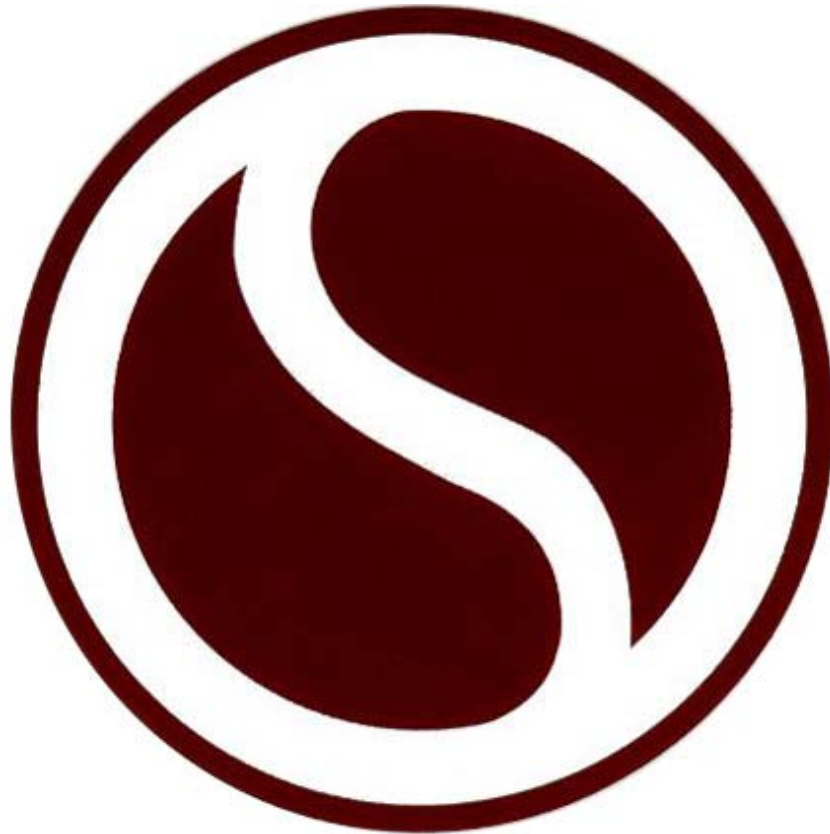


**Sinton ISD**



**Student Handbook  
2021-2022**

## **District Arrival/Dismissal**

7:15 a.m. – 7:40 a.m.	Report to school cafeteria
7:40 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	School Day at WE and SE
7:55 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.	School Day at SMS and SHS
3:45 p.m.	Dave Odem Latchkey Program Begins
6:00 p.m.	Dave Odem Latchkey Program Dismissal

## **Campus Directory**

Sinton High School  
400 N. Pirate Blvd.  
Sinton, Texas 78387  
Phone: (361) 364-6650  
Fax: (361) 364-6668

E. Merle Smith Middle School  
1000 S. San Patricio  
Sinton, Tx 78387  
Phone: 361-364-6840  
Fax: 361-364-6856

Sinton Elementary  
200 S. Bowie  
Sinton, Texas 78387  
Phone: (361) 364-6900  
Fax: (361) 364-6914

Welder Elementary  
901 Hamilton Street  
Sinton, Texas 78387  
Phone: (361) 364-6600  
Fax: (361) 364-6908

## CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

### **Dr. Chad Jones, *Superintendent***

Julie Guerra, Administrative Assistant	364-6803
Yvonne Rodriguez, Central Office Clerk	364-6813
Olga Guerrero, Transportation Supervisor	364-6854
Eileen Troup, School & Community Relations Coordinator	364-6809
Michael Troutman, Director of Athletics	364-6681

### **Melissa Villarreal, *Assistant Superintendent for Business***

Cindy Hinojosa, Accounts Receivable/Business Office Clerk	364-6802
Amelia Fuentes, Financial Accounting Supervisor	364-6829
Donald Mercier, Director of Maintenance/Facilities	364-6808
Silke West, Director of Child Nutrition	
Diane Marroquin, Secretary	364-6816

### **Dana Allen, *Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum/Support Services***

Veronica Sanchez, Human Resources Assistant	364-6807
Joseph Buffa, Director of Information Systems	364-6991
Michael Elbert, Director for Special Education	
Nelda Espinoza	364-6940
Ashley Cox, Blended Learning Instructional Coach	364-6824
Cori Gandara, Literacy Specialist	364-6978
Gina Guajardo, Director of Federal & Special Programs	
Amanda Gracia, Federal & Special Programs Assistant	364-6838
Christy Martinez, Instr. Materials & Fixed Asset Specialist	364-6817
Mary Lankford, STEM Director	364-6650
Rosie Salinas, Instructional Technologist	364-6993
Kristey Wiese, Blended Learning Instructional Coach	364-6820

## CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION

### WELDER ELEMENTARY 364-6600

Luci Rodriguez	Principal
Connie Seago	Assistant Principal
Glenda Gomez	Secretary

### SINTON ELEMENTARY 364-6900

Lori Trevino	Principal
Leticia Ruiz	Assistant Principal
Priscilla Ortiz	Secretary

### E. MERLE SMITH MIDDLE SCHOOL 364-6840

Jennifer Landry	Principal
Margie Torres-Garcia	Assistant Principal
Dimas DeAsis	Secretary

### SINTON HIGH SCHOOL 364-6650

Albert Byrom	Principal
Stephanie Hesseltine	Assistant Principal
Leslie Balerio	Assistant Principal
Belinda Pena	Secretary

### DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Sinton Administration Building 364-6810

Brittany Ivie	Administrator
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# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

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# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## Preface Parents and Students:

Welcome to the new school year!

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

The Sinton ISD Student Handbook is a general reference guide that is divided into two sections:

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

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

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

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

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

Therefore, parents and students should become familiar with the Sinton ISD Student Code of Conduct. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district’s website at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net). State law requires that the Code of Conduct be prominently displayed or made available for review at each campus.

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

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

A hard copy of either the Student Code of Conduct or Student Handbook can be requested at 322 S Archer St. Sinton, TX 78387.

**Note:** References to board policy codes are included for ease of reference. The hard copy of the district’s official policy manual is available for review in the district administration office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net).

The policy manual includes:

- Legally referenced (LEGAL) policies that contain provisions from federal and state laws and regulations, case law, and other legal authorities that provide the legal framework for school districts.
- Board-adopted (LOCAL) policies that articulate the board’s choices and values regarding district practices.

For questions about the material in this handbook, please contact your campus principal.

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

- Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook,
- Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information,
- Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (if you choose to restrict the release of information to these entities), and
- Consent/Opt-Out Form for participation in third-party surveys.

[See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information and Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation** for more information.]

## **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact the Director of Information Systems at 364-6991.

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## Section One: Parental Rights

This section describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

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

#### Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation

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

**Note:** An evaluation may be legally required under special education rules or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports.

#### Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

The district does not provide instruction related to human sexuality.

#### *Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service*

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

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

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention.

The mental health liaison can be reached by contacting the school counselor at each campus.

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as educational materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

[See **Mental Health Support** on page 58.]

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

Teachers may display a student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes:

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

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## **Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if a Student is under Age 14**

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

## **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law**

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

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

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

## **Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment**

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling a student—will not be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and district policy FO(LOCAL).

## **Limiting Electronic Communications between Students and District Employees**

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

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

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

The employee is required to include the student’s parent, or his or her immediate supervisor as a recipient on all text messages.

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal.

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

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” from a student’s education records without written consent.

“Directory information” is information that, if released, is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Examples include:

- A student’s photograph (for publication in the school yearbook);
- A student’s name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments);
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program);

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

- 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.)

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 this information. Any objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the student's first day of instruction for this school year. [See Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information, included in the forms packet.]

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

The district has identified the following as directory information: student name; address; telephone listing; electronic mail address; photograph; date and place of birth; major field of study; degrees, honors, and awards received; dates of attendance; grade level; most recent educational institution attended; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and weight and height of members of athletic teams. If a parent objects to the release of the student's information included on the directory information response form, this objection also applies to the use of that information for school-sponsored purposes, such as:

- Honor roll,
- School newspaper,
- Yearbook,
- Recognition activities,
- News releases, and
- Athletic programs.

**Note:** Review **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records** on page 16.

## **Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**

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

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

- Name,
- Address, and
- Telephone listing.

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

[See **Parent’s Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education**, included in the forms packet.]

## Participation in Third-Party Surveys

### *Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey*

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

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

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
- Sex behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, and ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parent; or
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility for a program.

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

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

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

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

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

A parent may inspect:

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

Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

The ED provides extensive information about the [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment](#), including a [PPRA Complaint Form](#).

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A parent may request that his or her child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be made in writing.

State law, however, requires that all students participate in one minute of silence following recitation of the pledges.

[See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 68 and policy EC(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Religious or Moral Beliefs**

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

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

### **Tutoring or Test Preparation**

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

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

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

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

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

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs, contact the student’s teacher, and see policies EC and EHBC. See **Standardized Testing** on page 75 for information regarding required accelerated instruction after a student fails to perform satisfactorily on certain state-mandated tests.]

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

### **Instructional Materials**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Student Records**

#### *Accessing Student Records*

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

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,

## Sinton ISD Student Handbook

- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected regarding any intervention strategies used with the child, as the term “intervention strategy” is defined by law,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to the child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in the child’s classroom.

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

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

For purposes of student records, an “eligible” student is anyone age 18 or older or who attends a postsecondary educational institution. These rights, as discussed here and at **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 11, are the right to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

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- FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student’s education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records.
  - Legitimate educational interest may include:
    - Working with the student;
    - Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
    - Compiling statistical data;
    - Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility; or
    - Investigating or evaluating programs.
  - School officials may include:
    - Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
    - Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);
    - A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer);
    - A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district’s safe and supportive school program;
    - A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
    - A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

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

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

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- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [See **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 11 to prohibit this disclosure.]

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

The 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.

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

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

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

The address of the superintendent's office is 322 S. Archer St. Sinton, TX 78387

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

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If after the hearing the records are not amended, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to place a statement in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading guidelines.

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, **Complaints and Concerns** on page 36, and Finality of Grades at policy FNG(LEGAL).]

The district's student records policy is found at policy FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and is available at the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's website at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net).

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

## Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications

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

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

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

## A Student with Exceptionalities or Special Circumstances

### Children of Military Families

The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children entitles children of military families to flexibility regarding certain district and state requirements, including:

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

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

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

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

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](#).

## Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments

### *Multiple-Birth Siblings*

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

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

### *Safety Transfers/Assignments*

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

The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom.

[See **Bullying** on page 29, and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

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

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## **Student Use of a Service/Assistance Animal**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 40, **Course Credit** on page 39, and **Students in Foster Care** on page 77.]

## **A Student Who Is Homeless**

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

- Proof of residency requirements;
- Immunization requirements;
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules;

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- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district;
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one half of a two-half course;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities; and
- Graduation requirements.

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

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

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

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration** on page 40, **Course Credit** on page 39, and **Students who are Homeless** on page 78.]

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

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

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, his or her parent may contact the individuals listed below to learn about the school's overall general education referral or screening system for support services.

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

### ***Special Education Referrals***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The designated contact person regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is the Director of Special Education at (361)364-6940.

For questions regarding post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment, for students receiving special education services, contact the district's transition and employment designee: Monica Soliz, ARD Facilitator, 322 S. Archer St. Sinton, TX 78387, [msoliz@sintonisd.net](mailto:msoliz@sintonisd.net), (361)364-6945

## ***Section 504 Referrals***

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

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

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

The designated person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for Section 504 services is: the Director of Special Education at (361)364-6940.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 23.]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

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

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

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

### **A Student Who Speaks a Primary Language Other than English**

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

If the student qualifies for these services, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including accommodations or modifications related to classroom instruction, local assessments, and state-mandated assessments.

[See **English Learners** on page 47 and **Special Programs** on page 75.]

### **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**

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

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

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

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 21 and policy FB for more information.]

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

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

It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level.

Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact the campus principal or your child's counselor.

### **Absences/Attendance**

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

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

Parents and children should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact your campus principal.

### **Compulsory Attendance**

#### ***Prekindergarten and Kindergarten***

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

#### ***Ages 6–18***

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

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

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

#### ***Age 19 and Older***

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

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## Compulsory Attendance—Exemptions

### *All Grade Levels*

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

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences related to autism services, if the student returns to school on the same day of the appointment and brings a note from the health-care provider;
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician;
- For students in the conservatorship of the state,
  - 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.

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

### *Secondary Grade Levels*

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver's license, provided that the board has authorized such excused absences under policy FEA(LOCAL). The student will be required to provide documentation of his or her visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any work missed. [See **Driver License Attendance Verification** on page 28.]

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

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

The district will allow a student 17 years old or older to be absent for up to four days during the period the student is enrolled in high school to pursue enlistment in the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the student verifies these activities to the district.

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

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

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

## **Compulsory Attendance—Failure to Comply**

### *All Grade Levels*

School employees must investigate and report violations of the compulsory attendance law.

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

### *Students with Disabilities*

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

### *Ages 6–18*

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

The notice will:

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

The truancy prevention facilitator for the district is Ruby Perez, rperez@sintonisd.net. For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the facilitator or any other campus administrator.

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

If a student age 12–18 incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

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

### *Age 19 and Older*

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

## **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (All Grade Levels)**

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend the class at least 90 percent of the days it is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days may receive credit or a final grade if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to

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fulfill the class's instructional requirements. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the judge presiding over the case must also approve the plan before the student receives credit or a final grade.

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

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

- If makeup work is completed, absences listed under **Compulsory Attendance—Exemptions** on page 25 will be considered extenuating circumstances.
- A transfer or migrant student incurs absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- Absences incurred due to the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances if the student makes 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 student or student's parent had any control over the absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and discuss ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

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

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

The district will take official attendance every day at 9:45 a.m. for Welder and Sinton Elementary. Official attendance is taken every day during 3rd period at 10:00 a.m. for High School and 10:35 a.m. for Middle School.

A student absent for any portion of the day, should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

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

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

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

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

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

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## **Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels)**

Within 3 days of returning to school, a student absent for more than 4 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the absence. Otherwise, the absence may be considered unexcused and in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

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

## ***Certification of Absence Due to Severe Illness or Treatment***

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

The campus will only be accepting 10 parent excuses for the school year. After the 10th parent excuse is reported only official doctor excuses will be taken.

[See policy FEC(LOCAL) for more information.]

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

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

<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/driver/forms/VOE.pdf>.

Further information may be found on the Texas Department of Public Safety website:

<https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license>.

See **Compulsory Attendance—Exemptions for Secondary Grade Levels** on page 25 for information on excused absences for obtaining a learner license or driver's license.

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

Sinton ISD and each of its campuses are held to certain standards of accountability under state and federal law. A key component of accountability is the dissemination and publication of certain reports and information, including:

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

Accountability information can be found on the district's website at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

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

## **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test (Grades 10–12)**

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

The test shall be offered on a date and time TBD at Sinton High School.

Contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

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

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

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

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

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

- A cellular or other type of telephone
- A computer
- A camera
- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application
- An internet website
- Any other internet-based communication tool.

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:

- Hazing
- Threats

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

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

A student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying by accessing the Report a Bully section of the district website at [https://www.sintonisd.net/237316\\_2](https://www.sintonisd.net/237316_2)

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

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

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

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

Upon recommendation of the administration, the board may transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus.

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

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

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

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 19, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41, **Hazing** on page 55, policy FFI, the district's Student Code of Conduct, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

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## **Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Work-Based Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

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

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Finance
- Health Science
- Human Services
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Admission to these programs is based on student interest, age appropriateness and space availability. Please note that not all CTE courses offered may make minimum enrollment to these programs is based on the number of courses selected by students.

District policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

The district will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in all educational and vocational programs.

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

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 66 for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator.]

### **Celebrations (All Grade Levels)**

Although a parent or grandparent may provide food to share for a school-designated function or for a student's birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss any classroom allergies with the teacher before bringing food to share.

Occasionally, the school or a class may host functions or celebrations tied to the curriculum that involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers to provide food. [See **Food Allergies** on page 61.]

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

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net). Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

### **Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct

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with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

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

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

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

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41.]

## Warning Signs of Trafficking

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

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

Possible warning signs of sexual trafficking in children include:

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

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips;
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit;
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students;

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- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off;
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours;
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss;
- Not being in control of his or her own money;
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver; and
- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Class rank for senior students shall be calculated by averaging semester grades earned in grades 9–12. The numeric semester average shall earn grade points according to the District’s weighted grade point scale. Class rank for graduating seniors shall be calculated at the end of the third nine-week grading period. Mid-term grades for college coursework will be used if applicable.

For purposes of class rank, courses designated as AP, Honors, dual credit, PLTW Engineering, Academic Decathlon, Future Problem Solving, Debate II–IV, and AVID shall be weighted on a five-point scale; all regular courses shall be weighted on a four-point scale.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2024, only the following classes will be weighted:

- All AP courses; and
- Honors courses or dual credit courses in English, mathematics, science, social studies, and languages other than English.

Class ranking shall be determined by accumulated grade points divided by the number of courses for which final grades were given. Class ranking and grade point averages (GPAs) shall include all coursework in grades 9–12, with the exception of grades earned in middle school. Credit for which only a pass/fail grade was given, and credit awarded in a nonaccredited instructional setting shall also not be included in class ranking and GPAs. In addition, no credit earned as a teacher aide, office aide, counselor aide, or library aide shall be included in the class rank computation. A senior student who is enrolled but does not complete a semester of active participation in a credit-eligible extracurricular activity shall receive a grade of WP (withdraw while passing), and the class shall not be included in the computation for GPA.

