

BLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Student Handbook 2018 - 2019

PRINCIPAL: JASON HAMMACK
ASST. PRINCIPAL: ERIN GRAY
COUNSELOR: MEGAN GUNNELS
SECRETARY: SAMANTHA LIMMER

MAILING ADDRESS: PHYSICAL ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 216 5123 FM 2194
MERIT, TEXAS 75458 MERIT, TEXAS 75458

PHONE NUMBERS:
OFFICE: 903.776.2239
FAX: 903-527.5491

BLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION:

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. BOX 216
MERIT, TEXAS 75458

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION PHONE NUMBERS:

CENTRAL OFFICE: 903-776-2239
CENTRAL OFFICE FAX: 903-776-2240

SUPERINTENENT: RICK TIDWELL
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT: BRIAN BYMASTER
SECRETARY: JILL SPEAR
TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR: TED CAPPS
CURRICULUM DIRECTOR: SHELLI WENDLAND
DISTRICT MOTTO: "Live To Learn, Learn To Live"

It is the policy of BLAND I.S.D. not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the

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

BLAND I.S.D. will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the following District designees:

Title IX Coordinator

Name: Rick Tidwell
Position: Superintendent
Address: PO Box 216, Merit, Texas, 75458
Phone: 903 776 2239

504 Coordinator

Name: Rick Tidwell
Position: Superintendent
Address: PO Box 216, Merit, Texas, 75458
Phone: 903 776 2239

Title II Coordinator

Name: Rick Tidwell
Position: Superintendent
Address: PO Box 216, Merit, Texas, 75458
Phone: 903 776 2239

Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth

Name: Christy Blackburn
Position: Counselor
Address: PO Box 216, Merit, Texas, 75458
Phone: 903 776 2161

PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

The Principal's Office, located at 5123 FM 2194 Merit, TX 75423, is inside the eastern main entrance, the assistant principal's office is inside the western main entrance office. Teachers, students, and parents, are always welcome for conferences.

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

The Superintendent's Office is located in the Administration Building at 2566 Lake Avenue in Merit, TX 75458 and contains all the administrative records pertaining to the school system.

CAMPUS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of BLAND I.S.D. is to encourage and support the personal growth of its students in their development of attitudes, knowledge and skills; the most important skills to be taught are how to think, how to learn, and how to act.

CAMPUS VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Bland Independent School District is to have students and staff that encourage and support one another; learn as much as possible; and most importantly give 100% to do their best.

CAMPUS PURPOSE STATEMENT

Students, teachers, and staff will show respect for each other and work collaboratively to achieve high expectations, model excellent citizenship, and demonstrate a passion for lifelong learning so that all involved in the educational process will succeed.

SCHOOL SONG

“Hats off to the ole Bland School
The school that we love,
She will help us grow stronger
By getting above,
We salute the ole Bland School
The Blue and the Gold
The love and thy honor shall never be told
Yea Blue, Yea Gold
Come on Tigers, Let's Go!”

FACULTY & STAFF

Pam Kane	Pre- Kindergarten
Casey Sherrow	Pre-Kindergarten Aide
Samantha Striplin	Pre- Kindergaretn Aide
Carissa Brophy	Kindergarten
Courtney Moore	Kindergarten
Elizabeth Kennedy	1st Grade
Becki Rodgers	1st Grade
Benita Wilson	1st Grade
Jill Singleton	2 nd Grade
Christa Lormand	2nd Grade
Kim Daniels	2nd Grade
KaLynn Blount	3 rd Grade Reading
Kailee Warren	3 rd Grade Math
Amy Morgan	4 th Reading/S. Studies/ Science
Melissa Jenkins	4 th English/ Science
Chelsea Jenkins	4 th Math/ Science
Tasha Flowers	5 th Math
Kacie Soto	5 th Science/S. Studies
Brandi Curry	5 th English / Reading / UIL
Carl Herod	Music
Danny Roper	P.E.

Melody McCann	Library
Rachel Bouknight	ESL
Taylor Warren	ESL Aide
Rosie Treino	ESL Aide
Jessica Phelps	Math Interventionist
Karen Ruthart	Reading Interventionist
Monica Thomasson	Dyslexia Therapist
Cheri Adams	Sp.Ed. CM/RS/LS
Mary Hicks	Sp.Ed. / Resource
Charla Flowers	Sp.Ed. Aide
Toni Holloway	Sp.Ed. Aide
	Sp.Ed Aide
Tristan Clamon	Life Skills
Alesha Smith	Sp.Ed Aide
Erika Dechkhum	Sp.Ed. Aide
Rita Blakemore	Cafeteria Director
Stacy Spruill	Cafeteria Worker
Lori Dunlap	Cafeteria Worker
Cruz Gomez	Cafeteria Worker
Lori Cotton	Custodian
Phillip Armstrong	Custodian/ Bus Driver
Samantha Limmer	Secretary
Amy Struckmeyer	Cafeteria Clerk/ Office Aide
Megan Gunnels	Counselor
Diana Marsh	Nurse
Erin Gray	Assistant Principal
Jason Hammack	Principal

Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information

State law requires the district to give you the following information:

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want BLAND ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing by within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues.

For the following school-sponsored purposes: BLAND I.S.D. has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

For all other purposes, BLAND I.S.D. has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- E-mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Most recent school previously attended
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team
- Enrollment Status
- Student identification numbers or identifiers that cannot be used alone to gain access to electronic education records.

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

*In your registration packet, be sure to initial those actions, on your Acknowledgement form, that you do NOT wish to give consent to. By leaving the spaces blank, you are giving consent for that information to be released.

Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education

Federal law requires that the district release to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, upon request, the name, address, and phone number of secondary school students enrolled in the district, unless the parent or eligible student directs the district not to release information to these types of requestors without prior written consent.

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2018-2019. 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 Bland Elementary School Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS—with notices that the district must provide to all parents, as well as other 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; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS —organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

Please be aware that the term “the student’s parent” is used to refer to the parent, legal guardian, or any other person who has agreed to assume school-related responsibility for a student.

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Bland High School *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 as an attachment to this handbook or as a separate document sent home to parents.

The student handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect student handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters and other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* and any provisions of the student handbook, the provisions of board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

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.

