

# Southland Independent School District

190 Eighth Street

Southland, Texas 79364

*Soaring into New Beginnings Grounded  
by Proud Traditions*



This information is provided for educational purposes only to facilitate a general understanding of the law or other regulatory matter. This information is neither an exhaustive treatment on the subject nor is this intended to substitute for the advice of an attorney or other professional adviser. Consult with your attorney or professional adviser to apply these principles to specific fact situations.

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## Required Forms

### Acknowledgment Form

My child and I have received a copy of the Southland Student Handbook and the Southland Student Code of Conduct for 2020-2021. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Southland Student Code of Conduct, I should direct those questions to the principal at (806)996-5339 ext. 121 or [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net)

Printed name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***“Please sign and date this page, remove it from the handbook, and return it to the student’s school by Thursday, September 10th.”***

## Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of Student Handbook

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or to electronically access at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net) the Southland ISD Student Handbook and the Southland ISD Code of Conduct for 2020-2021.

I have chosen to:

- Receive a paper copy of the Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Handbook by visiting the Web address listed above.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Code, I should direct those questions to the principal at (806)996-5339 ext. 121 or email at [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net)

Printed name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***“Please sign and date this page, remove it from the handbook, and return it to the student’s school by Thursday, September 10th.”***

# Table of Contents

PREFACE..... 14

SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS..... 16

    CONSENT, OPT-OUT, AND REFUSAL RIGHTS..... 16

        Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation ..... 16

        Consent to Display a Student’s Original Works and Personal Information ..... 16

        Consent to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction if Student is Under Age 14..... 17

        Consent to Video or Audio Record a Student When Not Otherwise Permitted by Law..... 17

        Prohibiting the Use of Corporal Punishment..... 17

        Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees..... 18

        Objecting to the Release of Directory Information..... 18

        Objecting to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education (Secondary Grade Levels Only)..... 20

        Participation in Third-Party Surveys..... 20

            Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation..... 20

            “Opting Out” of Participation in Other Types of Surveys or Screenings and the Disclosure of Personal Information..... 21

REMOVING A STUDENT FROM INSTRUCTION OR EXCUSING A STUDENT FROM A REQUIRED COMPONENT OF INSTRUCTION..... 21

    Human Sexuality Instruction..... 21

    Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence in Grades 3–12..... 22

    Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags ..... 23

    Religious or Moral Beliefs..... 23

    Tutoring or Test Preparation ..... 23

RIGHT OF ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS, CURRICULUM MATERIALS, AND DISTRICT RECORDS/POLICIES..... 24

    Instructional Materials ..... 24

    Notices of Certain Student Misconduct to Noncustodial Parent..... 24

    Participation in Federally Required, State-Mandated, and District Assessments ..... 24

    Student Records ..... 24

        Accessing Student Records..... 24

        Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records ..... 25

    Teacher and Staff Professional Qualifications..... 29

STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES .....	29
Children of Military Families .....	29
Parental Role in Certain Classroom and School Assignments.....	30
Multiple Birth Siblings .....	30
Safety Transfers/Assignments.....	30
Service/Assistance Animal Use by Students.....	31
Students in the Conservatorship of the State (Foster Care) .....	31
Students Who Are Homeless.....	32
Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services or Section 504 Services .....	33
Special Education Referrals.....	33
Contact Person for Special Education Referrals.....	34
Section 504 Referrals.....	34
Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals.....	34
Notification to Parents of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to Students in General Education.....	35
Students Who Receive Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home .....	35
Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English.....	35
Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected Under Section 504 .....	36
SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS ....	36
ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE.....	36
Compulsory Attendance .....	36
Kindergarten .....	36
Between Ages 6 and 18.....	36
Age 19 and Older .....	37
Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance.....	37
All Grade Levels .....	37
Secondary Grade Levels .....	38
Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance.....	38
All Grade Levels .....	38
Students with Disabilities.....	39
Between Ages 6 and 18.....	39
Age 19 and Older .....	39
Attendance for Credit or Final Grade (Kindergarten–Grade 12).....	40

Official Attendance-Taking Time (All Grade Levels) .....	41
Documentation After an Absence (All Grade Levels) .....	41
Doctor’s Note After an Absence for Illness (All Grade Levels) .....	42
Driver License Attendance Verification (Secondary Grade Levels Only) .....	42
ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW (All Grade Levels) .....	43
ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL BATTERY TEST (Grades 10-12).....	43
BULLYING (All Grade Levels) .....	43
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS (Secondary Grade Levels Only) .....	46
CELEBRATIONS (All Grade Levels) .....	46
CHILD NUTRITION.....	46
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, TRAFFICKING, AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN (All Grade Levels).....	47
Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse.....	47
Warning Signs of Trafficking.....	48
Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children.....	49
Further Resources on Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children.....	50
CLASS RANK/HIGHEST-RANKING STUDENT (Secondary Grade Levels Only) .....	50
CLASS SCHEDULES (Secondary Grade Levels Only) .....	52
COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS (Secondary Grade Levels Only) .....	53
COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES (Secondary Grade Levels Only) .....	53
COMMUNICATIONS.....	54
Automated, Emergency (All Grade Levels).....	54
Nonemergency (All Grade Levels).....	54
COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS (All Grade Levels) .....	55
CONDUCT (All Grade Levels) .....	55
Applicability of School Rules .....	55
Campus Behavior Coordinator .....	56
Deliveries.....	56
Disruptions of School Operations .....	56
Social Events.....	57
COUNSELING.....	57
Academic Counseling .....	58
Elementary and Middle/Junior High School Grade Levels .....	58