To be eligible for valedictorian, salutatorian, or honors graduate, a student must have been continuously enrolled in the District high school for his or her entire junior and senior year. The student meeting the local eligibility criteria for recognition as the valedictorian shall also be considered the highest-ranking graduate for purposes of receiving the honor graduate certificate from the state of Texas.

Three-year graduates shall not be eligible for the honors positions of valedictorian, salutatorian, or honors graduate. If a tie develops for valedictorian or salutatorian, all those students tying shall be recognized.

[See policy EIC for more information.]

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

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a full class schedule. Exceptions may be made occasionally by the campus principal for students in grades 9–12 who meet specific criteria and receive parental consent to enroll in less than a full-day schedule.

[See **Schedule Changes** on page 71 for information related to student requests to revise their course schedule.]

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

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

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); or

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- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

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

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

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of automatically admitted students to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. During the summer and fall 2021 terms and spring 2022 term, the University will admit the top six percent of a high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

As required by law, the district will provide written notice concerning:

- Automatic college admission
- Curriculum requirements for financial aid
- Benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid
- The Texas First Early High School Completion Program and the Texas First Scholarship Program

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

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

[See **Class Rank/Highest-Ranking Student** on page 31 for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation** on page 50 for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

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

## **College Credit Courses (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

Students in grades 9–12 may earn college credit through the following opportunities:

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), or college preparatory;
- Enrollment in AP or dual credit courses through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN);
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with Del Mar College, which may be offered on or off campus; and
- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities.

Enrollment in these programs is based on college readiness standards.

A student may be eligible for subsidies based on financial need for AP or IB exam fees. See **Fees (All Grade Levels)** on page 49 for more information.

- A student may also earn college credit for certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. See **Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Other Work-Based Programs (Secondary Grade Levels Only)** on page 31 for information on CTE and other work-based programs.

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

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

## **Communications (All Grade Levels)**

### **Parent Contact Information**

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

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

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

A parent may update contact information contacting the campus secretary.

### **Automated Emergency Communications**

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

[See **Safety** on page 70 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

### **Automated Nonemergency Communications**

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

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

If you do not wish to receive such communications, please contact your child's principal. [See **Safety** on page 70 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

### **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed informally by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal.

For those complaints and concerns that cannot be resolved informally, the board has adopted a Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances policy FNG(LOCAL). This policy can be viewed in the district's policy manual, available online at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net). The complaint forms can be accessed at the principal's or superintendent's office.

To file a formal complaint a parent or student should complete and submit the complaint form. In general, the written complaint form should be completed and submitted to the campus principal in a timely manner. If the concern is not resolved, a parent or student may request a conference with the superintendent. If the concern is still unresolved, the district provides a process for parents and students to appeal to the board of trustees.

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## Conduct (All Grade Levels)

### Applicability of School Rules

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

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

### Campus Behavior Coordinator

Each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct. The contact information for each campus behavior coordinator is available on the district's website at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net) and is listed below:

- Connie Seago-Welder Elementary School
- Leticia Ruiz-Sinton Elementary School
- Margie Torres-Garcia-Smith Middle School
- Stephanie Hesseltine-Sinton High School

### Deliveries

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

### Disruption of School Operations

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

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

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

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- Entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district is also considered a disruption.

## **Social Events**

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

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

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

## **Counseling**

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

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

The district will make a preview of the program, including all materials and curriculum, available to parents to review during school hours.

## **Academic Counseling**

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

The school counselor will provide information to students and parents about college and university admissions and the importance of planning for postsecondary education, including appropriate coursework and financial aid availability and requirements.

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

### ***High School Grade Levels***

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

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

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

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

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

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

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal, social, and family concerns, including emotional or mental health issues and substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should request an appointment or pass to the counseling 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.

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

[See Mental Health Support on page 58, and Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children on page 31 and Dating Violence on page 41.]

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

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

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

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

Examples of prior instruction include incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to earn credit by examination after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

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

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

[See the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

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

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

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

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

When another entity administers an examination, the student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity.

If a student plans to take an examination, the student or parent must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [See policy EHDC for more information.]

## **Kindergarten Acceleration**

Sinton ISD believes that great care should be taken with student acceleration at this early grade. The kindergarten program in Sinton ISD is designed to accommodate student needs for acceleration within the kindergarten classroom. It is, therefore, the philosophy of Sinton ISD to accelerate only students who cannot be effectively served through district programs at their current grade level. A kindergarten screener will first be administered to determine if a child is ready to continue to the next phase of testing. In the second phase of testing the student must score at least 80% on each exam.

## **Students in Grades 1–5**

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

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

## **Students in Grades 6–12**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Dating Violence**

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

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

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

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

For more information on dating violence, see the CDC's [Preventing Teen Dating Violence](#).

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## **Discrimination**

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

## **Harassment**

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

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

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

## **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 are not limited to:

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature;
- Sexual advances;
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; 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 that a reasonable person would not construe as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic, sexual, and other inappropriate social relationships between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

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

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

- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors;
- Physical aggression or assault;

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

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

## **Reporting Procedures**

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

Upon receiving a report, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine whether the allegations, if proven, constitute bullying, as defined by law and policy FFI. If the alleged prohibited conduct also meets the statutory and policy definitions for bullying, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See **Bullying** on page 29]

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

## **Investigation of Report**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## **Discrimination**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41.]

## **Distance Learning (All Grade Levels)**

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

The distance learning opportunities that the district makes available to district students are through the TxVSN.

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

[See **Remote Instruction** on page 69.]

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

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

Depending on the TXVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. [See **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** on page 47.] In addition, a student who enrolls in a TXVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

A parent may ask questions or request that their child be enrolled in a TXVSN course by contacting the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the campus principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TXVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

A copy of policy EHDE addressing distance learning will be distributed to parents of middle and high school students at least once each year. (**Appendix II**). If you do not receive a copy or have questions about this policy, please contact the campus principal.

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

### **School Materials**

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

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

### **Nonschool Materials**

#### ***From Students***

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

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The campus principal shall designate the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA for more information.]

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

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

## ***From Others***

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

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

The superintendent or principal will designate the location for approved nonschool materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

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

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

## **Dress and Grooming (All Grade Levels)**

The district's dress code teaches grooming and hygiene, prevents disruption, minimizes safety hazards, and maintains a positive learning climate. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the district's dress code.

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

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

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

### **Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones, and Other Electronic Devices**

The district permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. [See **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials** on page 78 for graphing calculator applications on computing devices.]

A student must have approval to possess other personal telecommunications devices on campus such as laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The student/parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 74 and policy FNF for more information.]

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

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

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must also sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook).

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

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

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

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

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether on district-

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owned or personally owned equipment, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

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

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

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

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

[See **Graduation** on page 50 and **Standardized Testing** on page 75.]

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

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

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

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 75, may be administered to an English learner up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student’s LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to English learners who qualify for services.

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

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

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

Some extracurricular activities may include off-campus events. Students are required to use transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions may only be made with the approval of the activity’s coach or sponsor. [See **Transportation** on page 79.]

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

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

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

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

Generally, a student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

However, if a student receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course, or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or languages other than English, the student remains eligible for participation in all extracurricular activities.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved course that requires demonstration of the mastery of an essential knowledge and skills in public performance and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of the grading period, the student may participate in a performance so long as the general public is invited.

If a student is enrolled in a state-approved music course that participates in UIL Concert and Sight reading Evaluation, and the student receives a grade below 70 in any course at the end of a grading period, the student may perform with the ensemble during the UIL evaluation performance, but is ineligible for other extracurricular activities for at least three weeks.

In addition, the following applies to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of 2 absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions. Additional absences shall be permitted with the approval of the principal and Superintendent.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will be considered an unexcused absence.

## Standards of Behavior

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

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

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

- Materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations.
- Admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student health and accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees for driver training courses.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN).

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

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

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes in accordance with administrative regulations. [See policies FJ and GE for more information.]

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

Certain criminal offenses, including gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next-highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. Gang-free zones include a school bus and any location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

## **Gender-Based Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41.]

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## Grade-Level Classification (Grades 9–12 Only)

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

Credits Earned	Classification
6.5 + 1 year of attendance	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
13 + 2 years of attendance	Grade 11 (Junior)
19 + 3 years of attendance	Grade 12 (Senior)

## Grading Guidelines (All Grade Levels)

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

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

[See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** for additional information on grading guidelines.]

## Graduation (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

### Requirements for a Diploma

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

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

### Testing Requirements for Graduation

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

- English I,

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- English II,
- Algebra I,
- Biology, and
- U.S. History.

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

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

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

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

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 75.]

## ***Foundation Graduation Program***

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

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

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

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

A **Personal Graduation Plan** will be completed for each high school student, as described on page 53.

State law prohibits a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student's sophomore year, the student and student's parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether graduation under the foundation program without an endorsement will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

A student graduating under the foundation graduation program can also earn performance acknowledgments on his or her transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course, on an AP or IB examination, on certain

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national college preparatory and readiness or college entrance examinations, or for earning a license or certificate recognized at the state, national, or international level. The school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student is not required to complete an Algebra II course to graduate under the foundation graduation program, and the district will annually notify a student's parent of this fact. However, not taking Algebra II will make a student ineligible for automatic admission to four-year public universities and colleges in Texas and for certain financial aid and grants while attending those institutions.

A school district will permit a student to satisfy the curriculum requirements for graduation under the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement, including an endorsement, by successfully completing courses in the core curriculum of a public Texas institution of higher education. Please see your counselor for more information.

### *Credits Required*

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

Course Area	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social Studies	3	3
Physical Education	1	1
Languages other than English	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Locally required courses	½ credit in Health ½ credit in Speech or equivalent	½ credit in Health ½ credit in Speech or equivalent
Electives	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>

Additional considerations apply in some course areas, including:

- **Mathematics.** To obtain the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program, a student must complete an endorsement and take Algebra II as one of the 4 mathematics credits. A student's completion of the distinguished level of achievement is a requirement to be considered for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university and will be included on a student's transcript.
- **Physical education.** A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, or another locally determined credit-bearing course for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student's ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

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- **Languages other than English.** Students are required to earn 2 credits in the same language other than English to graduate. Any student may substitute computer programming languages for these credits.
  - A student may satisfy one of the two required credits by successfully completing in elementary school a dual language immersion program or a course in American Sign Language.
  - In limited circumstances, a student may be able to substitute this requirement with other courses, as determined by a district committee authorized by law to make these decisions for the student.

## *Available Endorsements*

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

### **FAFSA or TASFA**

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

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

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

Please contact the school counselor for more information.

The district will confirm that a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA in accordance with TEA guidance.

## *Personal Graduation Plans*

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

The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class.

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

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

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

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

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## Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs

Each spring, the district will update students on the courses required or offered in each curriculum area so students can enroll for the upcoming school year.

**Note:** The district may require the completion of certain courses for graduation even if these courses are not required by the state for graduation.

## Certificates of Coursework Completion

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

## Students with Disabilities

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

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

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

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

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

## Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include:

- Baccalaureate
- Commencement Exercises
- Graduation Practice
- Graduation Group Pictures
- Chemical Free Party

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on end-of-course assessments or been declared eligible to graduate by an individual graduation committee, if applicable, will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. Keep in mind that participating in the ceremonies is not synonymous with graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

Students who are eligible to graduate but are assigned to a disciplinary alternative education program at the end of the school year will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities.

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## Graduation Speakers

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to speak at graduation ceremonies.

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

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

[See **Student Speakers** on page 78 for student speakers at other school events.]

## Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both the student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Fees** on page 49.]

## Scholarships and Grants

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

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

## Harassment

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41.]

## Hazing (All Grade Levels)

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

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

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

[See **Bullying** on page 29 and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## Health—Physical and Mental

### Illness (All Grade Levels)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day.

State rules require schools to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for certain periods of time. For example, if a child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications. Students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without use of diarrhea-suppressing medications for 24 hours.

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

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

If a student becomes ill during the school day, and the school nurse determines that the child should go home, the nurse will contact the parent.

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

The school nurse is available to answer any questions for parents who are concerned about whether or not their child should stay home.

### Immunization (All Grade Levels)

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

For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#) or by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are:

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

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

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

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 60, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this or other vaccination requirements.

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

## Lice (All Grade Levels)

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

The district does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to discuss a treatment plan using an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student undergoes one treatment, the parent should contact the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments, how best to get rid of lice, and how to prevent lice from returning.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in an affected classroom without identifying the student with lice.

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

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

## Medicine at School (All Grade Levels)

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

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student.

In accordance with policy FFAC, authorized employees may administer:

- Prescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- 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.

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- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **Note:** Insect repellent is considered a nonprescription medication.
- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

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

At the elementary level, a student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to the student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and asks for help applying it. A student at this level may apply his or her own sunscreen if the student is able to do so.

At the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student needs assistance with sunscreen application, please address the need with the school nurse.

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

### **Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions**

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

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

See also **Food Allergies** on page 61.

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

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for physician-prescribed medical use only.

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

### **Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)**

The district has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

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

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- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

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

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

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [See policy FFEb for more information.]

For related information, see:

- **Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation** on page 10 and **Consent to Provide a Mental Health Care Service** on page 10 for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information;
- **Counseling** on page 38 for the district's comprehensive school counseling program;
- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** on page 61 for campus and community mental and physical health resources; and
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** on page 62 for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

## Physical Activity Requirements

### *Elementary School*

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

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

### *Middle School*

The district will ensure that students in middle school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters in accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA.

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

### *Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education*

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

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## **Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3–12)**

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

## **Physical Health Screenings/Examinations**

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

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

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

This examination is required 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.

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

See the UIL's explanation of [sudden cardiac arrest](#) for more information.

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

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

All students who meet the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.

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

### ***Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels)***

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

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

## **Special Health Concerns (All Grade Levels)**

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

Please see the district's website at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net) for information regarding meningitis for information regarding meningitis.

**Note:** Entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution

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of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.

[See **Immunization** on page 56.]

## ***Diabetes***

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

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

Parents should notify the district when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

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

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, an individual care plan will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net).

[See Celebrations on page 31 and policy FFAF for more information.]

## ***Seizures (All Grade Levels)***

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 23 and contact the school nurse for more information.]

## **Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property)**

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), or any other electronic vaporizing device while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity.

The 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 FNCD and GKA for more information.]

## **Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures**

### **Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels)**

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

- The district nurse: Lori Soliz at 361-364-6696.

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- The campus school counselor.
- The local mental health authority which may be contacted at Coastal Plains Community Center-San Patricio County, 201 Roots Ave, Taft, Tx 78390 (361)528-4516 for Mental Health Services
- Dr. James Mobley, Health Authority of San Patricio County, [jmobley@co.san-patricio.tx.us](mailto:jmobley@co.san-patricio.tx.us)

## **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels)**

The district has adopted board policies that promote student physical and mental health. (LOCAL) policies on the topics below can be found in the district's policy manual, available at <https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1056>.

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

In addition, the District Improvement Plan details the district's strategies to improve student performance through evidence-based practices that address physical and mental health.

The district has developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement the above policies and plans.

Please contact Director of Federal/Special Programs at (361)364-6838 for further information regarding these procedures and access to the District Improvement Plan.

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

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) held 2 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's SHAC is available from the Director of Federal and Special Programs.

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Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings will be posted at each campus administrative office at least 72 hours before the meeting. Notification of upcoming SHAC meetings, meeting minutes, and a recording of each meeting will be posted on the district website.

[See **Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 10 and policies BDF and EHAA. for more information.]

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

To encourage healthy habits in our students, the district has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement it. You are encouraged to contact the campus principal with questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan

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

### **Questioning of Students**

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

- Verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question the student at school.
- Ordinarily make reasonable efforts to notify the parents, unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- Ordinarily be present for the questioning or interview, 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 law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.

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

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

## Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

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

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

## Leaving Campus (All Grade Levels)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **During Lunch**

All campuses are closed campuses and no students are allowed to leave during lunch.

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

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

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

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

A lost and found collection box is located in the campus office. A student who loses an item should check the lost and found box. The district discourages bringing personal items of high monetary value to school, as the district is not responsible for lost or stolen items. The campus will dispose of lost and found items at the end of each semester.

## **Makeup Work**

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

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

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

The student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any makeup work. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold regarding the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 26.]

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

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

## **DAEP Makeup Work**

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

#### *Grades 9–12*

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

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## **In-School Suspension (ISS) and Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels)**

### ***Alternative Means to Receive Coursework***

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

### ***Opportunity to Complete Courses***

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

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

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

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

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

The district has designated and authorized the following employee as the Title IX Coordinator to address concerns or inquiries regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, or gender-based harassment: Dana Allen, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Support Services, 322 S. Archer St. Sinton, TX 78387, (361)364-6807, [dallen@sintonisd.net](mailto:dallen@sintonisd.net). Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator: Michael Elbert, Director of Special Education and Section 504 322 S. Archer St. Sinton, TX 78387 361-364-6940.
- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the superintendent: Dr. Chad Jones 361-364-6803, [cjones@sintonisd.net](mailto:cjones@sintonisd.net).