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the Bland Elementary School Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child 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.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering ninth grade.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 903-776-2239 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer. [See policy GKG]
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [See policies BQA and BQB]
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies BDF, EHAA, and FFA]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations.

SECTION 1: PARENTAL RIGHTS

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 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 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, and the like on the district's Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction

As a parent, if your child is under the age of 14, you must grant permission for your child to receive instruction in the district's parenting and paternity awareness program or your child will not be allowed to participate in the instruction. This program, developed by the Office of the Texas Attorney General and the Texas State Board of Education, is incorporated into the district's health education classes.

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

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or
- When it relates to media coverage of the school
- When it relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

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

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

Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment-spanking or paddling the student-may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual.

If you do not want corporal punishment to be administered to your child as a method of student discipline, submit a written statement to the campus principal stating that decision. A signed statement must be provided each year. You may choose to revoke this request at any time during the year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal. However, district personnel may choose to use discipline methods other than corporal punishment even if the parent requests that this method be used on the student.

Please note that if the district is made aware that a student is in temporary or permanent conservatorship (custody) of the state, through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements, corporal punishment will not be administered, even when a signed statement prohibiting its use has not been submitted by the student's caregiver or caseworker.

Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees

Teachers and other approved employees are permitted by the district to communicate with students through the use of electronic media within the scope of the individual's professional responsibilities. For example, a teacher may set up a social networking page for his or her class, or extra curricular activity 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, upcoming tests or extra curricular activities .

If you prefer that your child not receive any one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee, please submit a written request to the campus principal stating this preference.

Objecting to the Release of Directory Information

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated "directory information" from a child'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 list of student birthdays for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition; a student's name and photograph posted on a district-approved and -managed social media platform; and the names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period. This directory information will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, a parent or eligible student may object to the release of 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.]

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and the second for all other requests. For all district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information:

- Student’s Name
- Photograph
- Degrees, honors, and awards recieved
- Dates of attendance
- Grade Level
- Participation in offically recognized activites and sports
- Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

If you do not object to the use of your child’s information for these limited school-sponsored purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use the information for the schoolsponsored purposes listed above.

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

- Student’s Name
- Telephone listing
- Degrees, honors, and awards recieved
- Grade level
- Participation in offically recognized activites and sports
- Enrollment Status

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.

Also review the information at **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**

Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education

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 registration 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

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.
- Sexual 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 parents.
- 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.

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

“Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings 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 that 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 scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam 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.

REMOVING A STUDENT FROM INSTRUCTION OR EXCUSING A STUDENT FROM A REQUIRED COMPONENT OF INSTRUCTION

Removing a Student from 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.

As a parent, you are entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, you may remove your child from any part of this instruction with no academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. 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.

Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

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 3–12 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 United States 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 United States 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 follow.

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 is in need of additional targeted assistance in order 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 ten 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

Reviewing 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 child's teacher.

Notices of Certain Student Misconduct To Noncustodial Parent

A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to your 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]

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 counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns, and
- 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 the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or 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 ____**, are:

Please note:

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to :

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights. For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

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

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes.
- District staff members who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. “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; or investigating or evaluating programs. Such persons would include school officials (such as board members, the superintendent, and principals), school staff members (such as teachers, counselors, and diagnosticians), or an agent of the district (such as a medical consultant).
- Various governmental agencies.
- Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she subsequently enrolls.

Release 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 principal 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.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. If circumstances prevent inspection during these hours, 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 records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

The address of the superintendent’s office is PO Box 216, Merit, Texas 75458.

The address of the principal’s office is 5123 FM 2194 Celeste, Texas 75423

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the principal. 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 requestor has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor 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 is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal's office or on the districts Web site.

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 parents or the student.

Teachers 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; 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.

STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Accommodations for 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, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the

absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=7995>.

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, etc.) 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 FDB(LEGAL).]

School Safety Transfers/Assignments

As a parent, you have a right:

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the Superintendent or Principal to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent or designee for information. [See policy FDB.]
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the district decides to transfer your child to another campus. Transportation is not provided in this circumstance.

[See Bullying, policy FDB, and policy FFI]

- To 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.
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).]

Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students

A parent of a student who uses a service animal because of the student's disability must submit a request in writing to the principal at least ten district business days before bringing the service animal on campus.

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 does 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 at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school. 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.

[See also Credit by Examination For Advancement/Acceleration on page ____, Course Credit on page ____, and Students in Foster Care.

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.

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.

Students Who Have Learning Disabilities or Who Need Special Education Services

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other support services that are available to all students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

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

- Texas Project First, at <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/>
- Partners Resource Network, at <http://www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html>

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Megan Gunnels or Jason Hammack at 903 527 5490.

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

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

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

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

Special Education Referrals:

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

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

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

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for

three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

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

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

Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Megan Gunnels

Phone Number: 903-527-5490

Section 504 Referrals:

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

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Megan Gunnels Phone Number: 903-527-5490

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

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

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

A student may be eligible to receive specialized support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student has difficulty performing ordinary class work in English. If the student qualifies for these extra services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected Under Section 504

A child 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 child is in need of services and

supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law. The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is Megan Gunnels at 903-527-5490.

[Also see policy FB.]

SECTION II: OTHER INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the 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 conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your children have a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Jason Hammack at (903) 527-5490.

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 compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below:

Compulsory Attendance Between Ages 6 and 19

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 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.

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.

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 listed in Section I at Children of Military Families, 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.

Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance

ALL Grade Levels

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.

Between Ages 6 and 19

When a student between ages 6 and 19 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 his or her child'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. The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is Rodney Godwin. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

A court of law may also impose penalties against a student's parent if a schoolaged 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 ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

If a student ages 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 policy FEA(LEGAL).]

Attendance for Credit or Final Grade K-12

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class

is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit 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, if appropriate. [See policy FEC.]

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant 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 review absences incurred based on the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made up the work missed in each class.
- 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.

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

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

Official Attendance-Taking Time

The district must submit attendance of its students to Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day.

Official attendance is taken every day during second period as required by state rule.

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

Documentation after an Absence

Please do not forget to call the office (**903.527.5490**) when your child will miss school for any reason. When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note within three school days, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent’s permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence.