High School Grade Levels .....	58
Personal Counseling (All Grade Levels) .....	59
COURSE CREDIT (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	59
CREDIT BY EXAMINATION—If a Student Has Taken the Course/Subject (All Grade Levels).....	59
CREDIT BY EXAMINATION FOR ADVANCEMENT/ACCELERATION—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course/Subject.....	60
Students in Grades 1–5 .....	60
Students in Grades 6–12 .....	60
DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION (All Grade Levels).....	61
Dating Violence .....	61
Discrimination.....	62
Harassment.....	62
Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment .....	62
Retaliation.....	63
Reporting Procedures .....	63
Investigation of Report .....	64
DISCRIMINATION .....	64
DISTANCE LEARNING .....	65
All Grade Levels .....	65
Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) (Secondary Grade Levels) .....	65
DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE, PUBLISHED MATERIALS, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS (All Grade Levels).....	65
School Materials .....	65
Non-school Materials.....	66
From Students .....	66
From Others .....	66
DRESS AND GROOMING (All Grade Levels).....	67
Attire.....	68
Dress Code Violations.....	70
Grooming.....	71
ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGYRESOURCES (All Grade Levels) .....	72
Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones, and Other Electronic Devices.....	72

Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices.....	73
Acceptable Use of District Technology Resources.....	73
Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources.....	73
END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS.....	74
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (All Grade Levels).....	74
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS (All Grade Levels) .....	74
Standards of Behavior.....	76
Offices and Elections.....	76
FEES (All Grade Levels).....	76
FUNDRAISING (All Grade Levels).....	77
GANG-FREE ZONES (All Grade Levels).....	77
GENDER-BASED HARASSMENT.....	78
GRADE-LEVEL CLASSIFICATION (Grades 9–12 Only).....	78
GRADING GUIDELINES (All Grade Levels).....	78
GRADUATION (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	78
Requirements for a Diploma.....	78
Testing Requirements for Graduation.....	79
Foundation Graduation Program.....	79
Credits Required.....	81
Available Endorsements.....	82
Personal Graduation Plans.....	82
Available Course Options for All Graduation Programs.....	82
Certificates of Coursework Completion.....	83
Students with Disabilities.....	83
Graduation Activities.....	83
Graduation Speakers.....	84
Graduation Expenses.....	84
Scholarships and Grants.....	84
HARASSMENT.....	84
HAZING (All Grade Levels).....	84
HEALTH.....	85
Illness (All Grade Levels).....	85
Immunizations (All Grade Levels).....	86
Lice (All Grade Levels).....	87



Medicine at School (All Grade Levels).....	87
Asthma and Severe Allergic Reactions.....	88
Steroids (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	89
Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels).....	89
Physical Activity Requirements .....	90
Elementary School .....	90
Junior High/Middle School.....	90
Temporary Restriction from Participation in Physical Education.....	90
Physical Fitness Assessment (Grades 3-12).....	90
Physical Health Screenings/Examinations.....	91
Athletics Participation (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	91
Spinal Screening Program.....	91
Other Examinations and Screenings (All Grade Levels).....	91
<b>SPECIAL HEALTH CONCERNS (All Grade Levels).....</b>	<b>92</b>
Bacterial Meningitis (All Grade Levels).....	92
Diabetes.....	92
Food Allergies (All Grade Levels).....	92
Seizures (All Grade Levels).....	93
Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited (All Grade Levels and All Others on School Property).....	93
<b>HEALTH-RELATED RESOURCES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>93</b>
Physical and Mental Health Resources (All Grade Levels).....	93
Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health (All Grade Levels).....	93
School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) (All Grade Levels) .....	94
Student Wellness Policy/Wellness Plan (All Grade Levels) .....	95
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES (All Grade Levels).....</b>	<b>95</b>
Questioning of Students.....	95
Students Taken into Custody.....	95
Notification of Law Violations.....	96
<b>LEAVING CAMPUS (All Grade Levels).....</b>	<b>96</b>
During Lunch.....	97
At Any Other Time During the School Day.....	97
<b>LOST AND FOUND (All Grade Levels).....</b>	<b>97</b>