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

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## Parent and Family Engagement (All Grade Levels)

### Working Together

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 38.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. [See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page **Error! Bookmark not defined..**]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [See **Volunteers** on page 81 and policy GKG for more information.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees that develop educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For more information, [Contact *The Director of Federal and Special Programs* and see policies BQA and BQB, for more information.]
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and assisting the district in aligning local community values with health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)** on page 61 and policies BDF, EHAA, FFA for more information.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular board meetings are held on the 3rd of each month at 6:30 p. m. at 322 S. Archer St. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting online at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net). [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

### Parking and Parking Permits (Secondary Grade Levels Only)

A student must present a valid driver's license and proof of insurance to be eligible for a parking permit.

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Students must request a parking permit to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits may be issued throughout the year.

Students will not be permitted to:

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

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

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

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 14.]

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

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

[See policy EC for more information.]

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

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

## **Promotion and Retention**

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

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

## ***Prekindergarten —Grade 3***

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## Elementary and Middle School Grade Levels

In grades 1 and 2, promotion is based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in language arts and mathematics.

In grades 3–5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in languages arts, (which includes both reading and language), mathematics, and either science or social studies.

In grades 6–8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts, mathematics, and either science or social studies.

For the 2021–22 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat grade 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 that the student was enrolled in during the 2020-21 school year. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

## High School Grade Levels

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

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade-Level Classification** on page 50.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page 50 and **Standardized Testing** on page 75.]

For the 2021–22 school year, a parent may request in writing that a student repeat a course taken for high school credit that the student took and received credit for during the 2020–21 school year. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

## Release of Students from School

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 64.]

## Remote Instruction

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

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

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

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

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period parents will receive a progress report. If a student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be asked to schedule a conference with the teacher. [See **Working Together** on page 67 for how to schedule a conference.]

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

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

the district's grading policy. [See **Grading Guidelines** on page 50 and policy EIA(LOCAL) for more information.]

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

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

Students are required to maintain a passing grade (70) in each Honors or AP course at each nine weeks report card in order to stay in the course. If the teacher agrees, a student who makes below a 70 in an Honors or AP course will be allowed to stay in the course by signing and agreeing to the following terms:

- The student must earn a grade for the nine weeks following the failed nine weeks that averages with the failed grade to at least a 70. This means that the student does not simply need to pass the next nine weeks, they must make a grade higher than a 70 to make the overall average passing.
- This waiver can only be used for a specific course. If a student fails a second time then they will be removed from the Honors or AP course.

## **Retaliation**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41.]

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

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

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or others at risk.
- Follow all behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct or set by district employees.
- Remain alert to any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member, and promptly report any incidents to a district employee. A student may make anonymous reports about safety concerns by accessing the link at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net).
- 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.

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

The district may purchase accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students and businesses involved in the district's CTE programs, the district will notify the affected students and parents.

## **Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies**

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

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## **Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed**

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

The district will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security’s Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

## **Emergency Medical Treatment and Information**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Emergency School Closing Information**

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

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

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways: automated telephone messaging system, social media and the district website.

[See **Automated Emergency Communications** on page 36.]

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

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 75.]

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

Students are not allowed to change schedules or drop courses except by parent-counselor or parent-principal conference.

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

The master schedule is based on student's registration the previous spring. If a student did not request a course and/or did not turn in a registration form, a schedule change may not be possible, thus will not be granted. Exceptions will be granted on an individual basis and the following steps should be taken:

- pick up a schedule Change Request Card from the counselors' office;
- fill out the information requested;
- have your parent sign the Change Request Card;
- the teacher, coach or sponsor involved must also sign the Change Request Card;
- administrator approval is required to receive a schedule change;
- return the Change Request Card to the Counselors' office.

**Not all changes can be granted.** Availability of classes, class size and reason for the change are factors which will be considered in granting these requests.

## **School Facilities**

### **Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels)**

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's asbestos management plan is available in the central administrative office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact the Director of Maintenance the district's designated asbestos coordinator: at (361)364-6800.

### **Food and Nutrition Services (All Grade Levels)**

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. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

[See policy CO for more information.]

Parents should continually monitor their child's meal account balance for supplemental purchases. When a student's meal account is depleted, the district will notify the parent. The student may not continue to purchase supplemental items. The district will present the parent with a schedule of repayment for any outstanding account balance.

If the district is unable to work out an agreement with the student's parent on replenishment of the meal account and payment of any outstanding balance, the student will receive a meal. The district will make every effort to avoid bringing attention to the student.

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

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies for food service, including guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see the Director of Food and Nutrition Services. [See policy FFA for more information.]

### **Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the Director of Maintenance, the district's IPM coordinator, at 361-364-6800.

## **Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels)**

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

## **Library (All Grade Levels)**

The library is open for independent student use during the following times with a teacher permit.

## **Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels)**

During class times, loitering or standing in the halls is not permitted, and 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.

## **Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

- Cafeteria

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

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

## **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

Student-organized, student-led 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.

## **School-Sponsored Field Trips (All Grade Levels)**

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes.

A parent must provide permission for a student to participate in a field trip.

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

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

## **Searches**

### **Searches in General (All Grade Levels)**

In the interest of promoting student safety and drug-free schools, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

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

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

### **District Property (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

### **Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels)**

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

### **Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels)**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

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

[See **Electronic Devices and Technology Resources** on page 46 and policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

### **Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels)**

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

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## **Drug Testing (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

The district's policy FNF(LOCAL) addresses board authorization for drug testing of students as described in the policy, but specifics of the drug-testing program should be addressed in administrative regulations, such as this handbook or your extracurricular conduct guide.

[See **Steroids** on page 58.]

## **Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

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

## **Sexual Harassment**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 41.]

## **Special Programs (All Grade Levels)**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, students who are homeless, students in foster care, bilingual students, migrant students, English learners, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Support Services.

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

## **Standardized Testing**

### **Secondary Grade Levels**

#### ***SAT/ACT***

#### ***(Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)***

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

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

#### ***TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment***

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The TSI assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that freshmen-level students need to perform effectively as undergraduates in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may also be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit

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course offered through the district. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

## **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 are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

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

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

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

### ***Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on STAAR Reading or Math***

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

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

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

- Request that the district consider assigning the student to a particular classroom teacher in the applicable subject area, if more than one classroom teacher is available.
- File a grievance or complaint regarding the content or implementation of the ALC’s educational plan. See **Complaints and Concerns (All Grade Levels)** on page 36 and FNG(LOCAL).

### ***Standardized Testing for a Student Enrolled Above Grade Level***

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

### ***Standardized Testing for a Student in Special Programs***

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

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## *Personal Graduation Plans - Middle or Junior High School Students*

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

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

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

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

For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

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

## *High School Courses End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments*

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- U.S. History

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

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

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

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PGP).

[See **Graduation** on page 50.]

## *Failure to Perform Satisfactorily on an EOC*

If a student does not perform satisfactorily on an EOC, the district will provide accelerated instruction.

Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

## **Students in Foster Care (All Grade Levels)**

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district will provide enrollment and registration assistance, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment, to any student who

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is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

If you have questions, please contact the Director of Federal and Special Programs who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at 361-364-6838 with any questions.

[See **A Student in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care)** on page 20.]

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

A parent is encouraged to inform the district if his or her child is experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources that may be able to assist families.

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

For more information on services for students who are homeless, contact the district's homeless education liaison, Gina Guajardo at 361-364-6838.

[See **A Student Who is Homeless on page 20.**]

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

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events:

- Football games;
- Opening announcements and greetings for the school day;
- Any other athletic events designated by the District; and
- Any additional events designated by the District, which may include, but not be limited to, assemblies and pep rallies.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce one of the school events listed above, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

[See Graduation on page 50 for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies and policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities.]

## **Tardies (All Grade Levels)**

A student who is more than 10 minutes tardy to class may be assigned to detention hall or given another appropriate consequence.

## **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials (All Grade Levels)**

The district provides textbooks and other approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat any books with care and place covers on them, as directed by the teacher. The district may also provide electronic textbooks and technological equipment to students, depending on course objectives.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student who does not return an item or returns an item in an unacceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage is paid for by the

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parent. However, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

## **Transfers (All Grade Levels)**

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 19, **Bullying** on page 29, and **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 21, for other transfer options.]

## **Transportation (All Grade Levels)**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use school-provided transportation to and from the event. However, in accordance with campus procedures, a parent may provide written consent for his or her child to ride with or be released after the event to the parent or another adult designated by the parent. [See **School-Sponsored Field Trips** on page 73.]

### **Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students and to any students who are experiencing homelessness. This service is provided at no cost to students.

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

A parent may designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated location must be an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, contact the Transportation Supervisor at 361-364-6854.

Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses and other district vehicles are clean and safe. 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 vehicle in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco or e-cigarettes in any district vehicle.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the vehicle and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle.

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Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, including loss of the privilege to ride in a district vehicle.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

## **Vandalism (All Grade Levels)**

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

## **Video Cameras (All Grade Levels)**

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

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

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

[See policy EHBAF(LOCAL) for more information.]

[See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** on page 11 for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

## **Visitors to the School (All Grade Levels)**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. All visitors should be prepared to show identification.

Individuals may visit classrooms or observe virtual instruction during instructional time only with approval of the principal and teacher. Visitors may not interfere with instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct. Disruptive behavior or violations of student privacy will not be permitted.

[See **Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student when Not Already Permitted by Law** on page 11 for video and other recording by parents or visitors to virtual or in-person classrooms.]

### **Unauthorized Persons**

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

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or

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

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

[See the Student Code of Conduct.]

## **Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students**

### ***Business, Civic, and Youth Groups***

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

### ***Career Day***

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

### **Volunteers (All Grade Levels)**

The district invites and appreciates the efforts of volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your campus secretary or SISD Central Office for more information and to complete an application.

The district does not require state criminal history background checks for volunteers who are parents, guardians, or grandparents of a child enrolled in the district.

Subject to exceptions in accordance with state law and district procedures, other volunteers will be subject to a state criminal history background check, and the volunteer must pay all costs for the background check.

### **Voter Registration**

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

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

### **Withdrawing from School (All Grade Levels)**

To withdraw a student under age 18 from school, the parent or guardian must submit a written request to the principal specifying the reasons for withdrawal and the final day the student will be in attendance. Withdrawal forms are available from the principal's office.

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

Please provide the school at least three days' notice of withdrawal so that records and documents may be prepared.

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## Glossary

**Accelerated instruction**, also referred to as **supplemental instruction**, is an intensive supplemental program designed to help an individual student acquire the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level. It is required when a student does not meet the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

**ACT**, or the American College Test, is one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions examinations. The test may be required for admission to certain colleges or universities.

**ACT-Aspire** is designed as a preparatory and readiness assessment for the ACT. This is usually taken by students in grade 10.

**ARD** stands for admission, review, and dismissal. The ARD committee convenes for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student and his or her parents are members of the committee.

**Attendance review committee** is responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent, or in some cases 75 percent, of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences.

**CPS** stands for Child Protective Services.

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

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

**DPS** stands for the Texas Department of Public Safety.

**DSHS** stands for the Texas Department of State Health Services.

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

**EOC** (end-of-course) assessments are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

**ESSA** is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle; sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP; and outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

**TAC** stands for the Texas Administrative Code.

**TEA** stands for the Texas Education Agency, which oversees primary and secondary public education in Texas.

**TEC** stands for the Texas Education Code.

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

**TSI** stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

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**TXVSN** stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors and are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

## Freedom from Bullying Policy

**Note:** School board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit <https://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1056> Below is the text of *Sinton ISD's* policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date this handbook was finalized for this school year.

### Student Welfare: Freedom from Bullying

Policy FFI(LOCAL) adopted on 11/10/2017

**Note:** This policy addresses bullying of District students. For purposes of this policy, the term bullying includes cyberbullying.

For provisions regarding discrimination and harassment involving District students, see FFH. Note that FFI shall be used in conjunction with FFH for certain prohibited conduct. For reporting requirements related to child abuse and neglect, see FFG.

### Bullying Prohibited

- The District prohibits bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by state law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Examples

- Bullying of a student could occur by physical contact or through electronic means and may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

### Retaliation

- The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation.

Examples

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

### False Claim

- A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### Timely Reporting

- Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

### Reporting Procedures

Student Report

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- To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other District employee. The Superintendent shall develop procedures allowing a student to anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying.

## Employee Report

- Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

## Report Format

- A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

## Notice of Report

- When an allegation of bullying is reported, the principal or designee shall notify a parent of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the incident is reported. The principal or designee shall also notify a parent of the student alleged to have engaged in the conduct within a reasonable amount of time after the incident is reported.

## Prohibited Conduct

- The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

## Investigation of Report

- The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

## Concluding the Investigation

- Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.
- The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

## Notice to Parents

- If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

## District Action

### Bullying

- If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct. The District may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances.

# Sinton ISD Student Handbook

## *Discipline*

- A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action.
- The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

## *Corrective Action*

- Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine whether any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

## *Transfers*

- The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

## *Counseling*

- The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

## *Improper Conduct*

- If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

## **Confidentiality**

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

## **Appeal**

- A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

## **Records Retention**

- Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

## **Access to Policy and Procedures**

- This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's website, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

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FREEDOM FROM BULLYING

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**Definitions**

Bullying

“Bullying”:

1. Means a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that satisfies the applicability requirements below and that:
  - a. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property;
  - b. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
  - c. Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
  - d. Infringes on the rights of the victim at school; and
2. Includes cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying

“Cyberbullying” means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

**Applicability**

These provisions apply to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
  - a. Interferes with a student’s educational opportunities; or

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

**Policy**

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

1. Prohibits the bullying of a student;
2. Prohibits retaliation against any person, including a victim, a witness, or another person, who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying;
3. Establishes a procedure for providing notice of an incident of bullying to:
  - a. A parent or guardian of the alleged victim on or before the third business day after the date the incident is reported; and
  - b. A parent or guardian of the alleged bully within a reasonable amount of time after the incident;
4. Establishes the actions a student should take to obtain assistance and intervention in response to bullying;
5. Sets out the available counseling options for a student who is a victim of or a witness to bullying or who engages in bullying;
6. Establishes procedures for reporting an incident of bullying, including procedures for a student to anonymously report an incident of bullying, investigating a reported incident of bullying, and determining whether the reported incident of bullying occurred;
7. Prohibits the imposition of a disciplinary measure on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, on the basis of that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying; and
8. Requires that discipline for bullying of a student with disabilities comply with applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.).

The policy and any necessary procedures must be included annually in the student and employee handbooks and in the district improvement plan under Education Code 11.252. [See BQ]

**Internet Posting**

The procedure for reporting bullying must be posted on a district's Internet Web site to the extent practicable.

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**Prevention and  
Mediation**

A district may establish a district-wide policy to assist in the prevention and mediation of bullying incidents between students that:

1. Interfere with a student's educational opportunities; or
2. Substantially disrupt the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

*Education Code 37.0832*

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**Distance Learning and Correspondence Courses**

Credit toward state graduation requirements may be granted for distance learning and correspondence courses only as follows:

1. The institution offering the correspondence course is The University of Texas at Austin, Texas Tech University, or another public institution of higher education approved by the commissioner of education.
2. Students may earn course credit through distance learning technologies such as satellite, Internet, two-way videoconferencing, online courses, the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN), and instructional television.
3. The distance learning and correspondence courses must include the state-required essential knowledge and skills for such a course.

*19 TAC 74.23*

**Texas Virtual School Network**

The TXVSN is a state-led initiative for online learning authorized by Education Code Chapter 30A. The TXVSN is a partnership network administered by TEA in coordination with regional education service centers (ESCs), Texas public school districts and charter schools, institutions of higher education, and other eligible entities.

The TXVSN is comprised of two components—the online school (OLS) program and the statewide course catalog.

*19 TAC 70.1001(4)*

**“Online School (OLS) Program”**

“Online School (OLS) program” is a full-time, virtual instructional program that is made available through an approved course provider and is designed to serve students in grades 3–12 who are not physically present at school. *19 TAC 70.1001(7)*

A TXVSN OLS may serve students in grades 3–12 but may not serve students in kindergarten–grade 2.

A school district that operates a TXVSN OLS that serves students in full-time virtual instruction shall, prior to the start of each academic year, notify TEA of grade levels to be served and the total number of students to be served during that academic year. A school district may not add grade levels after the start of the school year.

A TXVSN OLS or a school district wishing to add additional grade levels to its online program shall certify that the OLS has courses sufficient to comprise a full instructional program for each additional grade level to be served by the OLS prior to serving that grade level.

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School districts approved to serve as TXVSN OLSs shall follow the TEA procedures related to obtaining a campus number for the virtual campus through which they serve their TXVSN OLS students.

School districts serving as TXVSN OLSs must follow all requirements in 19 Administrative Code 70.1011.

*19 TAC 70.1011*

“Statewide Course Catalog”

“Statewide course catalog” is a supplemental online high school instructional program available through approved providers. *19 TAC 70.1001(10)*

Course Providers

A TXVSN course provider is an entity that provides an electronic course through the TXVSN. Course providers include TXVSN OLSs and providers in the statewide course catalog. *19 TAC 70.1001(8)*

*Electronic Course*

“Electronic course” means an educational course in which:

1. Instruction and content are delivered primarily over the Internet;
2. A student and teacher are in different locations for a majority of the student’s instructional period;
3. Most instructional activities take place in an online environment;
4. The online instructional activities are integral to the academic program;
5. Extensive communication between a student and a teacher and among students is emphasized; and
6. A student is not required to be located on the physical premises of a school district or open-enrollment charter school.