Doctor’s Note after an Absence for Illness

Within 3 days of returning to school because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student’s extended absence from school. Otherwise, the student’s absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

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

[See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW (All

Grade Levels)

Bland ISD 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;
- The performance ratings of the district’s evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law; and

■ Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.

Information about all of these can be found on the district's website at <https://sites.google.com/a/blandisd.org/blandisd/links>

Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at <http://www.texaschoolaccountabilitydashboard.org> and www.tea.texas.gov.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Student clubs and performing groups such as the athletic teams may establish rules of conduct--and 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 school shall apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization.

ASSEMBLIES

Assemblies will be held at the end of each nine weeks. Notice of assemblies will be placed in the hands of teachers and students as far ahead of time as possible. Each teacher is responsible for his/her class at the assembly. All students and teachers are required to attend assemblies. A student's conduct in assemblies must meet the same standard as in the classroom. A student who is tardy or who does not abide by District rules of conduct during an assembly shall be subject to disciplinary action. Do not bring books to assemblies. The Student Council will help in scheduling assemblies but each assembly will be under the direct supervision of the Principal.

ATHLETICS

The purpose of athletics is to aid in the development of the student both physically and mentally. Athletics should enhance school spirit, teach self-discipline, and be a release from the academics. Sportsmanship is of utmost importance and should be shown by participants, coaches, and fans. Athletics should help unite the school and the community.

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 healthcare provider authorized under UIL rules that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the athletic program. The district follows the UIL guidelines for physicals: This examination is required in annually and the first and third years of high school competition.

BETA CLUB

The sole purpose of the Bland Beta Club is to recognize and encourage students of high achievement, character and leadership. It is not a social organization, rather an honor society.

There are certain requirements a student must meet in order to be invited to join the Bland Middle School Junior Beta Club:

1. The student must have an average of 85. This figure will be reached by averaging all of the student's academic subjects. Physical education shall not be included.
2. The average discussed above will be tallied at the end of the first nine week grading period.
3. Each candidate's name will be submitted to each of his/her teachers. If the teacher feels that the candidate does not exhibit the character, leadership, and behavior traits necessary to warrant membership, then the teacher will anonymously check the student's name. If two teachers indicate that they feel the candidate is not worthy of membership, then that candidate's name will be dropped from the invitation list.
4. The candidate will be invited to join the Beta Club only once. Students are eligible for membership their seventh and eighth grade years.
5. After the student has joined the organization, he/she must maintain an average of 85 on all academic subjects. If the average falls below 85, the member has one nine weeks period to raise the average to 85 again. The member may not have any "C's" on their report card. If average falls below 85% or a C grade the student will be placed on probation. If the student fails to meet the membership standard for a nine weeks, he/she will no longer be a member of the Beta Club.
6. If at any time, a Beta Member exhibits behavior that is against the principles and general purpose of the National Beta Club, he/she will be removed from membership by the sponsor, principal, and superintendent.

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Student Council is an organization of students selected from each class and four (4) major officers are chosen by the entire student body.

The purpose of the Council is to promote and maintain closer relationships between the student body and the faculty; to unify all student interest under one body; to build character; to promote better citizenship; and to insure better school spirit.

In order for a student to be eligible to be nominated and serve as either the President or Vice-President of the Student Council, he/she must have an overall grade average of 85 or better and have served on the Council for at least one year. All members must have an overall grade average of 70 or better.

BULLYING

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic methods, or physical conduct against another student on school property, at a school-sponsored or -related activity, or in a district operated vehicle, and the behavior:

- Results in harm to the student or the student's property,
- Places a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or of damage to the student's property, or
- Is so severe, persistent, and pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment.

This conduct is considered bullying if it exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim and if it interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

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. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying."

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, 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.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The district will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the 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.

The administration 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 his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district.

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's Web site, and is included at the end of this Handbook in the form of an appendix.

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

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The district offers career and technology programs in Agriculture, Computer Science, and Business. Placement is based on scheduled assignments.

Celebrations

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child's or grandchild's classroom for his or her birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child's teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products. [Also see Food Allergies on page ____.]

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which is included in the district crisis management plan. 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. 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.

As a parent, 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 (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp.

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

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm>

<http://www.kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html>

<http://www.taasa.org/member/materials2.php>

<http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/what-we-can-do-about-child-abuse-1>

<http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/what-we-can-do-about-child-abuse-1>

Reports may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1-800-252-5400, or on the Web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual, or on the district's Web site at <http://blandisd.us>.

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus teacher. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the principal. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the superintendent.

CONDUCT

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—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 the summer instruction.

To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the *Student Code of Conduct* and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, whether on or off school grounds, in conjunction with classes and school-sponsored activities.

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. The campus behavior coordinator at each district campus is listed below:

- Dustin Evans, High School
- Erin Gray, Middle School
- Erin Gray, Elementary School

Disruptions of School Operations

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.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on 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.
- Interference with the transportation of students in district vehicles.

Social Events

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

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

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade 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.

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

Personal Counseling

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. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should notify Ms. Gunnels and visit her office. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

[Also see Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention on page ____ and Suicide Awareness on page ____.]

COURSE CREDIT

A student in grades 6-8 will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1 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 or attend summer school.

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

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 by passing an exam 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."

The school counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject. The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam.

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

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction, i.e., for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level. The exams offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees, and state law requires the use of certain exams, such as College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, when applicable. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2017–18 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 exams 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 exam, 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 exam only once. If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [For further information, see policy EHDC.]

Students in Grades 6–12

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam, a scaled score of 50 or higher on an exam administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam, as applicable. A student may take an exam to earn 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.

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

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, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal or 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, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

Harassment

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

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

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 not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

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, counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH(LOCAL) for the appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.

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.

The district will promptly notify the parents 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 parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

During the course of an investigation, the district may take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct.

When an investigation is initiated for alleged prohibited conduct, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law. If so, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See policy FFI]

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.

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**]

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. 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, in order 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.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

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

The yearbook is available for students.

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

Nonschool Materials

Students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing more than 10 copies of written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non school material must include the name of the sponsoring

person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days. (FNAA LOCAL).

The principal has designated the school office as the location for approved non school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students.

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

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 policies at GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any non school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy.