MAKEUP WORK.....	98
Makeup Work Because of Absence (All Grade Levels).....	98
DAEP Makeup Work.....	98
Grades 9–12.....	98
In-School Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work (All Grade Levels).....	99
Alternative Means to Receive Coursework.....	99
Opportunity to Complete Courses.....	99
NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT (All Grade Levels) .....	99
PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (All Grade Levels).....	100
Working Together .....	100
PARKING AND PARKING PERMITS (High School Only).....	101
PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE (All Grade Levels).....	102
PRAYER (All Grade Levels) .....	102
PROMOTION AND RETENTION .....	102
Elementary and Middle/Junior High Grade Levels .....	102
High School Grade Levels .....	104
RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL .....	104
REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES (All Grade Levels).....	104
RETALIATION.....	105
SAFETY (All Grade Levels) .....	105
Accident Insurance.....	105
Insurance for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs.....	106
Preparedness Drills: Evacuation, Severe Weather, and Other Emergencies .....	106
Preparedness Training: CPR and Stop the Bleed.....	106
Emergency Medical Treatment and Information .....	106
Emergency School-Closing Information.....	106
SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS.....	107
SCHEDULE CHANGES (Middle/Junior High and High School Grade Levels).....	107
SCHOOL FACILITIES.....	107
Asbestos Management Plan (All Grade Levels).....	107
Food and Nutrition Services (All Grade Levels).....	107
Vending Machines (All Grade Levels).....	107
Pest Management Plan (All Grade Levels).....	108
Conduct Before and After School (All Grade Levels) .....	108
Library (All Grade Levels) .....	108

Use of Hallways during Class Time (All Grade Levels).....	109
Use by Students Before and After School (All Grade Levels).....	109
Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	110
SCHOOL-SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS.....	110
SEARCHES .....	110
Searches in General (All Grade Levels).....	110
District Property (All Grade Levels).....	110
Metal Detectors (All Grade Levels).....	111
Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices (All Grade Levels).....	111
Trained Dogs (All Grade Levels).....	111
Drug Testing (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	111
Appeals.....	111
Collection Procedures.....	111
Confidentiality.....	112
Consent.....	112
Consequences.....	112
Drug Abuse Prevention.....	112
Vehicles on Campus (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	112
SEXUAL HARASSMENT.....	113
SPECIAL PROGRAMS (All Grade Levels) .....	113
STANDARDIZED TESTING.....	113
Secondary Grade Levels .....	113
SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test).....	113
TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment .....	113
STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) .....	114
Grades 3–8 .....	114
High School Courses—End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments .....	114
STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE (All Grade Levels) .....	115
STUDENTS WHO ARE HOMELESS (All Grade Levels).....	115
STUDENT SPEAKERS (All Grade Levels) .....	116
SUMMER SCHOOL (All Grade Levels) .....	116
TARDIES (All Grade Levels).....	116
TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (All Grade Levels).....	116
TRANSFERS (All Grade Levels).....	117

TRANSPORTATION (All Grade Levels).....	117
School-Sponsored Trips .....	117
Buses and Other School Vehicles .....	117
VANDALISM (All Grade Levels) .....	118
VIDEO CAMERAS (All Grade Levels).....	118
VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL (All Grade Levels).....	119
General Visitors .....	119
Unauthorized Persons.....	119
Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students.....	120
Business, Civic, and Youth Programs.....	120
Career Day.....	120
VOLUNTEERS (All Grade Levels) .....	120
VOTER REGISTRATION (Secondary Grade Levels Only).....	120
WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL (All Grade Levels) .....	120
Glossary .....	121
APPENDIX I: Freedom from Bullying Policy .....	124
APPENDIX II: Acknowledgment Form—Amendment .....	125

## **Board of Trustees**

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Danya Peterson

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Joe Patterson

Tina Taylor

## **Superintendent**

Toby Miller

## **Business Manager**

Wyanza Basinger

## **Principal**

Gregg Johnson

## **District Contact Information**

Office: 806-996-5339

Fax: 806-496-2745

## **School Day**

First Bell (Tardy): 7:45 a.m.

Last Bell: 3:45 p.m.

## PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2020-2021! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

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

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS**—describes certain parental rights as specified in state and federal law. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

**Section II—OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**—is organized alphabetically by topic. 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 *Southland ISD Student Code of Conduct*. To review the Code of Conduct, visit the district’s website at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.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 newsletters 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 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 the Southland ISD main office.

**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 Southland ISD Business Office, and an unofficial electronic copy is available at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.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 Mr. Gregg Johnson.

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):

- 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** on page 17 and **Consent Required Before Student Participation in a Federally Funded Survey, Analysis, or Evaluation** on page 19 for more information.]

## **Accessibility**

If you have difficulty accessing this handbook because of a disability, please contact the principal at [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net) and/or (806)996-5339.

## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS**

This section of the *Southland ISD Student Handbook* describes certain parental rights as specified in state or federal law.

### **CONSENT, OPT-OUT, AND REFUSAL RIGHTS**

#### ***Consent to Conduct a Psychological Evaluation or Provide a Mental Health Care Service***

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, screening, or treatment, without obtaining prior written parental consent. The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student except as permitted by law. The district has established procedures for providing a parent with a recommendation for an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns or substance abuse or who has been identified as at risk of attempting suicide. 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 a possible need for intervention and provide information about available counseling options.

The parent and student will be provided resources and follow-up will be provided by the school counselor and/or principal.

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, Hannah Gomez, Secretary, can be reached at [hgomez@southlandisd.net](mailto:hgomez@southlandisd.net) and can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as educational materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on- and off-campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

For further information, see **Mental Health Support** on page 89.

**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 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 classroom website), or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

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

A student under 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 Otherwise Permitted by Law***

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

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

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

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

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

However, in accordance with law, the district may not administer corporal punishment if a student’s parent submits a signed, written statement prohibiting its use.

A parent who does not want corporal punishment administered to his or her child must return the form included in the forms packet. This signed statement must be submitted each school year. A parent may revoke this prohibition at any time during the school year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal.

#### **Note:**

- District personnel may use discipline methods other than corporal punishment if a parent requests that corporal punishment not be used.

- If the district knows that a student is in temporary or permanent custody of the state (through foster care, kinship care, or other arrangements), corporal punishment will not be administered, even when the student’s caregiver or caseworker has not submitted a signed statement prohibiting its use.

### ***Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by 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 as a recipient on all text messages.

### **AND**

The employee is required to include 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 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);

- 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.

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

For the following school-sponsored purposes—all district publications and announcements— directory information shall include student name, address, telephone listing, photograph, date and place of birth, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school previously attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.

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

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

- For all other purposes, directory information shall include student name and telephone listing.

If a parent does not object to the use of your child's information for these purposes, the school must release this information when the school receives a request from an outside entity or individual.

Also review the information at **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records** on page 25.

### ***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,
- Addresses, and
- Telephone listings.

[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, Analysis, or Evaluation***

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

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

- Any survey concerning protected information, regardless of funding.
- 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.

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

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

As a part of the district’s curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for course materials.

State law requires that the district provide written notice before each school year of the board’s decision to provide human sexuality instruction.

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

- Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;

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

Per state law, here is a summary of the district’s curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

**Human sexuality is taught to students through the health curriculum.**

A parent is entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, a parent may remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. A parent may also choose to become more involved with the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district’s SHAC. (See the campus principal for details.)

***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 102 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, without parental permission, districts are prohibited from removing a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the days the class is offered.

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

[For questions about school-provided tutoring programs contact the student's teacher and see policies EC and EHBC.]

## ***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.

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,
- 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 18, 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. The office that administers FERPA is:

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

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

Before disclosing 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—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school receives a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

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

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

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

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

- When school officials have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student's records.
- Legitimate educational interest may include:
  - Working with the student;
  - Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
  - Compiling statistical data;

- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs.
- School officials may include:
  - Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principal;
  - Teachers, 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, 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.
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details. [To prohibit this disclosure, see **Objecting to the Release of Directory Information** on page 18.]

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 principal 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 records custodian 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: 190 Eighth Street, Southland, TX 79364

The address of the principal’s office is: 190 Eighth Street, Southland, TX 79364

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 104, **Complaints and Concerns** on page 55, 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.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.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.

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

## ***STUDENTS 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 or campus if the district has determined that the child has been a victim of bullying, including cyberbullying, as defined by Education Code 37.0832. The board may transfer a student who has engaged in bullying to another classroom.

Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for more information.

[See **Bullying** on page 43, and policies FDB and FFI for more information.]

The district will honor a parent’s request for the transfer of his or her child to a safe public school in the district if the child attends a school identified by the Texas

Education Agency as persistently dangerous or if the child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds.

[See policy FDE 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.

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

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.

### ***Students 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 grant partial course credit by semester when the student only passes one semester of a two-semester 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 59, **Course Credit** on page 59, and **A Student in Foster Care** on page 115.]

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

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements;
- Immunization requirements;
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);
- Credit-by-examination opportunities 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;
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester 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 59, **Course Credit** on page 59, and **Students who are Homeless** on page 115.]

### ***Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education 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.

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 person to contact regarding options for a student experiencing learning difficulties or regarding a referral for evaluation for special education services is Donald Friers at (806)996-5339.

### **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 Amanda Calderon at (806)996-5339.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under** Section 504 on page 36.]

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](#)

### ***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.

### ***Students Who Receive Special Education Services with Other School-Aged Children in the Home***

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

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

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL) for more information.]

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

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

If the student qualifies for these 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 74 and **Special Programs** on page 113.]