An electronic course is the equivalent of what would typically be taught in one semester. For example: English IA is treated as a single electronic course and English IB is treated as a single electronic course.

*Education Code 30A.001(4); 19 TAC 70.1001(1)*

*OLS Eligibility*

To be eligible to serve as a TXVSN OLS, a school district shall:

1. Have a current accreditation status of Accredited under 19 Administrative Code 97.1055 (relating to Accreditation Status);
2. Be rated acceptable under Education Code 39.054;

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3. Be rated at the Standard Achievement level or higher under the state financial accountability rating system under 19 Administrative Code 109.1001 (relating to Types of Financial Accountability Ratings);
4. Have met statutory requirements for timely submission of annual audit and compliance reports, Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) reports, and timely deposits with the Teacher Retirement System, with all records and reports reflecting satisfactory performance;
5. Be in good standing with other programs, grants, and projects administered through TEA; and
6. Have been approved to operate a TXVSN OLS as of January 1, 2013.

*19 TAC 70.1009(a)*

*Statewide Course  
Catalog Provider  
Eligibility*

To be eligible to serve as a course provider in the TXVSN statewide course catalog, a district must be rated acceptable under Education Code 39.054. A Texas school district may provide an electronic course through the TXVSN to a student enrolled in that district or school, a student enrolled in another school district or school in the state, or a student who resides in Texas who is enrolled in a school other than a public school district or charter school. *19 TAC 70.1007(a)*

*General  
Requirements*

TXVSN course providers shall:

1. Provide the TXVSN receiver district in which each TXVSN student is enrolled with written notice of a student's performance in the course at least once every 12 weeks;
2. Provide the TXVSN receiver district in which each TXVSN student is enrolled with written notice of a student's performance at least once every three weeks if the student's performance in the course is consistently unsatisfactory, as determined by the TXVSN course provider;
3. Notify students in writing upon enrollment to participate in the TXVSN course with specific dates and details regarding enrollment;
4. Meet all federal and state requirements for educating students with disabilities;
5. Provide a contingency plan for the continuation of instructional services to all TXVSN students allowing them to complete their TXVSN courses in the event that the contract or agreement through which the electronic courses are provided are

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terminated or the TXVSN courses become unavailable to students;

6. Ensure a maximum class size limit of 40 students in a single section of a course and ensure that the class size does not exceed the maximum allowed by law, as applicable, whichever is less; and
7. Meet all reporting requirements established by TXVSN central operations, including timely submission of student performance reports, course completion results, catalog data, data required to verify instructor qualifications, and all data necessary for the TXVSN Informed Choice Report required under 19 Administrative Code 70.1031 (relating to Informed Choice Reports).

*19 TAC 70.1007(c)*

*Receiver District Requirements*

A district is eligible to serve as a receiver district in the TXVSN statewide course catalog. Each TXVSN receiver district shall:

1. Register as a receiver district with TXVSN central operations;
2. Assign a qualified staff member to serve as the TXVSN coordinator;
3. Enroll a student who resides in Texas and who is enrolled in a school other than a public school district or charter school upon request by the student and/or parent or guardian; and
4. In accordance with 19 Administrative Code 74.26 (relating to Award of Credit), award credit to a student enrolled in the district who has successfully completed all state and local requirements and received a grade that is the equivalent of 70 on a scale of 100, based upon the essential knowledge and skills for a course offered through the TXVSN statewide course catalog.

*19 TAC 70.1008*

Courses

All electronic courses to be made available through the TXVSN shall be reviewed and approved prior to being offered in accordance with the course requirements at 19 Administrative Code 70.1005. *19 TAC 70.1005(a)*

An electronic course or program that was offered or could have been offered during the 2008–09 school year under former Education Code 29.909, as that section existed on January 1, 2009, may be offered during a subsequent school year through the TXVSN. *Education Code 30A.006*

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Student Eligibility <i>Generally</i>	<p>A student is eligible to enroll in a TXVSN course only if the student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. On September 1 of the school year is younger than 21 years of age or is younger than 26 years of age and entitled to the benefits of the Foundation School Program under Education Code 42.003;</li><li>2. Has not graduated from high school; and</li><li>3. Is otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in this state.</li></ol> <p>A student is eligible to enroll full-time in courses provided through the TXVSN only if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The student was enrolled in a public school in this state in the preceding school year;</li><li>2. The student is a dependent of a member of the United States military who has been deployed or transferred to this state and was enrolled in a publicly funded school outside of this state in the preceding school year; or</li><li>3. The student has been placed in substitute care in this state, regardless of whether the student was enrolled in a public school in this state in the preceding school year.</li></ol>
Exception for Military Dependents	<p>A student is eligible to enroll in one or more TXVSN courses or enroll full-time in courses provided through the network if the student:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Is a dependent of a member of the United States military;</li><li>2. Was previously enrolled in high school in this state; and</li><li>3. No longer resides in this state as a result of a military deployment or transfer.</li></ol>
Provisional Enrollment	<p>If a student has not provided required evidence of eligibility to enroll, a TXVSN OLS may enroll a student provisionally for ten school days and withdraw the student from the OLS if the student does not provide the required evidence of eligibility within ten school days of the provisional enrollment.</p> <p>Upon enrolling a student provisionally, the TXVSN OLS shall notify the student and the student's parents or guardians that the student will be withdrawn if documentation is not provided within the required timeframe.</p>
<i>Education Code 30A.002; 19 TAC 70.1013</i>	
<i>Enrolled Students</i>	<p>A student who is enrolled in the district as a full-time student may take one or more electronic courses through the TXVSN. <i>Education Code 30A.107(b)</i></p>

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*Unenrolled  
Students*

A student who resides in this state but who is not enrolled in a school district or open-enrollment charter school in this state as a full-time student may, subject to Education Code 30A.155, enroll in electronic courses through the TXVSN. The student:

1. May not in any semester enroll in more than two electronic courses offered through the TXVSN;
2. Is not considered to be a public school student;
3. Must obtain access to a course provided through the network through the school district or open-enrollment charter school attendance zone in which the student resides;
4. Is not entitled to enroll in a course offered by a school district or open-enrollment charter school other than an electronic course provided through the network; and
5. Is not entitled to any right, privilege, activities, or services available to a student enrolled in a public school, other than the right to receive the appropriate unit of credit for completing an electronic course.

*Education Code 30A.107(c)*

*Enrollment,  
Advancement,  
and Withdrawal*

A student taking a course through the TXVSN statewide course catalog or a TXVSN OLS program is considered to:

1. Be enrolled in a TXVSN course when he or she begins receiving instruction and actively engages in instructional activities in a TXVSN subject area or course;
2. Have successfully completed a course if the student demonstrates academic proficiency and earns credit for the course, as determined by the TXVSN teacher; and
3. Be, and must be reported as, withdrawn from the TXVSN when the student is no longer actively participating in the TXVSN course or program.

A student taking a course through the TXVSN statewide course catalog:

1. Shall enroll in each TXVSN course through the TXVSN online registration system;
2. Shall be assigned a grade by the TXVSN teacher after the drop period established by TXVSN central operations;
3. May withdraw from a course taken through the TXVSN after the instructional start date without academic or financial pen-

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ality within the drop period established by TXVSN central operations; and

4. Shall have the grade assigned by the TXVSN teacher added to the student's transcript by the student's home district.

A student enrolled full time in grades 3–8 must demonstrate academic proficiency sufficient to earn promotion to the next grade, as determined by the TXVSN teacher for the educational program.

*19 TAC 70.1015*

*Compulsory  
Attendance*

Texas public school students are not required to be in physical attendance while participating in courses through a TXVSN OLS or the TXVSN course catalog.

Based upon successful completion of a TXVSN course for students in grades 9–12 or a TXVSN OLS instructional program for students in grades 3–8, students are considered to have met attendance requirements for that course or program. A student who has successfully completed the grade level or course is eligible to receive any weighted funding for which the student is eligible.

For audit purposes, TXVSN course providers and TXVSN receiver districts shall maintain documentation to support the students' successful completion and to support verification of compulsory attendance.

"TXVSN receiver district" means a Texas public school district that has students enrolled in the school district who take one or more online courses through the TXVSN statewide course catalog.

*19 TAC 70.1001(9), .1017*

Local Policy

A district shall adopt a written policy that provides students enrolled in the district with the opportunity to enroll in electronic courses provided through the TXVSN statewide course catalog. The policy must be consistent with the requirements regarding notice, enrollment requests, and students with disabilities as described below.

A district shall, at least once per school year, send to a parent of each district student enrolled at the middle or high school level a copy of the policy. A district may send the policy with any other information that the district sends to a parent.

*Education Code 30A.007; 19 TAC 70.1033*

*Notice*

At the time and in the manner that a district informs students and parents about courses that are offered in the district's traditional classroom setting, the district shall notify parents and students of

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	<p>the option to enroll in an electronic course offered through the TXVSN.</p>
<p><i>Requests to Enroll</i></p>	<p>Except as provided below, a district may not deny the request of a parent of a full-time student to enroll the student in an electronic course offered through the TXVSN.</p> <p>A district may deny a request to enroll a student in an electronic course if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A student attempts to enroll in a course load that is inconsistent with the student's high school graduation plan or requirements for college admission or earning an industry certification;</li><li>2. The student requests permission to enroll in an electronic course at a time that is not consistent with the enrollment period established by the district providing the course; or</li><li>3. The district offers a substantially similar course.</li></ol> <p>The course provider shall make all reasonable efforts to accommodate the enrollment of a student in the course under special circumstances.</p> <p>If a parent of a student requests permission to enroll the student in a TXVSN course, a district has discretion to select a course provider approved by TEA for the course in which the student will enroll based on factors including the informed choice report required by Education Code 30A.108(b).</p>
<p>Appeals</p>	<p>A parent may appeal to the commissioner a district's decision to deny a request to enroll a student in an electronic course offered through the TXVSN. The commissioner's decision under this subsection is final and may not be appealed.</p> <p><i>Education Code 26.0031; 19 TAC 70.1008, .1035</i></p>
<p><i>Students with Disabilities</i></p>	<p>For purposes of the policy, the determination of whether or not an electronic course will meet the needs of a student with a disability shall be made by the student's admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee in a manner consistent with state and federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq., and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. Section 794. <i>Education Code 30A.007(b)</i></p>
<p>Required Enrollment Prohibited</p>	<p>A school district or open-enrollment charter school may not require a student to enroll in an electronic course. <i>Education Code 30A.107(d)</i></p>

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Inducements for Enrollment Prohibited	<p>A course provider may not promise or provide equipment or any other thing of value to a student or a student's parent as an inducement for the student to enroll in an electronic course offered through the TXVSN. The commissioner shall revoke approval of electronic courses offered by a course provider that violates this prohibition. The commissioner's action under this section is final and may not be appealed. <i>Education Code 30A.1052</i></p>
Course Portability	<p>A student who transfers from one educational setting to another after beginning enrollment in an electronic course is entitled to continue enrollment in the course. <i>Education Code 30A.1051; 19 TAC 70.1015(d)</i></p>
Student Assessment	<p>All Texas public school students enrolled in the TXVSN are required to take the statewide assessments as required in Education Code 39.023 [see EKB]. The administration of the assessment instrument to the student enrolled in the electronic course must be supervised by a proctor.</p> <p>A district shall report to the commissioner through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) the results of assessment instruments administered to students enrolled in an electronic course offered through the TXVSN separately from the results of assessment instruments administered to other students.</p> <p>All districts participating in the TXVSN OLS program are included in the state's academic accountability system.</p> <p><i>Education Code 30A.110; 19 TAC 70.1023</i></p>
Funding	<p>A district in which a student is enrolled is entitled to funding under Education Code Chapter 42 for the student's enrollment in a TXVSN course in the same manner that the district is entitled to funding for the student's enrollment in courses provided in a traditional classroom setting, provided that the student successfully completes the electronic course.</p> <p>Funding is limited to a student's enrollment in not more than three electronic courses during any school year, unless the student is enrolled in a full-time online program that was operating on January 1, 2013.</p> <p><i>Education Code 30A.153</i></p> <p>A district may decline to pay the cost for a student of more than three yearlong electronic courses, or the equivalent, during any school year unless the student is enrolled in a full-time online program that was operating on January 1, 2013. If the district declines to pay the cost, a student is able to enroll in additional electronic courses at the student's cost. <i>Education Code 26.0031(c-1)</i></p>

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Course Cost

A district may charge the course cost for enrollment in a TXVSN course to a student who resides in this state and:

1. Is enrolled in the district as a full-time student with a course load greater than that normally taken by students in the equivalent grade level in other school districts; or
2. Elects to enroll in a TXVSN course for which the district in which the student is enrolled as a full-time student declines to pay the cost as authorized by Education Code 26.0031(c-1).

A district may charge the course cost for enrollment in a TXVSN course during the summer.

A district shall charge the course cost for enrollment in a TXVSN course to a student who resides in this state and is not enrolled in a school district or open-enrollment charter school as a full-time student.

A TXVSN course cost may not exceed the lesser of the cost of providing the course or \$400.

A district may decline to pay the course costs for a student who chooses to enroll in more than three year-long electronic courses, or the equivalent, during any school year. This does not limit the ability of the student to enroll in additional electronic courses offered through the TXVSN at the student's expense.

A district that is not the course provider may charge a student enrolled in the district a nominal fee, not to exceed \$50, if the student enrolls in a TXVSN course that exceeds the course load normally taken by students in the equivalent grade level.

A course provider in the TXVSN statewide course catalog shall receive:

1. No more than 70 percent of the catalog course cost prior to a student successfully completing the course; and
2. The remaining 30 percent of the catalog course cost when the student successfully completes the course.

*Education Code 30A.155(a)-(c-1); 19 TAC 70.1025*

Educators of  
Electronic Courses

Each instructor of an electronic course, including a dual credit course, offered through the TXVSN by a course provider must be certified under Education Code Chapter 21, Subchapter B, to teach that course and grade level or meet the credentialing requirements of the institution of higher education with which they are affiliated and that is serving as a course provider.

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In addition, each instructor must successfully complete one continuing professional development course specific to online learning every three years, and:

1. Successfully complete a professional development course or program approved by TXVSN central operations before teaching an electronic course offered through the TXVSN; or
2. Have a graduate degree in online or distance learning and have demonstrated mastery of the International Association for K–12 Learning (iNACOL) National Standards for Quality Online Teaching; or
3. Have two or more years of documented experience teaching online courses for students in grades 3–12 and have demonstrated mastery of the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching.

Each instructor of an electronic course, including a dual credit course, offered through the TXVSN by a course provider must meet highly qualified teacher requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as applicable.

TXVSN course providers shall affirm the preparedness of teachers of TXVSN electronic courses to teach public school-age students in a highly interactive online classroom and shall:

1. Maintain records documenting:
  - a. Valid Texas educator certification credentials appropriate for the instructor’s TXVSN assignment;
  - b. Successful initial completion of TXVSN-approved professional development, evidence of prior online teaching, or a graduate degree in online or distance learning; and
  - c. Instructors’ demonstrated mastery of the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching prior to teaching through the TXVSN;
2. Conduct and maintain records for background checks;
3. Maintain records of successful completion of continuing professional development;
4. Maintain records documenting successful completion of TXVSN-approved professional development before the end of the school year for any instructor who is hired after the school year has begun; and

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5. Make the records specified in this subsection available to TEA and TXVSN central operations upon request.

*19 TAC 70.1027*

Revocation

The commissioner may revoke the right to participation in the TXVSN based on any of the following factors:

1. Noncompliance with relevant state or federal laws;
2. Noncompliance with requirements and assurances outlined in the contractual agreements with TXVSN central operations and/or these provisions and Education Code Chapter 30A; or
3. Consistently poor student performance rates as evidenced by results on statewide student assessments, student withdrawal rates, student completion rates, successful completion rates, or campus accountability ratings.

*19 TAC 70.1029*

Applicability

Unless a district chooses to participate in providing an electronic course or an electronic diagnostic assessment under Education Code Chapter 30A to a student who is located on the physical premises of a school district or open-enrollment charter school, Chapter 30A does not affect the provision of a course to such a student.

Requirements imposed by or under Education Code Chapter 30A do not apply to a virtual course provided by a district only to district students if the course is not provided as part of the TXVSN.

*Education Code 30A.004*

# **Sinton ISD**



## **Electronic Acceptable Use Policy 2021-2022**

Sinton Independent School District  
Internet Safety Policy

### Introduction

It is the policy of Sinton ISD to:

- (a) prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- (b) prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity;
- (c) prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and
- (d) comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 USC 254(h)].

### Definitions

Key terms are as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act.

### Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or "Internet filters") shall be used to block or filter Internet, or other forms of electronic communications, access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Subject to staff supervision, technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

### Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the Sinton ISD online computer network when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes:

- (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; and
- (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

### Education, Supervision and Monitoring

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the Sinton ISD staff to educate, supervise and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

Procedures for the disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of Superintendent or designated representatives.

The Principal or designated representatives for each campus will provide age-appropriate training for students who use the District's Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote the District's commitment to:

- a. The standards and acceptable use of Internet services as set forth in the District's Internet Safety Policy and the Student Technology Acceptable Use Policy;
- b. Student safety with regard to:
  - i. safety on the Internet;
  - ii. appropriate behavior while on online, on social networking Web sites, and in chat rooms; and
  - iii. cyberbullying awareness and response.
- c. Compliance with the E-rate requirements of the Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA").

Following receipt of this training, the student will acknowledge that he/she received the training, understood it, and will follow the provisions of the District's acceptable use policies.