Prior review will not be required for:

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

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

DRESS AND GROOMING

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. 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. 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.

- Please keep in mind tank tops, muscle shirts and spaghetti straps are prohibited.
- Shorts or skirts should extend well beyond the fingertips when standing normal.

- Tights and leggings may only be worn with shorts, dresses, shirts and skirts that meet the dress code of fingertip length.
- Students will also be required to remove any inappropriate or dangerous piercings such as eyebrow, nose, lip...etc.
- Please keep hair neat and of a normal coloring. Any outrageous hair that is distracting will be addressed and will have to be changed.
- Baggy or sagging pants are prohibited.
- Caps and sun glasses are not to be worn in the building.

The District prohibits pictures, emblems, or writing on clothing that:

1. Are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene
2. Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcohol, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCL Local.

The student and parent may determine the student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the general guidelines set out above and the District's dress code for students in the student handbook and or discipline management plan.

If the principal determines that a student violates the dress code, the student shall be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school by changing into school appropriate attire. If not corrected, the student shall be assigned to in school suspension for the remainder of the day or until the problem is corrected. **Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action.** Appropriate discipline procedures shall be followed in all cases. The principal, in cooperation with the sponsor, coach, or other person in charge of an extracurricular activity may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in the activity. Students who violate those standards may be removed or excluded from the activity for a period determined by the principal or sponsor and may be subject to other disciplinary action.

Electronic Devices, Communication, and Resources

Bland Independent School District provides a variety of electronic communications systems for educational purposes. The electronic communications system is defined as the District's network (including the wireless network), servers, computer workstations, mobile technologies, peripherals, applications, databases, online resources, Internet access, and any other technology designated for use by students, including all new technologies as they become available. This also includes any access to the Bland ISD electronics system while on or near school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities, and includes the appropriate use of district technology resources via off-campus remote access. Please note that the Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks and is part of the district's electronic communications systems.

Electronic Communication Devices: *Bring Your Own Technology*

BISD is excited about the new learning opportunities available through *Bring Your Own Technology*. It is our goal that students and teachers will collaborate in rich, engaging learning experiences using technology. Students may bring their own device and utilize personal electronic communication devices at school and at school activities. Students may use these

devices in the classroom when the teacher deems them appropriate for educational purposes. All devices must remain silent or be put away unless being used within a lesson during class time. Students may use devices non-instructional times, such as passing periods, lunch and before/after school.

The district permits students to possess cell phones; however, cell phones or other electronic devices may not be used during state-mandated testing, in locker room areas, or in any restroom areas. Cell phone or electronic device use during teacher testing is at the discretion of the teacher and administration. Parents needing to contact their children need to do so through the Office of their child's campus during the instructional day.

Bring Your Own Technology includes any privately owned device that enhances the learning experience.

- All devices should be clearly labeled with student's full name. Keep a record of the device's serial number.
- Devices should be charged prior to bringing to school.
- Students are responsible for personal property brought to school and should keep personal items with self or in a locked space. Schools cannot be responsible for lost/stolen/damaged personal items.
- In the event the technology is used inappropriately, teachers /administrators may confiscate the device which will be returned to the after normal disciplinary consequences have occurred or at the end of any disciplinary/criminal investigation.
- Devices may also be confiscated if the administration deems they may have evidence of criminal or code of conduct violations. Devices will be returned at a time determined by BISD.

The Internet is a network of many types of communication and information networks and is part of the district's electronic communications systems. In a 21st Century school system, technologies, the Internet, and Web 2.0 tools are essential. In accordance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, Bland Independent School District educates staff and students regarding appropriate online behavior to ensure Internet safety, including use of email and Web 2.0 resources, and has deployed filtering technology and protection measures to restrict access to inappropriate content such as those that are illegal, harmful, or contain potentially offensive information. While every effort is made to provide the most secure and optimal learning environment, it is not possible to absolutely prevent access (accidental or otherwise) to inappropriate content. **It is each student's responsibility to follow the guidelines for appropriate and acceptable use.** Access to the Bland ISD network is a privilege, and administrators and faculty may review files and messages to maintain system integrity and ensure that users are acting responsibly.

Students who do not have a personal technology device may use campus technology. All Students must adhere to the **Student Code of Conduct**, as well as **Board policies**, specifically the **Acceptable Use Policy**.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE USE

- Students will be assigned individual email and network accounts and must use only those accounts and passwords that they have been granted permission by the district to use. All account activity should be for educational purposes only.
- Students must use the Bland ISD filtered wireless network during the school day on personal electronic devices.
- Internet use at school must be directly related to school assignments and projects.
- Students must at all times use the district's electronic communications system, including email, wireless network access, and Web 2.0 tools/resources to communicate only in ways that are kind and respectful.
- Students must only open, view, modify, and delete their own computer files.
- Students must immediately report threatening messages or discomforting Internet files/sites to a teacher or an administrator.
- Students are responsible at all times for their use of the district's electronic communications system and must assume personal responsibility to behave ethically and responsibly, even when technology provides them freedom to do otherwise.

Inappropriate Use of Technology

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or photographs will be disciplined according to the ***Student Code of Conduct*** and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

SOME EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE USE

- Using the district's electronic communications system for illegal purposes including, but not limited to, cyberbullying, gambling, pornography, and computer hacking.
- Disabling, attempting to disable, bypassing, or attempting to bypass any system monitoring or filtering or security measures.

- Sharing user names and passwords with others; and/or borrowing someone else's username, password, or account access.
- Purposefully opening, viewing, using or deleting files belonging to another system user except when directed by a teacher or an administrator.
- Electronically posting personal information about one's self or others (i.e., addresses, phone numbers, and pictures).
- Downloading or plagiarizing copyrighted information without permission from the copyright holder.
- Intentionally introducing a virus or other malicious programs onto the district's system.
- Electronically posting messages, graphics, video, audio or accessing materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal.
- Wasting or abusing school resources through unauthorized system use (e.g., playing online games, downloading music, watching video broadcast, participating in chat rooms, unnecessary printing, etc.).
- Gaining unauthorized access to restricted information or network resources.
- Recording photos, videos, and audio of anyone except as directed by the classroom teacher or district administrator as part of a learning activity.
- Breach of computer security or any kind.

CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

- Appropriate disciplinary action up to expulsion from school or legal action in accordance with the **Student Code of Conduct**, **Student Handbook**, and applicable laws including monetary damages
- Suspension of access to the district's electronic communications system
- Revocation of the district's electronic communications system account(s)
- Termination of System User Account: The district may deny, revoke, or suspend specific user's access to the district's system with or without cause or notice for lack of use, violation of policy or regulations regarding acceptable network use, or as a result of disciplinary actions against the user.
- Possible criminal action

BLAND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR ELECTRONIC AND NETWORK USE

Access to electronic equipment, network resources, and the Internet at Bland Independent School District (BISD) offers students and staff (users) an almost unlimited source of resources and information to support educational development; however, the BISD network is connected to computers all around the world, and as such, some material may be considered inappropriate for the educational setting. BISD will take available precautions, which are limited, to restrict users

from controversial materials; however, on a global network it is impossible to control all unacceptable materials. BISD firmly believes that the valuable information and interaction available on this world-wide network far outweighs the possibility that users may procure material that is not consistent with the educational goals of the district; therefore, users are advised that some Internet sites may contain offensive or educationally inappropriate information, messages, images, and speech. BISD does not condone or permit the use of such material; therefore, access to network resources, including the Internet, is granted only on the conditions that the user agrees to be accountable for appropriate use of these resources. Access to these resources is a privilege, not a right. Users have certain personal responsibilities for use of the BISD network. In general this requires efficient, ethical, and legal utilization of the network. Each user will be given an individual system user account which he/she will use to gain access to network resources. Users are expressly responsible for his/her user account and the files accessed, stored, and/or created while using the account. If any user violates any of the provisions of the guidelines, policies, and procedures, the user has violated acceptable use and may forfeit his/her user account, forfeit access to all or part of the BISD network, is subject to denial of class credit, is subject to administrative actions, and is subject to legal actions when and where necessary. These terms are legally binding. Please read the guidelines, policies, and procedures carefully.

- Users may not use equipment or facilities in a way that is inconsistent with the BISD Student Code of Conduct or BISD Employee Handbook.
- Users may not destroy, damage, or mistreat equipment, facilities, or software under any circumstances.
- Users may not intentionally waste or unnecessarily tie up network resources.
- Users may not employ the network for personal financial gain or commercial purposes.
- Users may not violate regulations prescribed by the network provider, faculty, or administration.
- Users may not engage in practices that threaten the integrity of the network (i.e. knowingly downloading or copying computer viruses) or use the network in a way that disrupts the use of the network by other users (i.e. downloading huge files, sending mass emails, annoying other users, etc.). Any malicious attempts to harm, destroy, or damage data, software, equipment, or other resources of BISD or other networks connected to BISD are strictly prohibited and are subject to administrative and/or legal actions.
- Users may not write, use, send, download, display, email, or publish obscene, threatening, harassing, bullying, or otherwise offensive language, messages, images, or speech, including but not limited to pornography.
- Users may not use equipment, software, or network resources for any illegal activities, including but not limited to the violation of copyright laws and/or software piracy.
- Users may not load, download, install, or copy any software or other programs to or from BISD equipment without explicit permission from the administration.

- Users may not use another user's password or system user account, nor may a user share his/her password or system user account, nor may a user attempt to log on as another user.
- Users may not trespass into or in any way alter another user's folders, documents, images, sounds, or files.
- Users may not disclose anyone's personal information (i.e. address, phone number, etc.) including their own or information belonging to another.
- Users may not disable or bypass or attempt to bypass Internet filters, network restrictions, or electronic security measures (i.e. anonymous web proxies, altering file permissions, bypass software, computer hacking, etc.).
- Users may not record or capture images or sounds without the express consent and knowledge of all participants, without permission of the administration, and outside the stated goals of the curriculum.
- If a user inadvertently damages or destroys equipment, software, or facilities in any manner, he/she must notify the instructor or administration immediately.
- If a user inadvertently enters an inappropriate Internet website, he/she must immediately minimize the browser window and notify the instructor or administration. Failure to do so will constitute a violation of policy.
- If a user knows or believes his/her user account has been compromised, he/she must notify the administration to re-secure the account.
- System security is a very high priority. If a user feels he/she can identify a security problem on the network, the user must notify the administration.
- Users identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other network systems may be denied access to all or part of BISD electronic resources and are subject to further administrative actions and/or limitations.
- Use of network resources must be in support of education and research and consistent with educational objectives of BISD.
- Users will conduct themselves in a polite, ethical, and efficient manner at all times when using electronic resources. Inappropriate language, inappropriate images, inappropriate speech, vulgarities, obscenities, threats, and bullying are violations of acceptable use.
- Users may be required to change and/or update user information, including but not limited to, passwords. Users must comply to continue accessing network resources.
- Failure to agree to the guidelines, policies, and procedures found in the BISD Student Code of Conduct or BISD Employee Handbook forfeits user privileges to the district network.

Users should be advised that in an effort to maintain system integrity and to ensure responsible use, files, communications, and network use could and will be monitored by district administrative personnel. Users should not expect that network activity or messages and files

created, modified, transmitted, received, or stored on BISD equipment are private except where expressly stated by law.

The BISD administration determines if a violation of acceptable use has occurred, determines the consequences of the violation(s), and decides whether legal authorities will be notified.

BISD makes no warranties of any kind, whether expressed or implied, for the services provided.

BISD is not responsible for damages any user suffers. This includes, but is not limited to, loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence, omissions, or user errors. Use of any information obtained via BISD is at your own risk. BISD specifically denies any responsibilities for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

These terms and conditions shall be governed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas and the United States of America.

DRUG TESTING

Mandatory Drug/Alcohol testing for U.I.L. Athletic and Academic Activities and Extracurricular Programs

A student who participates in U.I.L. athletic and academic competition and extracurricular programs is subject to mandatory drug/alcohol testing program.

Parents and students should be aware that state law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administered an **anabolic steroid**. **Anabolic steroids** are for medical use only and only a physician can prescribe use. Under state law, 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. Education Code 38.008

Testing will be done in accordance with accepted practices and procedures as established by the testing laboratory affiliated with the district. The testing parameters will be set at industry accepted standards as defined by the National Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Sample collections will begin with all students participating in U.I.L. athletic and academic activities and extracurricular programs and followed periodically on a random basis as generated by a computer program. Student privacy will be protected to the maximum extent possible during collection. Records of test results shall be kept confidential and provided only to district administrators and personnel responsible for administering the program.