### ***Students 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 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as defined in federal law.

[See **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 33 and policy FB for more information.]

## ***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 topic, please contact Mr. Gregg Johnson at (806)996-5339.

### ***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.

#### ***Compulsory Attendance***

##### ***Kindergarten***

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

### ***Between the Ages of 6 and 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 the state assessment for his or her grade level and/or applicable subject area.

### ***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.]

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

### ***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;
- 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.

***Secondary Grade Levels***

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

- Authorized by the board under policy FEA(LOCAL) and the student receives approval from the campus principal,
- 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.

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.

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

***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.

### ***Between the Ages of 6 and 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 Mr. Johnson. 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 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.]

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 **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** on page 37 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 **9:27 a.m.**

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

***Documentation after an Absence (All 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.

**Please note:**

- Parents/guardians **must** call the school at (806)996-5339 before 9:00 AM if their son/daughter will not be in attendance that day. Students who have been absent are required to bring a note upon their return to school that describes the reason for the absence. These notes are to be signed by a parent/guardian. **Students are allowed 2 school days to bring a note in order for it to be considered as an extenuating circumstance.**
- When a student misses three (3) or more consecutive days, an attempt will be made to contact the parent or guardian. Failure to respond may result in withdrawal for non- attendance.
- When a student's absence for personal illness exceeds 3 consecutive days, the student must present a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the absence from school.
- A student absent for any reason should promptly make up specific assignments missed and/or complete additional in-depth study assigned 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
- Students with 9 or more undocumented absences in a semester grading period will be subject to the following sanctions:

- Ineligibility for all co-curricular and extra-curricular activities until absences are removed.
- All grades and credits will be withheld until absences are removed.
- No driver's license forms will be issued until absences are removed.
- All SISD parking and driving privileges will be revoked until absences are removed.
- Students must be in attendance for 1/2 or more of the student's total number of classes on the day an event or activity is scheduled in order to participate. Students absent for more than 1/2 of their academic day may still participate in extra-curricular activities scheduled for that day if they receive approval from the principal and activity sponsor.
- Truant students will be ineligible for all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities until they have served the disciplinary sentence as determined by the principal

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

Within **2 days** of returning to school, a student absent for more **3 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 student's extended absence from school. 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.

[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/driverlicense/teendriver.htm>.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW (All Grade Levels)**

Southland 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.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office.

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

## **ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL 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 September 15th at 8:30 a.m. at Southland ISD library.

Contact the principal for information about this opportunity.

## **BULLYING (All Grade Levels)**

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
- 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 using the **StopIt** application.

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. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district.

The parent of a student who has been determined 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 30.]

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 30, **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 61, **Hazing** on page 85, 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.]

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

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following areas: **agriculture and family/consumer sciences**. Admission to these programs is based on the student's desire to be involved and the availability of the classes that a student desires to take.

District policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, and 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, or handicap 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 ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in all educational and vocational programs.

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** on page 99 for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator, who will address certain allegations of discrimination.]

### ***CELEBRATIONS (All Grade Levels)***

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.

### ***CHILD NUTRITION - Texas public school nutrition policy***

In 2004, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) implemented a much more restrictive policy on foods that are provided to students. The policy is aggressively enforced, and schools found to have violated the policy will lose a day of meal reimbursement funds from the state and will be required to reimburse the food service account for the lost

reimbursement. The policy applies to foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV), and any type of candy and also restricts the provision of “competitive foods,” which are all foods and beverages not provided by school food services. The policy also limits the number of grams of fat and sugar Texas schoolchildren are served each week, restricts portion sizes for items such as chips, cookies, frozen desserts and beverages, and calls for phasing out deep-fat frying in schools. Nutrition policy exemptions allow for such events as birthday parties, pizza parties and classroom snacks (see the Exemptions section on facing page for details). The full Texas Public School Nutrition policy is available on the Texas Department of Agriculture Web site at [www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org) (Texas Classroom Teachers Association, 2019).

[See **Food Allergies** on page 92.]

## ***CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN (All Grade Levels)***

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net). As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused.

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

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

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

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

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of 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 61.]

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp).

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

- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.pdf>
- <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html>
- <http://taasa.org/resources-2/>
- <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/what-we-can-do-about-child-abuse-1>
- <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cvs/what-we-can-do-about-child-abuse-2>

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the TDFPS

1-800-252-5400

or

at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>

### ***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;
- Owning 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](#)

### ***CLASS RANK/HIGHEST-RANKING STUDENT (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

**CALCULATION** Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2010-2011 school year, the District shall include in the calculation of class rank only grades earned for high school credit in English, mathematics, science, and social studies.

A student who earns more than the required number of credits in a core curriculum discipline shall have the highest grades earned for the number of required courses under the student's graduation program used in the calculation for class rank.