### Adoption

This Internet Safety Policy was adopted by the Sinton ISD Board of Trustees at a public meeting, following normal public notice, on June 18, 2012.

## STUDENT AGREEMENT FOR ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

### Acceptable Use Agreement

Because the Internet contains an unregulated collection of resources, the district cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information or the appropriateness of any material that a student may encounter. Sinton ISD has the right to restrict or terminate Internet, network or computer access at any time for any reason. The District also has the right to monitor Internet, network and computer activity in any way necessary to maintain the integrity and security of the network and the privacy and accuracy of user information.

- The use of the district's system is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use shall result in a cancellation of those privileges. The district's system shall be used only for purposes related to education. Commercial, political and/or personal use unrelated to an educational purpose is prohibited.
- The District's computer systems and networks (system) are any configuration of hardware and software. The system includes but is not limited to the following: Telephones, cellular telephones, and voice-mail technologies, Email accounts, Servers, Computer hardware and peripherals, Software including operating system software and application software, Digitized information including stored text, data files, email, digital images, and video and audio files, Internally or externally accessed databases, applications, or tools (Internet- or District-server based), District-provided Internet access, District-filtered Wi-Fi, and New technologies as they become available.
- All electronic communication including electronic mail transmissions, faxes, and program or data files sent, received, created or accessed by students are not considered confidential and may be monitored or read at any time by District staff to insure appropriate use of the educational technology and compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Using obscene, profane, lewd, vulgar, rude, inflammatory, threatening, or disrespectful language in emails blogs, wikis, or other communication tools is prohibited. Sending messages that could cause danger or disruption, personal attacks, including prejudicial or discriminatory attacks are prohibited.
- Students may not distribute illegally ("traffic") via the public Internet, private intranet or through peer-to-peer file sharing any and all digital music, video, movie and/or software from copyrighted sources.
- Students may not use the network for any illicit activity, including hacking and violation of copyrights.
- Students may not copy district-owned software for personal use or install privately-owned software, viruses, illegally obtained or inappropriate content onto a district device or the network.
- Sinton ISD uses an Internet filtering device that blocks access to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, inappropriate for students, or harmful to minors, as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act. System users may not disable, bypass, or attempt to disable or bypass a filtering device on the District's Electronic Communications System. System users may not gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to external resources or entities via use of Internet proxy sites and/or proxy servers designed to bypass District monitoring, security and content filtering devices.
- Students may not load a bootable, alternate operating system on any District-owned computer or attempt to boot a District computer directly from any student-owned source or media.
- Students are prohibited from deleting, examining, copying, or modifying files and/or data belonging to other users, without their permission.
- Students may be assigned individual accounts to District resources 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 and students may not use another person's account.
- Students should never post personal information or make appointments to meet people whom they meet on-line and if they receive such requests, students must immediately report it to a teacher or an administrator. Students may not redistribute or forward confidential information without proper authorization. Confidential information should never be transmitted, redistributed or forwarded to outside individuals who are not expressly authorized to receive the information. Revealing personal information about oneself such as, but not limited to, home addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, birth-dates or of others is prohibited.
- Students may not connect non-District purchased technology equipment to the Electronic Communications System either via wireless or through cabling without approval from the technology department and the campus principal.
- Computer/Network/Internet access is provided to all students unless parents or guardians request in writing to the campus principal that access be denied. Student Internet access will be under the direction and guidance of a District staff member.

## INTERNET SAFETY POLICY

Students are required to abide by the District Internet Safety Policy which includes required training on: Internet safety, appropriate behavior while on-line, on social networking Websites, and in chat rooms; and cyberbullying awareness and response.

## CONSEQUENCES FOR INAPPROPRIATE USE

The principal or designee shall make all decisions regarding whether or not a user has violated these regulations and may deny, revoke or suspend a user's access at any time. The decision of the principal or designee shall be final. The consequences for inappropriate use may include suspension of access to the system, revocation of the computer system account; or other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable laws. Consequences may include: Suspension of access to the system; revocation of the computer system account; or other disciplinary or legal action, in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable laws.

## DISCLAIMER

The District's system is provided on an "as is, as available" basis. The District does not make any warranties, whether expressed or implied, with respect to any services provided by the system(s) and any information or software contained therein. The District makes every effort to limit access to objectionable material; however, controlling all such materials on the computer/network/Internet is impossible, even with filtering in place. With global access to computers and people, a risk exists that students may access material that may not be of educational value in the school setting. Opinions, advice, services, and all other information expressed by system users, information providers, service providers, or other third-party individuals in the system are those of the providers and not the District. The District will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the District's electronic communications system.

# **Sinton ISD**



## **Campus Grading Policy 2021-2022**

# SINTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADING POLICY

## PHILOSOPHY

Assessing and grading student work communicates to parents the educational progress of their student. Assessment should be a positive influence on a student's education and indicate mastery of a given portion of the course content. If assessing and grading is to be valid, useful and constructive, the process must be fair and as objective as possible, and understandable to students and their parents. It must honestly and realistically report the strengths and weaknesses of student performance. Furthermore, assessment must be based on reasonable and clearly understood standards of performance.

Grades represent student achievement of curriculum objectives. Student progress on curriculum objectives should be reported in a useful and understandable manor to students and parents. Valid grades serve a variety of purposes; conveying information about student achievement, providing incentives for students to study, serving as selection criteria, helping in the evaluation and monitoring of the instructional process, and assisting students in educational and occupational planning.

## GRADING GUIDELINES

- The grade reflects what the student has learned by measuring academic performance and is used as a means of reporting achievement relative to curriculum objectives.
- Teachers should provide the evaluation criteria to each student at the beginning of the year or course.
- Grading begins with the individual and his/her achievement and the basic determinant of grades should be student achievement.
- Quizzes, tests, exams essays, homework and any other assignments should be evaluated and/or graded, returned promptly, and reviewed with the student before the next related test is administered.

## CAMPUS PROCEDURES

Each campus or grade level shall establish specific guidelines and procedure dealing with:

- Minimum number of grades in each grading period
- Nine weeks tests
- Semester exams

These guidelines shall be made available, in writing, to students and parents at the beginning of each school year.

## HOMEWORK GRADES RECORDED PER NINE WEEKS

By using the district homework policy, the teacher determines the grading of homework. There is no minimum number of homework grades.

## PRE-AP AND AP COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to maintain a passing grade (70) in each Pre-AP or AP course at each nine weeks report card in order to stay in the course. If the teacher agrees, a student who makes below a 70 in a pre-AP course will be allowed to stay in the course by signing and agreeing to the following terms:

- The student must earn a grade for the nine weeks following the failed nine weeks that averages with the failed grade to at least a 70. This means that the student does not simply need to pass the next nine weeks, they must make a grade higher than a 70 to make the overall average passing.
- This waiver can only be used for a specific course. If a student fails a second time then they will be removed from the Pre-AP or AP course.

## MINIMUM REPORT CARD GRADE

The actual numerical grade earned shall be recorded in the student's permanent cumulative records. [EIA (Local)].

## ABSENCES

Students may be permitted to make up work from unexcused and excused absences. Those students in jeopardy of failing because of excessive absences will be required to complete work as stated on their attendance contract.

Each campus will determine the acceptable length of time for completion of make-up work. This policy will be given to students and parents at the beginning of the school year.

### **NINE WEEKS TESTS**

Nine-week tests shall be given beginning in the sixth grade. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> nine-week periods will have nine weeks tests or unit tests figured on the report card.

Each campus will determine the weight of the unit tests or nine weeks exam.

### **SEMESTER EXAMS**

Semester exams will be given beginning in the sixth grade and continue through high school.

Semester exams will NOT be used to calculate the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks grade. The semester exam stands alone in the appropriate place on the report card and is not added in place of the nine weeks test. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks test grade will be determined by the average of the grades recorded for that nine weeks period.

The semester exam will count for 15% of the grade.

### **INCOMPLETE GRADES ON REPORT CARD**

Grades of incomplete (I) should be cleared by the student within one week of the end of the grading period. If the student does not make-up the work within this time period, all missing grades could be reported as zeroes (0) and the grade calculated accordingly.

Any exceptions for clearing the student's incomplete grade shall be approved through teacher and principal agreement.

**PK - K:**

A checklist of skills is sent to the parents at the end of each semester for Pre-K and each nine weeks for Kindergarten with the 1<sup>st</sup> nine weeks being a parent-teacher conference.

**1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:**

Numerical grades for the following subjects:

Language Arts

- Reading
- Writing/Grammar
- Word Study

Math

Letter grades of E (Excellent), S (Satisfactory), and U (Unsatisfactory) for the following:

Handwriting

Science

Social Studies

Fine Arts

Health

P.E.

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Numerical grades are required for the following subjects in 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grades:

Language Arts

- Reading
- Writing/Grammar
- Word Study

Math

Science

Social Studies

Letter grades of E (Excellent), S (Satisfactory), and U (Unsatisfactory) for the following subjects:

P.E./Health

Music

No nine weeks tests are required.

**K - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Conduct grades are as follows:

E – Excellent

S – Satisfactory

U - Unsatisfactory

Honor Roll for 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students is determined as follows:

A Honor Roll

All A's in academic classes and have a satisfactory conduct grade

A/B Honor Roll

Combination of As & Bs in academic classes and a satisfactory conduct grade

**Retention and Promotion Policy**

In grades 1 and 2, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) in language arts and mathematics.

In grades 3–5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in languages arts (which includes both reading and language) and mathematics, and either science or social studies.

Minimum number of grades recorded per nine weeks: 14 grades per nine weeks.

Nine weeks tests are required for all subjects the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> nine weeks. The exception to this requirement is that a department may request permission of the principal to waive a nine weeks test under these conditions:

1. When a unit of instruction requires more time before formal testing.
2. When a unit of instruction has been completed before the nine weeks and a major test has already been administered.
3. When using a Benchmark Test as a summative assessment which will count for the test grade.

If the principal rules that the nine weeks test may be waived under these conditions, an alternate major test may be counted as a nine weeks test even though it is not given during the traditional nine weeks testing period.

Each department will determine the weight of the exams with no one grade counting for more than 20% of the nine weeks grade. There will be no nine weeks test given at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks grading periods.

Semester exams will be given at the end of each semester. Semester exams will count as 15% of the semester average.

If a student fails the first semester in a full year course, a passing second semester grade which results in a yearly average of 70 or above would give full credit for the course.

Students are permitted to make up work missed due to excused and unexcused absences. At a minimum, a student will be given two (2) school days to complete make-up work for each day of absence. Grades of incomplete (I) shall be cleared by the student within one week of the end of the grading period. If the student does not make-up the work within this time period, all missing grades may be reported as zeroes (0) and the grade calculated accordingly. Teachers may grant extra time based upon their professional judgment.

Honor Roll is determined as follows:

A Honor Roll	All A's in academic classes
A/B Honor Roll	Combination of As & Bs in academic classes

Conduct grades are as follows:

- E – Excellent
- S – Satisfactory
- U - Unsatisfactory

### **Retention and Promotion Policy**

In grades 6–8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in language arts and in mathematics, and in either science or social studies.

These guidelines shall be made available, in writing, to students and parents at the beginning of each school year:

- There shall be a minimum of 14 grades recorded for each student during each grading period.
- Each department shall determine a uniform weight given to tests, homework projects, etc. within that department.
- The maximum grade posted on report cards shall be 100.
- The actual numerical grade earned shall be recorded in the student's permanent cumulative records. [EIA (Local)].
- Nine weeks tests will be given at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> nine weeks grading periods. Each high school department will determine the weight of the exams with no one grade counting for more than 20% of the nine weeks grade. There will be no nine weeks test given at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine weeks grading periods. Teachers have the option of giving either benchmark or unit exams in lieu of nine weeks exams.
- Semester exams will be given at the end of each semester and count 15% of the semester grade.
- Students enrolled in AP courses may request that their course be counted as non-GPA. This request must be made on a semester basis, and must be done by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.

Students are permitted to make up work missed due to excused and unexcused absences. At a minimum, a student will be given two (2) school days to complete make-up work for each day of absence, but teachers may grant extra time based upon extenuating circumstances and their professional judgment. Grades of incomplete (I) shall be cleared by the student within one week of the end of the grading period. If the student does not make-up the work within this time period, all missing grades will be reported as zeroes (0) and the grade calculated accordingly.

Conduct grades are as follows:

- E – Excellent
- S – Satisfactory
- U - Unsatisfactory

**Class Rank Policy**

See EIC(Local).

**Retention and Promotion Policy**

Grade-level advancement for students in grades 9–12 shall be earned by course credits.

# **Sinton ISD**



## **Student Code of Conduct**

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## **Student Code of Conduct**

### **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing the information in this document because of disability, please contact the Director of Federal and Special Programs.

### **Purpose**

The Student Code of Conduct (“Code”), as required by Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code, provides methods and options for managing student behavior, preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, and imposing discipline.

The law requires the district to define misconduct that may—or must—result in a range of specific disciplinary consequences, including removal from a regular classroom or campus, out-of-school suspension, placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP), or expulsion from school.

This Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Sinton ISD Board of Trustees and developed with the advice of the district-level planning and decision-making committee. It provides information to parents and students regarding standards of conduct, consequences of misconduct, and procedures for administering discipline. This Code remains in effect during summer school and at all school-related events and activities outside the school year until the board adopts an updated version for the next school year.

In accordance with state law, the Code shall be posted at each school campus or shall be available for review at the campus principal’s office. Additionally, the Code shall be available at the campus behavior coordinator’s office and posted on the district’s website. Parents shall be notified of any conduct violation that may result in a student being suspended, placed in a DAEP, expelled, or taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under Chapter 37 of the Education Code.

Because the Student Code of Conduct is adopted by the district’s board of trustees, it has the force of policy. In the event of a conflict between the Code and the Student Handbook, the Code shall prevail.

**Please note:** The discipline of students with disabilities who are eligible for services under federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) is subject to the provisions of those laws.

### **School District Authority and Jurisdiction**

School rules and the district's authority to administer discipline apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities.

The district has disciplinary authority over a student:

1. During the regular school day;
2. While the student is traveling on district transportation;
3. During lunch periods in which a student is allowed to leave campus;
4. At any school-related activity, regardless of time or location;
5. For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
6. When retaliation against a school employee, board member, or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
7. When a student engages in cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832;
8. When criminal mischief is committed on or off school property or at a school-related event;
9. For certain offenses committed within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line;
10. For certain offenses committed while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of another district in Texas;
11. When the student commits a felony, as provided by Education Code 37.006 or 37.0081; and
12. When the student is required to register as a sex offender.

### **Campus Behavior Coordinator**

As required by law, a person at each campus must be designated to serve as the campus behavior coordinator. The designated person may be the principal or any other campus administrator selected by the principal. The campus behavior coordinator is primarily responsible for maintaining student discipline. The district shall post on its website and in the Student Handbook, for each campus, the email address and telephone number of the person serving as campus behavior coordinator. Contact information may be found at [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net).

### **Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team**

The campus behavior coordinator or other appropriate administrator will work closely with the campus threat assessment safe and supportive school team to implement the district's threat assessment policy and procedures, as required by law, and shall take appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Code.

## **Searches**

District officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with state and federal law and district policy. Searches of students shall be conducted in a reasonable and nondiscriminatory manner. Refer to the district's policies at FNF(LEGAL) and FNF(LOCAL) for more information regarding investigations and searches.

The district has the right to search a vehicle driven to school by a student and parked on school property whenever there is reasonable suspicion to believe it contains articles or materials prohibited by the district.

Desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are the property of the district and are provided for student use as a matter of convenience. District property is subject to search or inspection at any time without notice.

## **Reporting Crimes**

The principal *or* campus behavior coordinator and other school administrators as appropriate shall report crimes as required by law and shall call local law enforcement when an administrator suspects that a crime has been committed on campus.

## **Security Personnel**

To ensure the security and protection of students, staff, and property, the board employs school resource officers (SROs). In accordance with law, the board has coordinated with the campus behavior coordinator and other district employees to ensure appropriate law enforcement duties are assigned to security staff. The law enforcement duties of school resource officers are: to provide security and police protection. Additionally, the SROs can provide law-related education and counseling, juvenile delinquency prevention by developing positive relationships with students, communication and presentations about anti-drug/alcohol, anti-bullying, and crime prevention measures, and security inspections. Overall, the SROs presence will promote the police profession and provide a positive role model to the students of Sinton ISD.

## **“Parent” Defined**

Throughout the Code of Conduct and related discipline policies, the term “parent” includes a parent, legal guardian, or other person having lawful control of the child.

## **Participating in Graduation Activities**

The district has the right to limit a student's participation in graduation activities for violating the district's Code.

Participation might include a speaking role, as established by district policy and procedures.

Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks at graduation shall be notified by the campus principal. Notwithstanding any other eligibility requirements, in order to be considered eligible, a student shall not have engaged in any misconduct that resulted in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

The valedictorian salutatorian, and honor graduate may also have speaking roles at graduation. No student shall be eligible to have such a speaking role if he or she engaged in any misconduct that resulted in an out-of-school suspension, removal to a DAEP, or expulsion during the semester immediately preceding graduation.

### **Unauthorized Persons**

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

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

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with policies FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL), as appropriate. However, the timelines for the district's grievance procedures shall be adjusted as necessary to permit the person to address the board in person within 90 calendar days, unless the complaint is resolved before a board hearing.

See **DAEP—Restrictions During Placement** on page 21 for information regarding a student assigned to DAEP at the time of graduation.