Consequences associated with a positive drug/alcohol test:

First positive test result:

- 1) A test will be performed by the school approved drug testing laboratory to confirm initial results. The parent (or the student, if the student is an adult or married) will be notified of the results and may have a second test run on the original sample (at the expense of the student or parent) by the school laboratory at the parent's (or student's) request;
- 2) Required parent/guardian meeting;
- 3) Suspension from all U.I.L. Athletic and Academic Activities and Extracurricular Programs for a period of 30 calendar days;
- 4) Refer to outside sources for counseling at the parent's request; require school counseling;
- 5) Retest during next random testing;
- 6) Suspension will begin the day the results are confirmed.

Second positive test result:

- 1) Suspension from U.I.L. Athletic and Academic Activities and Extracurricular Programs for the remainder of the school year;
- 2) Required parent/guardian meeting;
- 3) Refer to outside sources for counseling at the parent's request;
- 4) Required school counseling.

Each time a student says no to a drug test, after having signed the permission slip, it will be treated as a positive test:

1st no = 1st positive test - equal to the same consequences

2nd no = 2nd positive test - equal to the same consequences

Students who would like to volunteer to enter the program may do so, respective of the consequences as the athletic, academic, and extracurricular students. Students who do not declare at the beginning of the school year their intent to participate in U.I.L. Athletic and Academic Activities and Extracurricular Programs, will be tested at the time of their declaration into the activity.

Programs included for mandatory drug/alcohol testing:

All U.I.L. Athletic Activities	F.F.A.
All U.I.L. Academic Activities	F.H.A.
Student Council	F.C.A.
Beta Club	

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—(www.uil.utexas.edu) a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. The following requirements 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 or international baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or a foreign language—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities 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.
- The District shall permit unlimited absences for extracurricular activities provided that the student has demonstrated academic success. In the event that a student fails to demonstrate academic success, a meeting shall take place between the administration and the parent or guardian to make appropriate modifications to the number of absences allowed. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.
- UIL rules will be followed when determining eligibility of extracurricular activities during holiday breaks. In addition to UIL eligibility requirements, it is the policy of Bland ISD to enforce the following:

If you are determined to be ineligible according to UIL guidelines, you will also be ineligible for any holiday break that falls during this ineligible period. Possible holidays would include but are not limited to Fall Break, Christmas Break, and Spring Break.

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 local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization's standards of behavior.

Offices and Elections

Certain clubs, organizations, and performing groups will hold elections for

student officers. These groups include: Student Council, Beta Club, Science Olympiad, FCA.

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 accident insurance.
- 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.
- 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.

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 Superintendent.

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 10 days before the event, and approved by the superintendent.

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 1000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT

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

GRADING GUIDELINES

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. Each grading period, there shall be at least 10 minor grades posted at a weight of 50% and at least 3 major grades posted at the weight of 50%. 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.

HARASSMENT

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

HAZING

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.

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; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent.

[Also see **Bullying** and policies FFI and FNCC.]

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES / CONDITIONS

Student Illness

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools must exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. 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.

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

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.

- 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 2 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 (85–90 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 Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.

* Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. 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.

Also refer to **Immunizations**

Food Allergies

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. For the district's food allergy management plan, see Policy FFAF.

Head Lice

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. Because lice spread so easily, the district will need to exclude any student found to have live lice until after one treatment of an FDA-approved shampoo or cream rinse, which can be purchased from a drug store or grocery store.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent and inform the parent that the child will need to be picked up from school and will need to stay home until after an initial treatment is applied. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

More information on head lice can be obtained from the TDSHS Web site at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/lice.shtm>.

Physical Activity Requirements

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

School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the Superintendent's Office.

The duties of the SHAC 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.

Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels)

Bland ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. See school nurse for more information.

Physical Fitness Assessment

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3–12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to BLAND I.S.D. to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

Vending Machines

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the Assistant Superintendent, Brian Bymaster.

Other Health-Related Matters

When a child has medications to be taken during the school day. The medication should be left at the front desk, in the original bottle with the child's name and prescribed doses and instructions listed. No student is to have any medications other than an inhaler in their possession without the consent of the administration. Please contact the high school office if you have any further questions.

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 or 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

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Tidwell.

Pest Management Plan

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.

This school periodically applies pesticides as part of an integrated pest management program. All persons applying pesticides at this school are required to receive special training in pesticide application and pest control tactics whenever it is possible that pesticides may periodically be applied. Should you have further questions about pesticide use, including the types and timing of treatments, you may contact: Gene Riley, Bland Administration, PO Box 216, Merit, Texas 75458 or by phone at (903) 776-2138.

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Christy Blackburn, at 903 776 2161.

HOMESCHOOL CREDITS

Students entering the District from non-accredited public, private, or parochial schools, including home schools, shall be placed initially at the discretion of the principal, pending observation by classroom teacher(s), guidance personnel, and the principal. Criteria for placement may include:

1. Scores on achievement test(s), which may be administered by appropriate District personnel.
2. Recommendation of the sending school
3. Prior academic record.
4. Chronological age and social and emotional development of the student.
5. Other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal.

HOMEWORK

Homework and major papers (test) will both count 50% of total nine weeks grade. Each grading period there should be a minimum of 15 minor assignments and a minimum of 5 major assignments. Late work is any assignment that is not turned in by the teacher-assigned deadline. Any student who does not turn in completed work by the deadline will be assigned a "No-Assignment" detention to serve on the next school morning (sign in to detention by 7:35am). Students must turn in late work at the end of their detention; late work can have a maximum grade of 70. Work turned in after the detention will receive a zero. Repeated zeroes

on assignments or skipping the detention will result in an intervention, i.e. office referral, parent/teacher conference, disciplinary consequences, etc.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://corequest.dshs.texas.gov/>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis; measles, mumps, and rubella; polio; hepatitis A; hepatitis B; varicella (chicken pox); and meningococcal. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the 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, 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 TDSHS website: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

1. Students are to report to the school office immediately upon arrival. They will be escorted to the ISS building.
2. All students will ride a bus back to campus and travel home by their normal means (bus/parent pick-up). The student will not be released directly from the ISS building.