**EXCLUSIONS** The calculation of class rank shall exclude grades earned in or by traditional correspondence courses, distance learning or online supplements to existing District courses, and credit recovery

programs.

WEIGHTED GRADE SYSTEM CATEGORIES

The District shall categorize and weigh eligible courses as Advanced and Regular in accordance with provisions of this policy.

ADVANCED COURSES

Eligible Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Credit courses designated in the student handbook shall be categorized and weighted as advanced courses.

REGULAR COURSES

All other eligible courses shall be designated as Regular courses.

WEIGHTED NUMERICAL GRADE AVERAGE

The District shall assign weights to grades earned in eligible courses and shall calculate a weighted numerical grade average in accordance with the following scale:

Category	Weight
Advanced	plus ten (10)
Regular	plus zero (0)

The District shall record unweighted numerical grades on student transcripts.

TRANSFERRED GRADES

When a student transfers grades for properly documented and eligible courses, the District shall assign weight to those grades based on the categories and grade weight system used by the District if similar or equivalent courses are offered to the same class of students in the District.

LOCAL GRADUATION HONORS

For the purpose of determining honors to be conferred during graduation activities, the District shall calculate class rank using grades available at the time of calculation at the end of the fifth six-week grading period of the senior year. The average of the fourth and fifth six-week grades shall be used as the semester grade for this purpose.

For the purpose of applications to institutions of higher education, the District shall also calculate class ranking as required by state

law. The District’s eligibility criteria for local graduation honors shall apply only for local recognitions and shall not restrict class ranking for the purpose of automatic admission under state law. [See EIC(LEGAL)]

*VALEDICTORIAN and SALUTATORIAN*

The valedictorian and salutatorian shall be the eligible students with the highest and second highest ranking, respectively. To be eligible for such recognition, a student MUST:

- Have been continuously enrolled in the District high school since the first day of the school year for the four semesters immediately preceding graduation;
- Have completed the Recommended Program or the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program for graduation; and
- Be graduating after exactly eight semesters of enrollment in high school.

*BREAKING TIES*

In case of a tie in weighted numerical grade averages, the District shall apply the following methods, in this order, to determine recognition as valedictorian or salutatorian:

- Compare the number of weighted courses taken by each student involved in the tie.
- Compute the weighted numerical grade averages of all courses taken by each student involved in the tie.

If the tie is not broken after applying these methods, the District shall recognize all students involved in the tie as sharing the honor and title.

[For further information, see policy EIC.]

***CLASS SCHEDULES (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a 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 107 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
- 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 2020 terms and spring 2021 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 of through a holistic review process.

As required by law, the district will provide written notice concerning automatic college admission, the curriculum requirements for financial aid, and the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid. 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 50 for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class, and requirements for **Graduation** on page 79 for information associated with the foundation graduation program.]

[See **Students in the Foster Care** on page 115 for information on assistance in transitioning to higher education for students in foster care.]

## **COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES (Secondary Grade Levels Only)**

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

- Certain courses taught at the high school campus, which may include courses termed dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or college preparatory;
- Enrollment in AP or dual credit courses through the Texas Virtual School Network (TXVSN);
- Enrollment in courses taught in conjunction and in partnership with SOUTH PLAINS COLLEGE, which may be offered on or off campus;
- Enrollment in courses taught at other colleges or universities; and
- Certain Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses.

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**

### ***Automated – Emergency (All Grade Levels)***

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 104 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

### ***Nonemergency***

Your child's school will request that you provide contact information for the school to send information specific to your child, your child's school, or the district. If you provide a phone number for this purpose, please notify the school's administration office immediately if your number changes.

The district or school may generate automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are closely related to the

school's mission, so prompt notification of any change in contact information will be crucial.

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, please contact your child's principal.

[See **Safety** on page 105 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.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net). The complaint forms can be accessed online at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net) or at the principal's or superintendent's office.

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

## ***CONDUCT (All Grade Levels)***

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

The board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus, as well as 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***

The 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 the campus behavior coordinator is available on the district's website at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net) and is listed below:

Gregg Johnson, [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net) or (806)996-5339 ext. 121.

### ***Deliveries***

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

### ***Disruption of School Operations***

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

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

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

- Making loud noises;



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

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

### ***Social Events***

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

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

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

### ***COUNSELING (All Grade Levels)***

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/Junior High School Grade Levels***

The school counselor will provide information to students and parents about college and university admissions and the importance of planning for 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 teacher or the 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 principal or other staff member will also provide information each year a student is enrolled in high school regarding:

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

- Availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training.

Additionally, the principal or other staff member 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 mental health coordinator 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 mental health coordinator should contact Hannah Gomez. 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 mental health coordinator for more information.

[See **Mental Health Support** on page 89, and **Child Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children** on page 47, and **Dating Violence** on page 61.]

### ***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."

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

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

[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.]

#### ***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.

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, disability, age, 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 [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net).