### **Standards for Student Conduct**

Each student is expected to:

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

## General Conduct Violations

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school, in vehicles owned or operated by the district, and at all school-related activities, but the list does not include the most severe offenses. In the subsequent sections on **Out-of-School Suspension** on page 15, **DAEP Placement** on page 16, **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 24, and **Expulsion** on page 27, those offenses that require or permit specific consequences are listed. Any offense, however, may be severe enough to result in **Removal from the Regular Educational Setting** as detailed on page 14.

### Disregard for Authority

Students shall not:

- Fail to comply with directives given by school personnel.
- Leave school grounds or school-sponsored events without permission.
- Disobey rules for conduct in district vehicles.
- Refuse to accept discipline or consequence assigned by a teacher or principal.

### Mistreatment of Others

Students shall not:

- Use profanity or vulgar language or make obscene gestures.
- Fight or scuffle. (For assault, see **DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 24.)
- Threaten a district student, employee, or volunteer, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Engage in bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists. (See **glossary** for all four terms.)
- Release or threaten to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Engage in sexual or gender-based harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer.
- Engage in conduct that constitutes dating violence. (See **glossary**.)
- Engage in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
- Participate in hazing. (See **glossary**.)
- Coerce an individual to act through the use or threat of force.
- Commit extortion or blackmail.
- Engage in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct directed toward another person, including a district student, employee, or volunteer.
- Record the voice or image of another without the prior consent of the individual being recorded or in any way that disrupts the educational environment or invades the privacy of others.

### **Property Offenses**

Students shall not:

- Damage or vandalize property owned by others. (For felony criminal mischief, see **DAEP— Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 24.)
- Deface or damage school property, including textbooks, technology and electronic resources, lockers, furniture, and other equipment, with graffiti or by other means.
- Steal from students, staff, or the school.
- Commit or assist in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Penal Code. (For felony robbery, aggravated robbery, and theft, see **DAEP— Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 24.)
- Enter, without authorization, district facilities that are not open for operations.

### **Possession of Prohibited Items**

Students shall not possess or use:

- Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic device;
- A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
- A “look-alike” weapon that is intended to be used as a weapon or could reasonably be perceived as a weapon;
- An air gun or BB gun;
- Ammunition;
- A hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown;
- A firearm silencer or suppressor;
- \*A location-restricted knife;
- \*A club;
- \*A firearm;
- A stun gun;
- Knuckles;
- A pocketknife or any other small knife;
- Mace or pepper spray;
- Pornographic material;
- Tobacco products, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device;
- Matches or a lighter;
- A laser pointer, unless it is for an approved use; or
- Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists.

\*For weapons and firearms, see **DAEP—Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 24. In many circumstances, possession of these items is punishable by mandatory expulsion under federal or state law.

### **Possession of Telecommunications or Other Electronic Devices**

Students shall not:

- Use a telecommunications device, including a cell phone, or other electronic device in violation of district and campus rules.

### **Illegal, Prescription, and Over-the-Counter Drugs**

Students shall not:

- Possess, use, give, or sell alcohol or an illegal drug. (Also see **DAEP Placement** on page 16 and **Expulsion** on page 27 for mandatory and permissive consequences under state law.)
- Possess or sell seeds or pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
- Possess, use, give, or sell paraphernalia related to any prohibited substance. (See **glossary** for “paraphernalia.”)
- Possess, use, abuse, or sell look-alike drugs or attempt to pass items off as drugs or contraband.
- Abuse the student’s own prescription drug, give a prescription drug to another student, or possess or be under the influence of another person’s prescription drug on school property or at a school-related event. (See **glossary** for “abuse.”)
- Abuse over-the-counter drugs. (See **glossary** for “abuse.”)
- Be under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter drugs that cause impairment to body or mind. (See **glossary** for “under the influence.”)
- Have or take prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs at school other than as provided by district policy.

### **Misuse of Technology Resources and the Internet**

Students shall not:

- Violate policies, rules, or agreements signed by the student or the student’s parent regarding the use of technology resources.
- Attempt to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of the district, students, or employees or upload or create computer viruses, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Attempt to alter, destroy, or disable district technology resources including, but not limited to, computers and related equipment, district data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the district’s system, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- Use the internet or other electronic communications to threaten or harass district students, employees, board members, or volunteers, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.

## General Conduct Violations

- Send, post, deliver, or possess electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including cyberbullying and "sexting," either on or off school property, if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.
- Use the internet or other electronic communication to engage in or encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety, including off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment or infringes on the rights of another student at school.

## **Safety Transgressions**

Students shall not:

- Possess published or electronic material that is designed to promote or encourage illegal behavior or that could threaten school safety.
- Engage in verbal (oral or written) exchanges that threaten the safety of another student, a school employee, or school property.
- Make false accusations or perpetrate hoaxes regarding school safety.
- Engage in any conduct that school officials might reasonably believe will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
- Throw objects that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
- Discharge a fire extinguisher without valid cause.

## **Miscellaneous Offenses**

Students shall not:

- Violate dress and grooming standards as communicated in the Student Handbook.
- Engage in academic dishonesty, which includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination.
- Gamble.
- Falsify records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Engage in actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Repeatedly violate other communicated campus or classroom standards of conduct.

The district may impose campus or classroom rules in addition to those found in the Code. These rules may be posted in classrooms or given to the student and may or may not constitute violations of the Code.

## Discipline Management Techniques

Discipline shall be designed to improve conduct and encourage students to be responsible members of the school community. Disciplinary action shall draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques, including restorative practices. Discipline shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

### Students with Disabilities

The discipline of students with disabilities is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct. In the event of any conflict, the district shall comply with federal law. For more information regarding discipline of students with disabilities, see policy FOF(LEGAL).

In accordance with the Education Code, a student who receives special education services may not be disciplined for conduct meeting the definition of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or making hit lists (see **glossary**) until an ARD committee meeting has been held to review the conduct.

In deciding whether to order suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the district shall take into consideration a disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct.

### Techniques

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

- Verbal correction, oral or written.
- Cooling-off time or a brief "time-out" period, in accordance with law.
- Seating changes within the classroom or vehicles owned or operated by the district.
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
  - Utilization of Cell Phones: 1<sup>st</sup> Offense-confiscated for 1 school day and returned to the student at the end of the day. 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense- confiscated for 1 school day and returned upon receipt \$15 fine. Each successive – cell phone will be confiscated and a fine of \$15 must be paid by the parent to claim device. The school is not liable for lost or stolen phones or electronic items.
  - Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- Rewards or demerits.
- Behavioral contracts.
- Counseling by teachers, school counselors, or administrative personnel.
- Parent-teacher conferences.
- Behavior coaching.
- Anger management classes.

- Mediation (victim-offender).
- Classroom circles.
- Family group conferencing.
- Grade reductions for cheating, plagiarism, and as otherwise permitted by policy.
- Detention, including outside regular school hours.
- Sending the student to the office, another assigned area, or to in-school suspension.
- Assignment of school duties, such as cleaning or picking up litter.
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.
- Penalties identified in student organizations' extracurricular standards of behavior.
- Restriction or revocation of district transportation privileges.
- School-assessed and school-administered probation.
- Out-of-school suspension, as specified in **Out-of-School Suspension** on page 15.
- Placement in a DAEP, as specified in **DAEP** on page 16.
- Expulsion and/or placement in an alternative educational setting, as specified in **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses** on page 24.
- Expulsion, as specified in **Expulsion** on page 27.
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for criminal prosecution in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by the district.
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials.

### **Prohibited Aversive Techniques**

Aversive techniques are prohibited for use with students and are defined as techniques or interventions intended to reduce the reoccurrence of a behavior by intentionally inflicting significant physical or emotional discomfort or pain. Aversive techniques include:

- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain, other than corporal punishment as permitted by district policy. [See policy FO(LOCAL).]
- Using techniques designed or likely to cause physical pain by electric shock or any procedure involving pressure points or joint locks.
- Directed release of noxious, toxic, or unpleasant spray, mist, or substance near a student's face.
- Denying adequate sleep, air, food, water, shelter, bedding, physical comfort, supervision, or access to a restroom facility.
- Ridiculing or demeaning a student in a manner that adversely affects or endangers the learning or mental health of the student or constitutes verbal abuse.
- Employing a device, material, or object that immobilizes all four of a student's extremities, including prone or supine floor restraint.

- Impairing the student's breathing, including applying pressure to the student's torso or neck or placing something in, on, or over the student's mouth or nose or covering the student's face.
- Restricting the student's circulation.
- Securing the student to a stationary object while the student is standing or sitting.
- Inhibiting, reducing, or hindering the student's ability to communicate.
- Using chemical restraints.
- Using time-out in a manner that prevents the student from being able to be involved in and progress appropriately in the required curriculum or any applicable individualized education program (IEP) goals, including isolating the student using physical barriers.
- Depriving the student of one or more of the student's senses, unless the technique does not cause the student discomfort or complies with the student's IEP or behavior intervention plan (BIP).

### **Notification**

The campus behavior coordinator shall promptly notify a student's parent by phone or in person of any violation that may result in in-school or out-of-school suspension, placement in a DAEP, or expulsion. The campus behavior coordinator shall also notify a student's parent if the student is taken into custody by a law enforcement officer under the disciplinary provisions of the Education Code.

A good-faith effort shall be made to provide written notice of the disciplinary action to the student, on the day the action was taken, for delivery to the student's parent. If the parent has not been reached by telephone or in person by 5:00 p.m. of the first business day after the day the disciplinary action was taken, the campus behavior coordinator shall send written notification by U.S. Mail. If the campus behavior coordinator is not able to provide notice to the parent, the principal or designee shall provide the notice.

Before the principal or appropriate administrator assigns a student under age 18 to detention outside regular school hours, notice shall be given to the student's parent to inform him or her of the reason for the detention and permit arrangements for necessary transportation.

### **Appeals**

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the teacher, campus administration, or campus behavior coordinator, as appropriate. Appeals or complaints regarding the use of specific discipline management techniques should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of the policy may be obtained from the principal's office, the campus behavior coordinator's office, or the central administration office or through Policy On Line at the following address: <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/1056>.

The district shall not delay a disciplinary consequence while a student or parent pursues a grievance. In the instance of a student who is accused of conduct that meets the definition of sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, the district will comply with applicable federal law, including the Title IX formal complaint process. See policies FFH(LEGAL) and (LOCAL).

### **Removal from the School Bus**

A bus driver may refer a student to the principal's office or the campus behavior coordinator's office to maintain effective discipline on the bus. The principal or campus behavior coordinator must employ additional discipline management techniques, as appropriate, which can include restricting or revoking a student's bus riding privileges.

To transport students safely, the vehicle operator must focus on driving and not be distracted by student misbehavior. Therefore, when appropriate disciplinary management techniques fail to improve student behavior or when specific misconduct warrants immediate removal, the principal or the campus behavior coordinator may restrict or revoke a student's transportation privileges, in accordance with law.

## **Removal from the Regular Educational Setting**

In addition to other discipline management techniques, misconduct may result in removal from the regular educational setting in the form of a routine referral or a formal removal.

### **Routine Referral**

A routine referral occurs when a teacher sends a student to the campus behavior coordinator's office as a discipline management technique. The campus behavior coordinator shall employ alternative discipline management techniques, including progressive interventions. A teacher or administrator may remove a student from class for behavior that violates this Code to maintain effective discipline in the classroom.

### **Formal Removal**

A teacher may initiate a formal removal from class if:

1. A student's behavior has been documented by the teacher as repeatedly interfering with the teacher's ability to teach the class or with other students' ability to learn; or
2. The behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that the teacher cannot teach, and the students in the classroom cannot learn.

Within three school days of the formal removal, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference with the student's parent, the student, the teacher who removed the student from class, and any other appropriate administrator.

At the conference, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and the proposed consequences. The student shall have an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

When a student is removed from the regular classroom by a teacher and a conference is pending, the campus behavior coordinator or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

A teacher or administrator must remove a student from class if the student engages in behavior that under the Education Code requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP or expelled. When removing for those reasons, the procedures in the subsequent sections on DAEP or expulsion shall be followed.

### **Returning a Student to the Classroom**

A student who has been formally removed from class by a teacher for conduct against the teacher containing the elements of assault, aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault may not be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent.

A student who has been formally removed by a teacher for any other conduct may be returned to the teacher's class without the teacher's consent if the placement review committee determines that the teacher's class is the best or only alternative available.

## **Out-of-School Suspension**

### **Misconduct**

Students may be suspended for behavior listed in the Code as a general conduct violation, DAEP offense, or expellable offense.

The district shall not use out-of-school suspension for students in grade 2 or below unless the conduct meets the requirements established in law.

A student below grade 3 or a student who is homeless shall not be placed in out-of-school suspension unless, while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property, the student engages in:

- Conduct that contains the elements of a weapons offense, as provided in Penal Code sections 46.02 or 46.05;
- Conduct that contains the elements of assault, sexual assault, aggravated assault, or aggravated sexual assault, as provided by the Penal Code; or
- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of marijuana, an alcoholic beverage, or a controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by federal or state law.

The district shall use a positive behavior program as a disciplinary alternative for students below grade 3 who commit general conduct violations instead of suspension or placement in a DAEP. The program shall meet the requirements of law.

### **Process**

State law allows a student to be suspended for no more than three school days per behavior violation, with no limit on the number of times a student may be suspended in a semester or school year.

Before being suspended a student shall have an informal conference with the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator, who shall inform the student of the alleged misconduct and give the student an opportunity to respond to the allegation before the administrator makes a decision.

The campus behavior coordinator shall determine the number of days of a student's suspension, not to exceed three school days.

In deciding whether to order out-of-school suspension, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

The appropriate administrator shall determine any restrictions on participation in school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular and cocurricular activities.

### **Coursework During Suspension**

The district shall ensure a student receives access to coursework for foundation curriculum courses while the student is placed in in-school or out-of-school suspension, including at least one method of receiving this coursework that doesn't require the use of the internet.

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

### **Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Placement**

The DAEP shall be provided in a setting other than the student's regular classroom. An elementary school student may not be placed in a DAEP with a student who is not an elementary school student.

For purposes of DAEP, elementary classification shall be kindergarten–grade 5 and secondary classification shall be grades 6–12.

Summer programs provided by the district shall serve students assigned to a DAEP in conjunction with other students.

A student who is expelled for an offense that otherwise would have resulted in a DAEP placement does not have to be placed in a DAEP in addition to the expulsion.

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
7. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
8. The student's disciplinary history,
9. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
10. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
11. A student's status as homeless.

### **Discretionary Placement: Misconduct That May Result in DAEP Placement**

A student may be placed in a DAEP for behaviors prohibited in the General Conduct Violations section of this Code.

#### **Misconduct Identified in State Law**

In accordance with state law, a student **may** be placed in a DAEP for any of the following offenses:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Involvement in a public school fraternity, sorority, or secret society, or gang including participating as a member or pledge, or soliciting another person to become a pledge or member of a public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang. (See **glossary**.)
- Involvement in criminal street gang activity. (See **glossary**.)
- Criminal mischief, not punishable as a felony.
- Assault (no bodily injury) with threat of imminent bodily injury.
- Assault by offensive or provocative physical contact.

In accordance with state law, a student **may** be placed in a DAEP if the superintendent or the superintendent's designee has reasonable belief (see **glossary**) that the student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony, other than aggravated robbery or those listed as offenses in Title 5 (see **glossary**) of the Penal Code, that occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event, if the student's presence in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers or will be detrimental to the educational process.

The campus behavior coordinator **may** place a student in a DAEP for off-campus conduct for which DAEP placement is required by state law if the administrator does not have knowledge of the conduct before the first anniversary of the date the conduct occurred.

### **Mandatory Placement: Misconduct That Requires DAEP Placement**

A student **must** be placed in a DAEP if the student:

- Engages in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school. (See **glossary**.)
- Commits the following offenses on school property, within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
  - Engages in conduct punishable as a felony.
  - Commits an assault (see **glossary**) under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1).
  - Sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug in an amount not constituting a felony offense. A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (School-related felony drug offenses are addressed in **Expulsion** on page 27.) (See **glossary** for "under the influence" "controlled substance," and "dangerous drug.")
  - Sells, gives, or delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage; commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony offense. (School-related felony alcohol offenses are addressed in **Expulsion** on page 27.)
  - Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
  - Behaves in a manner that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure. (See **glossary**.)
  - Engages in conduct that contains the elements of an offense of harassment against an employee under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1), (2), (3), or (7).
- Engages in expellable conduct and is between six and nine years of age.
- Commits a federal firearms violation and is younger than six years of age.
- Engages in conduct that contains the elements of the offense of retaliation against any school employee or volunteer on or off school property. (Committing retaliation in combination with another expellable offense is addressed in **Expulsion** on page 27.)
- Engages in conduct punishable as aggravated robbery or a felony listed under Title 5 (see **glossary**) of the Penal Code when the conduct occurs off school property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and:

1. The student receives deferred prosecution (see **glossary**),
2. A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct (see **glossary**), or
3. The superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief (see **glossary**) that the student engaged in the conduct.

### **Sexual Assault and Campus Assignments**

A student shall be transferred to another campus if:

- The student has been convicted of continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual or convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault against another student on the same campus; and
- The victim's parent or another person with the authority to act on behalf of the victim requests that the board transfer the offending student to another campus.

If there is no other campus in the district serving the grade level of the offending student, the offending student shall be transferred to a DAEP.

