive special education services. Before the district places a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which your child receives special education services, the district will provide notice to you. Please speak directly with the principal, who has been designated by the district to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law, for further information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment.

[See EHBAF(LOCAL).]

## **Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)**

### ***General Visitors***

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and present some form of identification (such as a driver license or other photo ID). The identification will be scanned or manually entered into the Safety Check system. Safety Check will screen each visitor's identity against the registered sex offender databases in 48 states, as well as local alerts, such as court ordered restraining orders. Once the check is performed, an adhesive visitor's badge will be printed with the visitor's name and photo. All visitors must wear this badge during the entire time they spend on the campus.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

### **Commonly Asked Questions About Safety Check**

*What is Safety Check?*

Safety Check is a web-based visitor management system implemented to enhance the safety of students and staff by screening visitors on our campus.

*Why is my school using Safety Check?*

The safety and wellbeing of students and staff is the district's highest priority. This system will allow the campus to track visitors to the campus and prevent those who may pose a threat to safety from entering the building undetected. Your school is one of many to use the Safety Check system.

*Who will be checked?*

All visitors, vendors and others who come to the campus.

*How does Safety Check work?*

Visitors' driver licenses or other ID cards are scanned to check against sex offender databases in 48 states. (Additionally, other local checks, such as court restraining orders, can be added.) Once the scan is complete, a visitor's badge will be printed for the visitor to wear at all times while on the campus.

*What is Safety Check looking for?*

Safety Check searches for registered sex offenders or other local alerts such as court restraining orders or court ordered custody arrangements.

*What ID can I use?*

A government issued ID such as a driver license, state ID card or an ID obtained from a consulate can be used. A district-issued ID can be provided to those who need one (see your campus for details).

*Will the system check immigration status?*

No. The system only searches for registered sex offenders or other court orders, which do not include immigration status.

*What happens if I am identified as an offender by the system?*

An administrator will privately inform you of what the results mean as far as your presence on campus.

*Is my Safety Check information kept confidential?*

Yes. All information obtained will remain confidential and will not be shared or made public.

*If I want more information, whom can I contact?*

If you have technical questions about the Safety Check system, please email [safetycheck@austinisd.org](mailto:safetycheck@austinisd.org). If you have concerns regarding the handling of information obtained via Safety Check, please contact the campus administrator.

## ***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 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 the person 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 FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

[See also Student Code of Conduct.]

## ***Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students***

### **Business, Civic and Youth Groups**

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

## **Career Day**

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

## **Volunteers (All Grade Levels)**

We greatly appreciate the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the campus front office for more information and to complete an application.

The district welcomes volunteers who work to support students and schools. State law requires that school volunteers undergo a criminal history information review, unless the volunteer is a parent or grandparent of a student on the campus. Additionally, district policy GKG(LOCAL) requires a criminal history background check for all prospective mentors or a volunteer who will have unsupervised access to students, regardless of the exceptions described above, and campus administrators may require background checks for any and all other volunteers at their campus as necessary.

Unless otherwise noted at the campus, background checks are performed through the Austin Partners in Education (APIE) at [www.austinpartners.org](http://www.austinpartners.org). The checks are performed at no cost to volunteers. GKG (REGULATION) lists the standards that will be applied to criminal history checks for volunteers before they begin work with students.

Volunteers who work with student information are legally required to maintain strict confidentiality to protect student privacy rights. Such volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement stating that they understand the expectations and requirements associated with privacy.

Any volunteers serving on elementary campuses, especially those who will be supervising students, should receive training and materials associated with the duties and expectations for volunteers.

## **Voter Registration (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

## **Withdrawing from School (All Grade Levels)**

A student under age 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

A student who is age 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

## Glossary

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting 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** refers to an assessment that took the place of ACT-Plan and is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

**ARD** stands for admission, review and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

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

**CPS** stands for Child Protective Services.

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

**DFPS** is the Texas Department of Family Protective Services.

**DPS** stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**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 passed in December 2015.

**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 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

**FMNV** stands for foods of minimal nutritional value.

**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. The IEP contains several parts, such as: a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

**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.

**NCLB Act** is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**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 assist the district in ensuring that local community values and health issues are reflected in the district's health education instruction, along with providing assistance 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 A** is an accommodated version of the STAAR that is available for certain students who receive special education services or students who have been identified as dyslexic.

**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 Linguistically Accommodated (STAAR L)** is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigrant English learners.

**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. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the STAAR EOC assessments is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or 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. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It 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.

**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 courses are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic and music contests.

## **APPENDIX I: 2018–19 Austin ISD Contact Information**

1111 W. Sixth St., Austin, Texas 78703  
512-414-1700 | [www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org)

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## **Appendix II: Freedom from Bullying Policy**

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

### **Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying**

Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on May 4, 2018.

*Note:* This policy addresses bullying of District students. For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyberbullying. For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

#### ***Bullying Prohibited***

The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

#### **Examples**

Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

#### ***Retaliation***

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

#### **Examples**

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

#### ***False Claim***

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

#### ***Timely Reporting***

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

## ***Reporting Procedures***

### **Student Report**

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.

### **Employee Report**

Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

### **Report Format**

A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

### ***Notice of Report***

When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify the parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.

### ***Prohibited Conduct***

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

### ***Investigation of Report***

The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

### ***Concluding the Investigation***

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

### ***Notice to Parents***

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

### ***District Action***

#### ***Bullying***

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

#### ***Discipline***

A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.

The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

#### ***Corrective Action***

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

#### ***Transfers***

The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

#### ***Counseling***

The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

#### ***Improper Conduct***

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

### ***Confidentiality***

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

### ***Appeal***

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

### ***Records Retention***

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

### ***Access to Policy and Procedures***

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.