[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.

### ***Discrimination***

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, 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;
- 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 43]

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).

## ***DISCRIMINATION***

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 61.]



## ***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 is **OdysseyWare**.

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

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

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

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 73.] 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 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. If you do not receive a copy or have questions about this policy, please contact Gregg Johnson at [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net) or (806)996-5339.

## ***DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE, PUBLISHED MATERIALS, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS (All Grade Levels)***

### ***School Materials***

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

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

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

### ***From Students***

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

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

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

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

### ***From Others***

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any district premises by any district employee or by persons or groups not associated with the district, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered for distribution, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy, include the name of the sponsoring person or organization, and be submitted to the principal for prior review. The principal will approve or reject the materials within two school days of the time the materials are received. The requestor may appeal a rejection in accordance with the appropriate district complaint policy. [See policies at DGBA or GF.]

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

Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a non-curriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB(LOCAL)

- Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

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

## ***DRESS AND GROOMING (All Grade Levels)***

The District’s dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards, and teach respect for authority. Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others.

The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal’s judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations. Reasonable restrictions may be placed on student dress and speech if such restrictions are necessary for the peaceful operation of the school. Wearing either identified gang apparel or wearing clothing in a gang-style as identified by law enforcement agencies is prohibited.

The District prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that: (a) are lewd, offensive, vulgar, or obscene, or (b) advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCF (LEGAL). The student and parent may determine the student’s personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the general guidelines set out above and with the student 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. If not corrected, the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated dress code offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action. Appropriate discipline procedures shall be followed in all cases in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The school’s dress code motto is **“OUT OF CODE, OUT OF POPULATION”**.

It is of the opinion of the Board of Education and the administration that a student learns and reacts according to his self-pride. Therefore, the students of *Southland I.S.D.* shall meet all standards acceptable to this community in relation to dress, grooming, and conduct. The principal/designee, in connection with the sponsor, coach, or other person in charge of an extra- curricular activity, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in the activity if the principal/designee reasonably believes that the student's dress or grooming:

- Creates a hazard to the student's safety or to the safety of others.

- Will prevent, interfere with, or adversely affect the purpose, direction, or effort required for the activity to achieve its goal.
- Project a negative image of Southland ISD.

### ***Attire***

Student attire should be appropriate, decent, and non-disruptive. The school administration will determine whether a student's attire is potentially disruptive. The following is prohibited according to *Southland ISD* dress code:

- Wearing articles of clothing that promote gangs, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs is prohibited. Some articles of clothing or attire that have been determined to be inappropriate to the standards of this campus and are not to be worn include, but not limited to, clothing with language, pictures, or drawings, which may be interpreted as obscene, will not be allowed. Also prohibited is clothing that is identified as gang apparel or articles of clothing that the student wears in a gang style, this includes items which may represent any association with a gang, such as gang colors or bandannas.
- Strapless dresses, sundresses, see-through materials
- Tank tops, halter tops, fish net or spaghetti straps
- Low cut dresses, blouses, or shirts
- Inappropriate sleeveless shirts or mini-skirts
- Clothing which reveals a bare midriff or undergarments

Shirts and dresses must have material that covers the shoulder area to the edge of the shoulder at the top of the arm. Shoulder straps on shirts must be at least 3 inches wide across the shoulder. Shirts must be at least 4 inches below the waistline of any pants or shorts. Mid-drift should not be visible at any time.

- Proper undergarments will be worn at all times and will never be exposed.
- Headdress articles will not be permitted during the school day. These include curlers, headbands, caps, hats or other head ornaments. Caps may not be worn during school hours (7:45 a.m. until 3:45 p.m.). Caps and hats worn on school property or at school related activities during non-restricted times must be worn as designed (with bill pointing forward).
- Sunglasses (except by written permission of a physician) or improper eyewear will not be permitted in any building.
- All shirts, blouses or any top garment must be buttoned appropriately.
- Shoes must be worn at all times. Prohibited are shower shoes, slippers, pool shoes and house shoes. Socks are required when appropriate.
- No skates of any kind are allowed. This includes shoes with built in or attachable wheels.