3. Any student who misses any part of the day due to medical or dental appointments will have the day rescheduled, as it will not count as a day served.
4. All school district policies and Student Code of Conduct will be strictly enforced. A copy is available in the school office or on the school website.
6. When reasonable cause for a search exists and after due explanation to the class/ individual, a search may be made for any suspected contraband items.
7. Students shall not talk without permission, make any unnecessary noise, or write notes to each other. A student can speak to the teacher to ask a question after receiving permission. Students will also remain seated until permission is given to get up. Violations will add one day per offense to the student's assignment.
8. Students must not sleep in class and must maintain an upright position in the classroom. Violations will add one day per offense to the assignment.
9. Students may leave their books on their desks; however, the student is responsible for any items left in the school building.
13. Students will bring assignments to ISS to be completed during their assigned time. If students do not bring assignments, then the teacher will assign work to the student.
14. Students will turn in assignments to the ISS Teacher. Students who do not work on assignments will be assigned another day of ISS, determined by principal, which could include Saturday School. or receive other consequences, as needed.
16. An aide is available to help students with their assignments.
17. Lunch begins at 11:00 a.m. The student will be escorted to the cafeteria and remain there whether they choose to eat or not. They will not be allowed to eat from the machines; they are to eat in the cafeteria.
19. Every student who is placed in ISS is there because of a serious disciplinary action. The In-School Suspension is punishment. The rules are important and are to be followed.
20. Students in ISS will not be eligible for extra-curricular activities until the day after their ISS time is complete and an exit interview with the principal is conducted.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, 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.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

Students Taken Into Custody

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

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a 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, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 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 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 arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.

- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

LEAVING CAMPUS

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 child 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 in order to document parental consent:

- The parent/guardian must student must sign the student out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. 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 child 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

A "lost and found" collection box is located on campus. 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 cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose or donate lost and found items at the end of each semester.

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

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; usually, a day for a day.

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 time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP or In-School Suspension Makeup Work

A student removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, coursework needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district.

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, distance learning, or summer school.

Students and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student completes all work required for the course or grade level.

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. 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 policies at 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.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
 - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and
 - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

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.

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 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.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Bland ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in 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.

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment: Contact Rick Tidwell, Superintendent
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Contact Megan Gunnels, Counselor
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: Contact Rick Tidwell, Superintendent

MORNING DETENTION

Morning detention, as assigned to students by teachers or the administrator, will be served on assigned days from 7:25 to 7:45 AM. Prior notification to the principal is necessary in order to reschedule a morning detention. Failure to serve assigned detentions, or showing up late for assigned detentions, could result in Saturday Detention or ISS. Students with excessive morning detention assignments could also be placed in Saturday Detention or ISS. 4 detentions will result in one day of ISS/Saturday School. The count of detentions will restart at the end of each semester.

PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Bland ISD is committed to the goal of providing quality education for every child in this district. We want to establish partnerships with parents and with the community. Everyone gains if school and home work together to promote high achievement by our children. Neither home nor school can do the job alone. Parents play an extremely important role as children's first teachers. Their support for their children and for the school is critical to their children's success at every step along the way.

The following outline is in compliance with legal requirements (PL 100-297, Section 1016) and in accordance with our philosophy of nurturing parents toward recognizing and fulfilling that responsibility.

Title I Program Involvement:

- Bland Middle & Elementary Schools are a School-wide Title I campus.
- The Campus Improvement Planning Committee will meet annually to review and revise the campus Parent Involvement Policy and School-parent Compact. This compact

outlines how parents, staff, and students will share responsibility for promoting high student achievement. Other meetings will be held with Title I personnel for purposes of consultation, advising, and evaluation and to insure ongoing parental input toward achieving program objectives and developing a feeling of partnership.

Campus-wide Parent Involvement:

- There are many ways in which parents can become involved with their children's education. Reading to children at home and talking with them at a family meal are as important as volunteering at school and serving on advisory committees. They are also encouraged to make doctor appointments after school hours and to stress the importance of attendance at school.
- Parents are encouraged to take the initiative in calling their child's teacher when they are concerned about a problem.
- Bland ISD will provide opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency and will provide a translator as needed.
- Bland ISD will provide opportunities for the participation of parents who have students with disabilities.

Bland Elementary School Parent – School Compact

Parent's Responsibility

- I will come to all meetings/parent conferences so that I can be a part of the decision – making process at Bland Elementary School.
- I will respond to teacher requests and will discuss any concerns about my children calmly.
- I will give my support at home and at school because I know learning is a life – long process.
- I will help my children establish a routine for school days. I will be sure my children are ready for school and meet the Bland Elementary School dress code.
- I will be sure my children are at school on time every day with the supplies they need.
- I will communicate with administrators, teachers, and staff concerning my child's education.
- I will expect my children to behave, and I will set consistent consequences for misbehavior.

Bland Elementary School's Responsibility

- Bland Elementary School will ask for parent and community input regarding the education of our children.
- Bland Elementary School administration and teachers will have a homework policy which respects student's time and abilities. Homework assignments will be an extension of what is learned in the classroom and not merely "busy work" or untaught concepts that may cause parents and student stress at home.
- Bland Elementary School will communicate with parents through correspondence, email, and through the school website.
- Bland Elementary School staff will communicate positive reports, as well as concerns, about students to parents.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS/HEALTH SCREENINGS

Athletics' Participation

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 healthcare 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 in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third years of high school competition. During the alternate years, the student must complete a medical appraisal form, and the results of this appraisal may prompt the district to require a physical examination.

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.

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.

Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening.

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.]

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

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

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

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or 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.

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. A middle school student must have an overall average of 70 or above, as well as an average of 70 or above in Math and English/Language Arts to be promoted to the next grade level.

- **In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the reading section of the grade 8 assessment in English.**

If a student in grade 5 or 8 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 5 or 8 assessment. The student will instead take the corresponding EOC assessment. If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a

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

A student in grade 5 or 8 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. In order 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 language learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director. Parents of a student at or above grade level 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated exams 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 9. 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 principal 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.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day.