### **Process**

Removals to a DAEP shall be made by the campus behavior coordinator.

### **Conference**

When a student is removed from class for a DAEP offense, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall schedule a conference within three school days with the student's parent, the student, and, in the case of a teacher removal, the teacher.

At the conference, the campus behavior coordinator or appropriate administrator shall provide the student:

- Information, orally or in writing, of the reasons for the removal;
- An explanation of the basis for the removal; and
- An opportunity to respond to the reasons for the removal.

Following valid attempts to require attendance, the district may hold the conference and make a placement decision regardless of whether the student or the student's parents attend the conference.

### **Consideration of Mitigating Factors**

In deciding whether to place a student in a DAEP, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

### **Placement Order**

After the conference, if the student is placed in a DAEP, the campus behavior coordinator shall write a placement order. A copy of the DAEP placement order shall be sent to the student and the student's parent.

Not later than the second business day after the conference, the board's designee shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the placement order and all information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the student is placed in a DAEP and the length of placement is inconsistent with the guidelines included in this Code, the placement order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

### **Coursework Notice**

The parent or guardian of a student placed in DAEP shall be given written notice of the student's opportunity to complete, at no cost to the student, a foundation curriculum course in which the student was enrolled at the time of removal and which is required for graduation. The notice shall include information regarding all methods available for completing the coursework.

### **Length of Placement**

The campus behavior coordinator shall determine the duration of a student's placement in a DAEP.

The duration of a student's placement shall be determined case by case based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misconduct, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements. All DAEP placements will be for a minimum of 10 school days.

The maximum period of DAEP placement shall be one calendar year, except as provided below.

Unless otherwise specified in the placement order, days absent from a DAEP shall not count toward fulfilling the total number of days required in a student's DAEP placement order.

The district shall administer the required pre- and post-assessments for students assigned to DAEP for a period of 90 days or longer in accordance with established district administrative procedures for administering other diagnostic or benchmark assessments.

### **Exceeds One Year**

Placement in a DAEP may exceed one year when a review by the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees.

The statutory limitations on the length of a DAEP placement do not apply to a placement resulting from the board's decision to place a student who engaged in the sexual assault of another student so that the students are not assigned to the same campus.

### **Exceeds School Year**

Students who are in a DAEP placement at the end of one school year may be required to continue that placement at the start of the next school year to complete the assigned term of placement.

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond the end of the school year, the campus behavior coordinator or the board's designee must determine that:

## Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Placement

1. The student's presence in the regular classroom or campus presents a danger of physical harm to the student or others, or
2. The student has engaged in serious or persistent misbehavior (see **glossary**) that violates the district's Code.

### **Exceeds 60 Days**

For placement in a DAEP to extend beyond 60 days or the end of the next grading period, whichever is sooner, a student's parent shall be given notice and the opportunity to participate in a proceeding before the board or the board's designee.

### **Appeals**

Questions from parents regarding disciplinary measures should be addressed to the campus administration.

Student or parent appeals regarding a student's placement in a DAEP should be addressed in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). A copy of this policy may be obtained from the principal's office, the campus behavior coordinator's office, the central administration office, or through Policy On Line at the following address: [www.sintonisd.net](http://www.sintonisd.net).

Appeals shall begin at Level One with the principal.

The district shall not delay disciplinary consequences pending the outcome of an appeal. The decision to place a student in a DAEP cannot be appealed beyond the board.

### **Restrictions During Placement**

The district does not permit a student who is placed in a DAEP to participate in any school-sponsored or school-related extracurricular or cocurricular activity, including seeking or holding honorary positions and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations.

A student placed in a DAEP shall not be provided transportation unless he or she is a student with a disability who is entitled to transportation in accordance with the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.

For seniors who are eligible to graduate and are assigned to a DAEP at the time of graduation, the placement in the program shall continue through graduation, and the student shall not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities.

### **Placement Review**

A student placed in a DAEP shall be provided a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the campus behavior coordinator or the board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall be given the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus. The student may not be returned to the classroom of a teacher who removed the student without that teacher's consent.

### **Additional Misconduct**

If during the term of placement in a DAEP the student engages in additional misconduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the campus behavior coordinator may enter an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

### **Notice of Criminal Proceedings**

When a student is placed in a DAEP for certain offenses, the office of the prosecuting attorney shall notify the district if:

1. Prosecution of a student's case was refused for lack of prosecutorial merit or insufficient evidence, and no formal proceedings, deferred adjudication (see **glossary**), or deferred prosecution will be initiated; or
2. The court or jury found a student not guilty or made a finding that the student did not engage in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision, and the case was dismissed with prejudice.

If a student was placed in a DAEP for such conduct, on receiving the notice from the prosecutor, the superintendent or designee shall review the student's placement and schedule a review with the student's parent not later than the third day after the superintendent or designee receives notice from the prosecutor. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the review.

After reviewing the notice and receiving information from the student's parent, the superintendent or designee may continue the student's placement if there is reason to believe that the presence of the student in the regular classroom threatens the safety of other students or teachers.

The student or the student's parent may appeal the superintendent's decision to the board. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal. In the case of an appeal, the board shall, at the next scheduled meeting, review the notice from the prosecutor and receive information from the student, the student's parent, and the superintendent or designee, and confirm or reverse the decision of the superintendent or designee. The board shall make a record of the proceedings.

If the board confirms the decision of the superintendent or designee, the student and the student's parent may appeal to the Commissioner of Education. The student may not be returned to the regular classroom pending the appeal.

### **Withdrawal During Process**

When a student violates the district's Code in a way that requires or permits the student to be placed in a DAEP and the student withdraws from the district before a placement order is completed, the campus behavior coordinator may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order. If the student then re-enrolls in the district during the same or a subsequent school year, the district may enforce the order at that time, less any period of the placement that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district. If the campus behavior coordinator or the board fails to issue a placement order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings and issue a placement order.

### **Newly Enrolled Students**

The district shall continue the DAEP placement of a student who enrolls in the district and was assigned to a DAEP in an open-enrollment charter school or another district including a district in another state.

When a student enrolls in the district with a DAEP placement from a district in another state, the district has the right to place the student in DAEP to the same extent as any other newly enrolled student if the behavior committed is a reason for DAEP placement in the receiving district.

State law requires the district to reduce a placement imposed by a district in another state that exceeds one year so that the total placement does not exceed one year. After a review, however, the placement may be extended beyond a year if the district determines that the student is a threat to the safety of other students or employees or the extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

### **Emergency Placement Procedure**

When an emergency placement is necessary because the student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with classroom or school operations, the student shall be given oral notice of the reason for the action. Not later than the tenth day after the date of the placement, the student shall be given the appropriate conference required for assignment to a DAEP.

### **Transition Services**

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services to a student returning to the regular classroom from an alternative education program, including a DAEP. See policy FOCA(LEGAL) for more information.

## **Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses**

This section includes two categories of offenses for which the Education Code provides unique procedures and specific consequences.

### **Registered Sex Offenders**

Upon receiving notification in accordance with state law that a student is currently required to register as a sex offender, the district must remove the student from the regular classroom and determine appropriate placement unless the court orders JJAEP placement.

If the student is under any form of court supervision, including probation, community supervision, or parole, the student shall be placed in either DAEP for at least one semester.

If the student is not under any form of court supervision, the student may be placed in DAEP for one semester or placed in a regular classroom. The student may not be placed in the regular classroom if the board or its designee determines that the student's presence:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interests of the district's students.

### **Review Committee**

At the end of the first semester of a student's placement in an alternative educational setting and before the beginning of each school year for which the student remains in an alternative placement, the district shall convene a committee, in accordance with state law, to review the student's placement. The committee shall recommend whether the student should return to the regular classroom or remain in the placement. Absent a special finding, the board or its designee must follow the committee's recommendation.

The placement review of a student with a disability who receives special education services must be made by the ARD committee.

### **Newly Enrolled Students**

If a student enrolls in the district during a mandatory placement as a registered sex offender, the district may count any time already spent by the student in a placement or may require an additional semester in an alternative placement without conducting a review of the placement.

### **Appeal**

A student or the student's parent may appeal the placement by requesting a conference between the board or its designee, the student, and the student's parent. The conference is limited to the factual question of whether the student is required to register as a sex offender. Any decision of the board or its designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

### **Certain Felonies**

Regardless of whether placement or expulsion is required or permitted by one of the reasons in the DAEP Placement or Expulsion sections, in accordance with Education Code 37.0081, a student may be expelled and placed in either DAEP if the board or campus behavior coordinator makes certain findings and the following circumstances exist in relation to aggravated robbery or a felony offense under Title 5 (see **glossary**) of the Penal Code. The student must:

## Placement and/or Expulsion for Certain Offenses

- Have received deferred prosecution for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been found by a court or jury to have engaged in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been charged with engaging in conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense;
- Have been referred to a juvenile court for allegedly engaging in delinquent conduct for conduct defined as aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense; or
- Have received probation or deferred adjudication or have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of aggravated robbery or a Title 5 felony offense.

The district may expel the student and order placement under these circumstances regardless of:

1. The date on which the student's conduct occurred,
2. The location at which the conduct occurred,
3. Whether the conduct occurred while the student was enrolled in the district, or
4. Whether the student has successfully completed any court disposition requirements imposed in connection with the conduct.

### **Hearing and Required Findings**

The student must first have a hearing before the board or its designee, who must determine that in addition to the circumstances above that allow for the expulsion, the student's presence in the regular classroom:

1. Threatens the safety of other students or teachers,
2. Will be detrimental to the educational process, or
3. Is not in the best interest of the district's students.

Any decision of the board or the board's designee under this section is final and may not be appealed.

### **Length of Placement**

The student is subject to the placement until:

1. The student graduates from high school,
2. The charges are dismissed or reduced to a misdemeanor offense, or
3. The student completes the term of the placement or is assigned to another program.

### **Placement Review**

A student placed in a DAEP under this section is entitled to a review of his or her status, including academic status, by the campus behavior coordinator or board's designee at intervals not to exceed 120 days. In the case of a high school student, the student's progress toward graduation and the student's graduation plan shall also be reviewed. At the review, the student or the student's parent shall have the opportunity to present arguments for the student's return to the regular classroom or campus.

**Newly Enrolled Students**

A student who enrolls in the district before completing a placement under this section from another school district must complete the term of the placement.

## **Expulsion**

In deciding whether to order expulsion, regardless of whether the action is mandatory or discretionary, the campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

### **Discretionary Expulsion: Misconduct That May Result in Expulsion**

Some of the following types of misconduct may result in mandatory placement in a DAEP, whether or not a student is expelled. (See **DAEP Placement** on page 16.)

#### **Any Location**

A student **may** be expelled for:

- Engaging in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
- Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
- Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or of a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- Conduct that contains the elements of assault under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer.
- Criminal mischief, if punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of one of the following offenses against another student:
  - Aggravated assault.
  - Sexual assault.
  - Aggravated sexual assault.
  - Murder.
  - Capital murder.
  - Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
  - Aggravated robbery.
- Breach of computer security. (See **glossary**.)
- Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school.

### **At School, Within 300 Feet, or at a School Event**

A student **may** be expelled for committing any of the following offenses on or within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line, or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:

- Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony. A student with a valid prescription for low-THC cannabis as authorized by Chapter 487 of the Health and Safety Code does not violate this provision. (See **glossary** for "under the influence.")
- Selling, giving, or delivering another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol; or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol, if the conduct is not punishable as a felony.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of assault under Penal Code 22.01(a)(1) against an employee or a volunteer.
- Engaging in deadly conduct. (See **glossary**.)

### **Within 300 Feet of School**

A student **may** be expelled for engaging in the following conduct while within 300 feet of school property, as measured from any point on the school's real property boundary line:

- Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
- Arson. (See **glossary**.)
- Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
- Indecency with a child.
- Aggravated kidnapping.
- Manslaughter.
- Criminally negligent homicide.
- Aggravated robbery.
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual.
- Felony drug- or alcohol-related offense.
- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person a handgun or a location-restricted knife, as these terms are defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Possession of a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See **glossary**.)

### **Property of Another District**

A student **may** be expelled for committing any offense that is a state-mandated expellable offense if the offense is committed on the property of another district in Texas or while the

student is attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of a school in another district in Texas.

### **While in a DAEP**

A student may be expelled for engaging in documented serious misbehavior that violates the district's Code, despite documented behavioral interventions while placed in a DAEP. For purposes of discretionary expulsion from a DAEP, serious misbehavior means:

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Penal Code 1.07; or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
  - a. Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;
  - b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;
  - c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;
  - d. Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or
  - e. Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

### **Mandatory Expulsion: Misconduct That Requires Expulsion**

A student **must** be expelled under federal or state law for any of the following offenses that occur on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:

#### **Under Federal Law**

- Bringing to school or possessing at school, including any setting that is under the district's control or supervision for the purpose of a school activity, a firearm, as defined by federal law. (See **glossary**.)

**Note:** Mandatory expulsion under the federal Gun Free Schools Act does not apply to a firearm that is lawfully stored inside a locked vehicle or to firearms used in activities approved and authorized by the district when the district has adopted appropriate safeguards to ensure student safety.

#### **Under the Penal Code**

- Unlawfully carrying on or about the student's person the following, in the manner prohibited by Penal Code 46.02:
  - A handgun, defined by state law as any firearm designed, made, or adapted to be used with one hand. (See **glossary**.) *Note:* A student may not be expelled solely on the basis of the student's use, exhibition, or possession of a firearm that occurs at an approved target range facility that is not located on a school campus; while participating in or preparing for a school-sponsored, shooting sports competition or a shooting sports educational activity that is sponsored or supported by the Parks and Wildlife Department; or a shooting sports sanctioning organization working with the department. [See policy FNCG(LEGAL).]
  - A location-restricted knife, as defined by state law. (See **glossary**.)

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- Possessing, manufacturing, transporting, repairing, or selling a prohibited weapon, as defined in state law. (See **glossary**.)
- Behaving in a manner that contains elements of the following offenses under the Penal Code:
  - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, or aggravated sexual assault.
  - Arson. (See **glossary**.)
  - Murder, capital murder, or criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
  - Indecency with a child.
  - Aggravated kidnapping.
  - Aggravated robbery.
  - Manslaughter.
  - Criminally negligent homicide.
  - Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual.
  - Behavior punishable as a felony that involves selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or alcohol, or committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol.
- Engaging in retaliation against a school employee or volunteer combined with one of the above-listed mandatory expulsion offenses.

### **Under Age Ten**

When a student under the age of ten engages in behavior that is expellable behavior, the student shall not be expelled, but shall be placed in a DAEP. A student under age six shall not be placed in a DAEP unless the student commits a federal firearm offense.

### **Process**

If a student is believed to have committed an expellable offense, the campus behavior coordinator or other appropriate administrator shall schedule a hearing within a reasonable time. The student's parent shall be invited in writing to attend the hearing.

Until a hearing can be held, the campus behavior coordinator or other administrator may place the student in:

- Another appropriate classroom.
- In-school suspension.
- Out-of-school suspension.
- DAEP.

### **Hearing**

A student facing expulsion shall be given a hearing with appropriate due process. The student is entitled to:

1. Representation by the student's parent or another adult who can provide guidance to the student and who is not an employee of the district,

## Expulsion

2. An opportunity to testify and to present evidence and witnesses in the student's defense, and
3. An opportunity to question the witnesses called by the district at the hearing.

After providing notice to the student and parent of the hearing, the district may hold the hearing regardless of whether the student or the student's parent attends.

The board of trustees delegates to the Assistant Superintendent authority to conduct hearings and expel students.

### **Board Review of Expulsion**

After the due process hearing, the expelled student may request that the board review the expulsion decisions. The student or parent must submit a written request to the superintendent within seven days after receipt of the written decision. The superintendent must provide the student or parent written notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting at which the board will review the decision.

The board shall review the record of the expulsion hearing in a closed meeting unless the parent requests in writing that the matter be held in an open meeting. The board may also hear a statement from the student or parent and from the board's designee.

The board shall consider and base its decision on evidence reflected in the record and any statements made by the parties at the review. The board shall make and communicate its decision orally at the conclusion of the presentation. Consequences shall not be deferred pending the outcome of the hearing.

### **Expulsion Order**

Before ordering the expulsion, the board or campus behavior coordinator shall take into consideration:

1. Self-defense (see **glossary**),
2. Intent or lack of intent at the time the student engaged in the conduct,
3. The student's disciplinary history,
4. A disability that substantially impairs the student's capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of the student's conduct,
5. A student's status in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care), or
6. A student's status as homeless.

If the student is expelled, the board or its designee shall deliver to the student and the student's parent a copy of the order expelling the student.

Not later than the second business day after the hearing, the Assistant Superintendent shall deliver to the juvenile court a copy of the expulsion order and the information required by Section 52.04 of the Family Code.

If the length of the expulsion is inconsistent with the guidelines included in the Student Code of Conduct, the expulsion order shall give notice of the inconsistency.

### **Length of Expulsion**

The length of an expulsion shall be based on the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, and statutory requirements.

The duration of a student's expulsion shall be determined on a case-by-case basis. The maximum period of expulsion is one calendar year, except as provided below.

An expulsion may not exceed one year unless, after review, the district determines that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or to district employees, or
2. Extended expulsion is in the best interest of the student.

State and federal law require a student to be expelled from the regular classroom for a period of at least one calendar year for bringing a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. However, the superintendent may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis.

Students who commit offenses that require expulsion at the end of one school year may be expelled into the next school year to complete the term of expulsion.

### **Withdrawal During Process**

When a student's conduct requires or permits expulsion from the district and the student withdraws from the district before the expulsion hearing takes place, the district may conduct the hearing after sending written notice to the parent and student.

If the student then re-enrolls in the district during the same or subsequent school year, the district may enforce the expulsion order at that time, less any expulsion period that has been served by the student during enrollment in another district.

If the campus behavior coordinator or the board fails to issue an expulsion order after the student withdraws, the next district in which the student enrolls may complete the proceedings.

### **Additional Misconduct**

If during the expulsion, the student engages in additional conduct for which placement in a DAEP or expulsion is required or permitted, additional proceedings may be conducted, and the campus behavior coordinator or the board may issue an additional disciplinary order as a result of those proceedings.

### **Restrictions During Expulsion**

Expelled students are prohibited from being on school grounds or attending school-sponsored or school-related activities during the period of expulsion.

No district academic credit shall be earned for work missed during the period of expulsion unless the student is enrolled in a JJAEP or another district-approved program.

### **Newly Enrolled Students**

The district shall continue the expulsion of any newly enrolled student expelled from another district or an open-enrollment charter school until the period of the expulsion is completed.

If a student expelled in another state enrolls in the district, the district may continue the expulsion under the terms of the expulsion order, may place the student in a DAEP for the period specified in the order, or may allow the student to attend regular classes if:

## Expulsion

1. The out-of-state district provides the district with a copy of the expulsion order, and
2. The offense resulting in the expulsion is also an expellable offense in the district in which the student is enrolling.

If a student is expelled by a district in another state for a period that exceeds one year and the district continues the expulsion or places the student in a DAEP, the district shall reduce the period of the expulsion or DAEP placement so that the entire period does not exceed one year, unless after a review it is determined that:

1. The student is a threat to the safety of other students or district employees, or
2. Extended placement is in the best interest of the student.

### **Emergency Expulsion Procedures**

When an emergency expulsion is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm, the student shall be given verbal notice of the reason for the action. Within ten days after the date of the emergency expulsion, the student shall be given appropriate due process required for a student facing expulsion.

### **DAEP Placement of Expelled Students**

The district may provide educational services to any expelled student in a DAEP; however, educational services in the DAEP must be provided if the student is less than ten years of age.

### **Transition Services**

In accordance with law and district procedures, campus staff shall provide transition services for a student returning to the regular classroom from placement in an alternative education program, including a DAEP or JJAEP. See policies FOCA(LEGAL) and FODA(LEGAL) for more information.

## **Glossary**

**Abuse** is improper or excessive use.

**Aggravated robbery** is defined in part by Penal Code 29.03(a) as when a person commits robbery and:

1. Causes serious bodily injury to another;
2. Uses or exhibits a deadly weapon; or
3. Causes bodily injury to another person or threatens or places another person in fear of imminent bodily injury or death, if the other person is:
  - a. 65 years of age or older, or
  - b. A disabled person.

**Armor-piercing ammunition** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as handgun ammunition used in pistols and revolvers and designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

**Arson** is defined in part by Penal Code 28.02 as a crime that involves:

1. Starting a fire or causing an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:
  - a. Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
  - b. Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
    - (1) Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
    - (2) Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
    - (3) Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
    - (4) Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
    - (5) Knowing that it has located within it property belonging to another, or
    - (6) When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.
2. Recklessly starting a fire or causing an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance if the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or
3. Intentionally starting a fire or causing an explosion and in so doing:
  - a. Recklessly damaging or destroying a building belonging to another, or
  - b. Recklessly causing another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

**Assault** is defined in part by Penal Code 22.01 as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another; intentionally or knowingly threatening another with imminent bodily injury; or intentionally or knowingly causing physical contact with another that can reasonably be regarded as offensive or provocative.

**Breach of computer security** includes knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system without the effective consent of the owner as defined in Penal Code 33.02, if the conduct involves accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a school district and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes

school district property or information or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system.

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

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

Bullying includes cyberbullying. (See below.) This state law on bullying prevention applies to:

1. Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
2. Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
3. Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Chemical dispensing device** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of dispensing a substance capable of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being. A small chemical dispenser sold commercially for personal protection is not in this category.

**Club** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as an instrument, specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, and includes but is not limited to a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

**Controlled substance** means a substance, including a drug, an adulterant, and a dilutant, listed in Schedules I through V or Penalty Group 1, 1-A, 1-B, 2, 2-A, 3, or 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes the aggregate weight of any mixture, solution, or other substance containing a controlled substance. The term does not include hemp, as defined by Agriculture Code 121.001, or the tetrahydrocannabinols (THC) in hemp.

**Criminal street gang** is defined by Penal Code 71.01 as three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

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

**Dangerous drug** is defined by Health and Safety Code 483.001 as a device or a drug that is unsafe for self-medication and that is not included in Schedules I through V or Penalty Groups 1 through 4 of the Texas Controlled Substances Act. The term includes a device or drug that federal law prohibits dispensing without prescription or restricts to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.

**Dating violence** occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense, as defined by Section 71.0021 of the Family Code.

**Deadly conduct** under Penal Code 22.05 occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, such as knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

**Deferred adjudication** is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Deferred prosecution** may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Delinquent conduct** is conduct that violates either state or federal law and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail. It includes conduct that violates certain juvenile court orders, including probation orders, but does not include violations of traffic laws.

**Discretionary** means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

**E-cigarette** means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device or a consumable liquid solution or other material aerosolized or vaporized during the use of an electronic cigarette or other device described by this provision. The term includes any device that is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe or under another product name or description and a component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device.

**Explosive weapon** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine and its delivery mechanism that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror.

**False alarm or report** under Penal Code 42.06 occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

1. Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**Firearm** is defined by federal law (18 U.S.C. 921(a)) as:

1. Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
2. The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
3. Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer, defined as any device for silencing, muffling, or diminishing the report of a portable firearm; or
4. Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

Such term does not include an antique firearm.

**Graffiti** includes markings with paint, an indelible pen or marker, or an etching or engraving device on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

**Handgun** is defined by Texas Penal Code 46.01 as any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand.

**Harassment** includes:

1. Conduct that meets the definition established in district policies DIA(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL);
2. Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another person, including a district student, employee, board member, or volunteer; is sexually intimidating; causes physical damage to the property of another student; subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint; or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety, as defined in Education Code. 37.001(b)(2); or
3. Conduct that is punishable as a crime under Penal Code 42.07, including the following types of conduct if carried out with the intent to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass another:
  - a. Initiating communication and, in the course of the communication, making a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene, as defined by law;
  - b. Threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property;
  - c. Conveying, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the conveyor to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury;
  - d. Sending repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another; and
  - e. Publishing on an internet website, including a social media platform, repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to cause emotional distress, abuse, or torment to another person, unless the communications are made in connection with a matter of public concern, as defined by law.

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

1. Any type of physical brutality;
2. An activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the student's mental or physical health, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, calisthenics, or consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances;
3. An activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that violates the Penal Code; or
4. Coercing a student to consume a drug or alcoholic beverage in an amount that would lead a reasonable person to believe the student is intoxicated. **Hit list** is defined in Education Code 37.001(b)(3) as a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

**Improvised explosive device** is defined by Texas Penal Code 46.01 as a completed and operational bomb designed to cause serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage that is fabricated in an improvised manner using nonmilitary components.

**Indecent exposure** is defined by Texas Penal Code 21.08 as an offense that occurs when a person exposes the person's anus or any part of the person's genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person, and is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Intimate visual material** is defined by Civil Practices and Remedies Code 98B.001 and Penal Code 21.16 as visual material that depicts a person with the person's intimate parts exposed or engaged in sexual conduct. "Visual material" means any film, photograph, video tape, negative, or slide of any photographic reproduction or any other physical medium that allows an image to be displayed on a computer or other video screen and any image transmitted to a computer or other video screen.

**Location-restricted knife** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches.

**Knuckles** means any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

**Look-alike weapon** means an item that resembles a weapon but is not intended to be used to cause serious bodily injury.

**Machine gun** as defined by Penal Code 46.01 is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

**Mandatory** means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

**Paraphernalia** are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body.

**Possession** means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including, but not limited to,

1. clothing, purse, or backpack;
2. A private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including, but not limited to, an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle;
3. Telecommunications or electronic devices; or

4. Any school property used by the student, including, but not limited to, a locker or desk.

**Prohibited weapon** under Penal Code 46.05(a) means:

1. The following items, unless registered with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives or otherwise not subject to that registration requirement or unless the item is classified as a curio or relic by the U.S. Department of Justice:
  - a. An explosive weapon;
  - b. A machine gun;
  - c. A short-barrel firearm;
2. Armor-piercing ammunition;
3. A chemical dispensing device;
4. A zip gun;
5. A tire deflation device; or
6. An improvised explosive device.

**Public lewdness** is defined by Penal Code 21.07 as an offense that occurs when a person knowingly engages in an act of sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, or sexual contact in a public place or, if not in a public place, when the person is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang** means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student. Educational organizations listed in Education Code 37.121(d) are excepted from this definition.

**Reasonable belief** is that which an ordinary person of average intelligence and sound mind would believe. Chapter 37 requires certain disciplinary decisions when the superintendent or designee has a reasonable belief that a student engaged in conduct punishable as a felony offense. In forming such a reasonable belief, the superintendent or designee may use all available information, including the notice of a student's arrest under Code of Criminal Procedure Article 15.27.

**Self-defense** is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.

**Serious misbehavior** means:

1. Deliberate violent behavior that poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others;
2. Extortion, meaning the gaining of money or other property by force or threat;
3. Conduct that constitutes coercion, as defined by Section 1.07, Penal Code; or
4. Conduct that constitutes the offense of:
  - a. Public lewdness under Penal Code 21.07;
  - b. Indecent exposure under Penal Code 21.08;
  - c. Criminal mischief under Penal Code 28.03;
  - d. Hazing under Education Code 37.152; or

- e. Harassment under Penal Code 42.07(a)(1) of a student or district employee.

**Serious or persistent misbehavior** includes, but is not limited to:

- Behavior that is grounds for permissible expulsion or mandatory DAEP placement.
- Behavior identified by the district as grounds for discretionary DAEP placement.
- Actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
- Refusal to attempt or complete schoolwork as assigned.
- Insubordination.
- Profanity, vulgar language, or obscene gestures.
- Leaving school grounds without permission.
- Falsification of records, passes, or other school-related documents.
- Refusal to accept discipline assigned by the teacher or principal.

**Short-barrel firearm** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun that, as altered, has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

**Terroristic threat** is defined by Penal Code 22.07 as a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

1. Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
2. Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
3. Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or other public place;
4. Cause impairment or interruption of public communications; public transportation; public water, gas, or power supply; or other public service;
5. Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
6. Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state (including the district).

**Tire deflation device** is defined in part by Penal Code 46.01 as a device, including a caltrop or spike strip, that, when driven over, impedes or stops the movement of a wheeled vehicle by puncturing one or more of the vehicle's tires.

**Title 5 felonies** are those crimes listed in Title 5 of the Penal Code that typically involve injury to a person and may include:

- Murder, manslaughter, or homicide under Sections 19.02, – .05;
- Kidnapping under Section 20.03;
- Trafficking of persons under Section 20A.02;
- Smuggling or continuous smuggling of persons under Sections 20.05 – .06;

- Assault under Section 22.01;
- Aggravated assault under Section 22.02;
- Sexual assault under Section 22.011;
- Aggravated sexual assault under Section 22.021;
- Unlawful restraint under Section 20.02;
- Continuous sexual abuse of a young child or disabled individual under Section 21.02;
- Bestiality under Section 21.09;
- Improper relationship between educator and student under Section 21.12;
- Voyeurism under Section 21.17;
- Indecency with a child under Section 21.11;
- Invasive visual recording under Section 21.15;
- Disclosure or promotion of intimate visual material under Section 21.16;
- Sexual coercion under Section 21.18;
- Injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person of any age under Section 22.04;
- Abandoning or endangering a child under Section 22.041;
- Deadly conduct under Section 22.05;
- Terroristic threat under Section 22.07;
- Aiding a person to commit suicide under Section 22.08; and
- Tampering with a consumer product under Section 22.09.

**Under the influence** means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student "under the in-fluence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

**Use** means voluntarily introducing into one's body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

**Zip gun** is defined by Penal Code 46.01 as a device or combination of devices that was not originally a firearm and is adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

# **Sinton ISD**



**District Dress Code  
2021-2022**

# SINTON ISD

## 2021-2022 DRESS CODE

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***THE DISTRICT PROHIBITS ANY CLOTHING/GROOMING THAT THE PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OR DESIGNEE BELIEVES WILL INTERFERE WITH INSTRUCTION OR CAUSE DISRUPTION OF THE NORMAL SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT. THE FINAL DECISION IS LEFT UP TO THE PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL/ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL.***

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruption, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. Generally, the school may provide temporary clothing [i.e. sweats], allow the student to change, or have appropriate clothing brought to school for the first week of school, after that the student may be suspended, placed in D-Hall, or ISS.

Items that are deemed inappropriate may be confiscated. Confiscated items may be held by the Principal/Assistant Principal until the conclusion of the school year. Campus administrators shall be accorded the authority and discretion to rule on whether any article of clothing, jewelry, or tattoos is acceptable for the school year. This shall include new styles not expressly covered in the handbook. If the principal determines that a student's grooming violates the dress code, the student shall be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student shall notify a parent or designee to bring an acceptable change of clothes.

Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following:

### ***GENERAL***

1. Grooming and dress requirements may be modified to fit special events such as dances, field trips, programs, contests or assemblies. The principal or designee prior to the event should approve modifications to the normal school day requirements.
2. Tattoos and body art which promote nudity, obscenity or gang activity must be covered.

### ***HAIR***

1. Hair should be neat, clean and not interfere with vision. The style should not be extreme to the point of creating a danger or distraction.
2. Hair must be a natural color (as determined by the Principal/Assistant Principal).
3. Male hair length may extend to, but not past, the bottom of the collar of a shirt or to the neckline of a T-shirt when combed down. No designs or symbols will be shaved into hair or eyebrows.
4. The face must be clean-shaven (no mustaches, goatees, or mutton-chops). This applies to all students. (Only a letter from State Board Certified dermatologists may determine the need for a student to be excluded from shaving).

### ***CLOTHING***

1. Shoes are to be worn at all times. Rubber shower sandals, and bedroom slippers are not allowed. No wheeled shoes. Tennis shoes must be worn during PE.
2. Clothing should cover the body and fit in such a manner as to promote the modesty of the individual. Clothing shall be appropriate for school wear and worn as it is designed to be worn.
3. The following are not acceptable school wear:
  - Muscle shirts, sleeveless shirts, tank tops (Boys-Gr. 3-12)
  - Shoulder Straps must be a minimum of 1 inch on each shoulder (Girls-Grades 3-12)
  - Pajamas or other sleeping attire
4. Clothing, which exposes the mid-section of the body while sitting, standing, or when arms are raised above the head is not allowed.
5. Dresses, shirts and blouses shall not be extremely low cut in the front, back or sides. Determination of 'extreme' shall be at the subjective judgment of the principal/assistant principal.
6. Denim jeans and pants shall not contain holes, slits, or cuts that allow the showing of skin above the knee.

# SINTON ISD

## 2021-2022 DRESS CODE

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7. Clothing which allows undergarments to be seen is not allowed.
8. Appropriate undergarments should be worn and not visible.
9. Shorts, dresses and skirts (including slits in skirts) are appropriate provided they are no more than 4” inches above the knee. Height of the student shall not be considered as a determining factor.
10. Pants and shorts must be worn at the waistline or above the hips. Pants shall not be of excessive length. Pants and shorts may not be excessively baggy.
11. Clothing displaying violent, satanic, obscene, vulgar, sexually suggestive or racist picture or slogans shall not be worn.
12. Clothing displaying pictures, advertisements, slogans, or registered trademarks for alcohol, drugs or tobacco is not allowed.
13. Clothing associated with drugs or gang affiliation shall not be worn. The principal/assistant principal has the subjective discretion to determine gang affiliation.

### *ACCESSORIES*

1. Hats, caps and raised hoods (hoodies) are not to be worn inside the school buildings at all campuses.
2. Sunglasses shall not be worn inside of the school building or taken into the classroom. Only prescription eye-glasses are allowed
3. Adornment of male attire should be limited to watches, rings, bracelets, and necklaces. Rope chains or large metal chains may not be worn, either around the neck, as a watch chain, or a belt.
4. No body piercing other than earrings for girls is allowed. Devices for maintaining pierced openings are considered body piercing or earrings including earlobe-stretching or “gauging” and shall not be worn. Jewelry and accessories shall not cause a distraction, or be dangerous to the individual or others.
5. No mouth jewelry known as “grills” will be allowed.
6. No dog collars, leashes, spiked collars, spiked bracelets, chokers or chains are to be worn.

### *DAEP*

### *Discipline Alternative Education Program*

Sinton ISD Dress Code Applies With The Following Additions:

1. No jewelry including watches, rings, earrings or piercings of any kind
2. Shirts or T- shirts with NO writing, emblems or designs other than school spirit shirts
3. Shirts must be tucked in at all times
4. Fitted blue jeans or khaki pants
5. No baggy pants, coveralls, overalls, shorts, warm-ups or wind suits
6. No steel toed boots, sandals or open toe shoes; including slip on clogs
7. No purses or make-up