Unless the principal or superintendent has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every 9 weeks.

At the end of the sixth week and nine week, parents will be given a progress report if their child's 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 either by phone or in person.

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the superintendent and are designed to reflect each student's academic achievement 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.

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.

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 2 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]

SAFETY

Student safety on campus and at school-related events 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 should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students 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, 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.

Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

- **Fire Drill Bells (Announcement – Evacuate the building)**
- **Tornado/Weather Related Drill Bells (Announcement – Take Cover)**
- **Secure Classroom/Facility (Announcement – Lockdown)**

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 would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

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 realtime or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways:

- School Messenger
- KDFW Channel 4
- WFAA Channel 8
- KIK* FM 93.5
- KGVL AM 1400
- WBAP AM 820

SATURDAY DETENTION

Saturday detentions will be held on given Saturdays at the Middle School. Detention begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and will end at 12:00 noon or 3:00 p.m. Students are required to bring a sack lunch and school work. Students must be working on school related work for the entire day. For guidelines and regulations refer to ISS Guidelines and Regulations. Parents will be notified of the impending Saturday Detention. Students that do not attend Saturday Detention may be suspended from school for two days.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use By Students Before and After School

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

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:15 a.m.

- Competition Gym

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

After dismissal of school in the afternoon, 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, students must leave campus immediately.

Conduct Before and After School

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

Loitering or standing 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

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with standards set forth in state and federal law.

Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need or household situation. Information about a student's participation is confidential; however, disclosure of a student's eligibility may be made without prior notice or consent to programs, activities, and individuals that are specifically authorized access under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA), which is the law that sets forth the disclosure limits for the district's child nutrition programs. A student's name, eligibility status, and other information may be disclosed to certain agencies as authorized under the NSLA to facilitate the enrollment of eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent notifies the district that a student's information should not be disclosed. A parent's decision will not affect the child's eligibility for free and reduced price meals or free milk. See Missy Boren, MS secretary in the office to apply.

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open for independent student use daily.

Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups

Student-organized, student-led noncurriculum-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 from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

Students' Desks and Lockers

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 cause 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 Electronic Devices

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 in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

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

Trained Dogs

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.

Drug-Testing

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also, see **Steroids**]

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students who are English Language Learners, dyslexic students, 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 School Office.

STANDARDIZED TESTING

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

Grades 3–8

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

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level. See **Promotion and Retention**.

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

STAAR-L is a linguistically accommodated assessment that is available for English Language Learners (ELL) who require this type of testing accommodation.

STEROIDS

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 IN FOSTER CARE

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district strives to 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 Christy Blackburn, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at 903-776-2161 with any questions.

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 (TDSHS) maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its website:

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa-child-adolescent-services/>

SUICIDE AWARENESS

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 Web sites or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention and to find mental health services available in your area:

- www.texassuicideprevention.org

SUMMER SCHOOL

Summer school is offered at Bland as Accelerated Instruction, STAAR remediation, and credit recovery for attendance purposes.

TARDINESS

Definition of TARDY - When a student is not in a teacher's room when the tardy bell rings; and/or in his or her desk when the tardy bell rings according to teacher policy.

The only time a student will be excused from being tardy is when a teacher or administrator has caused that student to be late. If there is a question concerning a tardy, administration will determine if the tardy will be counted against a student. The following tardy policy applies to all Bland Middle School students:

1st Tardy - Warning

2nd Tardy-Student Receives Lunch Detention

3rd Tardy-Student Receives Lunch Detention

4th Tardy and Beyond - When a student has received his or her 4th tardy the student will be referred to the principal's office and likely will serve a full day of Saturday school or ISS. Saturday school or In-School-Suspension will be served for each subsequent tardy. Also, as noted above, having a 4th tardy constitutes an absence towards a student's exemption status so tardiness can affect a student's exemptions on semester exams. Students that do not attend Saturday detention can be suspended from school for up to two days. (Note): The student will have to serve his or her detention at the next available Saturday. Tardy counts will restart every nine weeks period.

TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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

BLAND I.S.D. does not accept transfers at this time.

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually, and any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's website. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Gene Riley at 903 776 2238.

Transportation is **not** provided to the DAEP in Caddo Mills.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- When students ride in a district van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened 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.

UNSAFE SCHOOLS

Each district receiving assistance via the Elementary and Secondary Education Act must allow a student to attend a safe public elementary or secondary school within the District, including a public charter school, if the student:

1. Attends a persistently dangerous public elementary or secondary school, as defined by the state's education agency; or
2. Becomes a victim or a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of

the school the students attends. See policy FDE (LOCAL)

VANDALISM

The taxpayers of the community have made a sustained financial commitment for the construction and upkeep of school facilities. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and for years to come—littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the video/audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Upon request of a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member, or a board member, 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 for further information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment.

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

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 principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to provide photo identification which shall be returned upon signing out.

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.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

VOLUNTEERS (All Grade Levels)

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the principal for more information and to complete an application and return to administration for approval. A name based background check will be performed in order to become a volunteer.

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 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.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw without parental signature.

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.

ACT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

Alternative assessment instrument, developed by the state, may be given to students in special education and students identified as limited English proficient.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 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 lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students in the DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. The DAEP will focus instruction on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

EOC assessments are end-of-course tests, which are state-mandated, and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments will be required for graduation beginning with students in grade 9 during the 2011–2012 school year. These exams will be given in English I, English II, English III, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, World Geography, World History, and United States History.

ESSA is the Every Student Succeeds Act passed by the federal government in December 2015.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that 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.

IEP is the written record of the Individualized Education Program 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; modifications to state or districtwide tests, etc.

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.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher 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.

SAT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement 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.

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 by an ARD committee to be eligible for special education services, appropriate regular educational services will be provided.

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

STAAR Alternate 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 Modified is an alternative state-mandated assessment based on modified achievement standards that is administered to eligible students receiving special education services, 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 language learners.

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 grade 11 exit-level test or end-of-course assessments, when applicable, 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; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. 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, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state’s standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grade 11 and is required for graduation for these students. A student in grade 12 who has not yet met the passing standard on this assessment will have opportunities to retake the assessment.

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

TxVSN is 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.