- No baggy pants. Oversized clothing is not allowed. Waistbands will be worn no lower than top of the hipbone. Waistbands will fit so that the garment does not “slide” down without a belt. Belts are required as needed. Pant legs will not touch or drag on the floor. If pants/shorts width, “bagginess”, or too-large-a-fit, gives the appearance of sagging, they are prohibited, and the student will be placed in ISS. **Sagging is not permitted.** Nothing looser than a “loose fit” will be acceptable.
- Thrasher jeans are not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, ripped jeans, torn jeans and/or jeans with holes. **Fraying or/and small holes created by the manufacturer must not appear more than 6 inches from the bottom of the knee.** Jeans that are frayed in excess purposely are not allowed to be worn. Excess will be determined by the principal or designee.
- No trench coats of any kind.
- Bandanas are not permitted; this includes any headdress articles. These items will be confiscated and will not be returned.
- No tank tops, muscle shirts, cutaway sweatshirts, etc. Any shirt with an indecent insignia or slogan will not be allowed.
- Unusual or non-traditional jewelry will not be permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, heavy chains, spikes, and dog collars.
- Prohibited unusual or non-traditional jewelry includes nose wear such as rings or studs, tongue rings or studs, or other body piercing jewelry of any kind, with the exception of pierced earrings for female students. Any item used as a post in a piercing such as broom straws, pieces of plastic are restricted.
- Male students may not wear earrings. This includes clip earrings, pierced earrings or studs, or any item used as a post in a pierced ear such as broom straws, pieces of plastic, etc.

Any attire considered in poor taste or judged to be a possible disruption will not be allowed. This includes, but is not limited to:

- clothing that depicts violence or gore
- clothing that is lewd, offensive or vulgar
- clothing that advertises or depicts tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or other prohibited substances
- clothing which portrays “Marilyn Manson”, “Adult Swim”, or other groups and/or characters which has been determined to represent a variance from community standards
- clothing that resembles prison and/or jail issue or mental ward attire
- Shorts must be hemmed. Shorts **cannot** be gym shorts, spandex, wind shorts or cutoffs. Skin-tight fitting material is not permitted. Shorts may

not be worn over warm-ups or worn below the waistline. **Shorts or pants with writing across the seat are not acceptable.**

All garments must meet minimum length requirements. An acceptable guideline for skirt or short length should be no more than 6 inches from the bottom of the knee. If a question arises, this will be checked by having the student place his/her knee in a chair and measure from the chair to where the skirt or short starts or the upper most part of any slit in the skirt.

- **Tights/Leggings can be worn BUT must have a covering (i.e. long t-shirt) worn over them that covers to the acceptable length of a pair of shorts or dress.**
- **Tights/Leggings with sheer/mesh must meet the length requirements listed above (6 inches above the bottom of the knee).**
- **Sheer shirts may be worn but the visible undershirt must be within dress code. Example: a sheer shirt worn with a strapless or spaghetti strapped shirt underneath is considered out of dress code.**
- Gang-related tattoos and insignias are forbidden. All tattoos must be covered.
- Chains on wallets will not be allowed for safety purposes.
- No garments are allowed that are not attached by the manufacturer to the student's main article of clothing. Including, but not limited to:
  - Caps
  - Hats
  - Gloves
  - Arm warmers

### ***Dress Code Violations***

- If the student's dress or grooming is objectionable under these provisions, the student will be removed from population immediately.
- The principal, coach, or any other person in charge of an extracurricular activity, including banquets, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in these activities. Violation of the dress code at these activities will result in ISS placement.
- Any attire or other items considered gang related by the administration or law officials will be confiscated and not returned to the student or parent. These items will be turned over to the Garza County Sheriff's Department.
- Students who violate provisions of the dress code relating to extra-

curricular activities may be removed or excluded from the extra-curricular activities for such period as the principal/designee and/or activity sponsor may determine.

- Exceptions to the dress code may be made for special events with the administration's approval.

## **Grooming**

Cleanliness and proper grooming are necessary for students to project a positive image, and personal appearance affects behavior. Because of the importance of appearance, SISD has established these guidelines to be followed:

- There are many acceptable hairstyles, so long as they are not extreme. If dyes, tints, or bleaches are used, the resulting color must look like natural human hair. The hair on top of the head must be neatly groomed. The length and the bulk of the hair will be as such that it does not present a ragged, unkempt, or extreme appearance. Design hair writing is prohibited. Notching of the eyebrows is not permitted.
- Unusual hairstyles considered to be disruptive will not be permitted. This includes excessive hair coloring, style, length, and/or fad haircuts (including, but not limited to, Mohawks, faux-hawks, or spiked). The young men of Southland I.S.D. will ensure that the hair when combed will not fall over the ears or eyebrows or touch the collar except for the closely cut hair at the back of the neck. Sideburns must be neatly trimmed. The base will not be flared, nor will it extend below the lowest part of the exterior ear. The bottom will be a clean-shaven horizontal line. The young men of Southland I.S.D. will not have ponytails, rat-tails or hair tails. There will be no irregular areas above the bottom of the ear.
- Beards, goatees, moustaches, excessive sideburns or other inappropriate facial hair are not permitted. **The face is to be clean-shaven**
- Unusual facial make-up or adornments that may be considered to be a possible disruption will not be allowed.
- All styles considered to be potentially disruptive cannot be listed; therefore, the school administration will determine whether a particular style is to be considered disruptive and inappropriate.
- Feathers are not allowed to be worn at school.

Students who are found to be in violation of the school dress code will be given the opportunity to fix the problem first. If they are not able to fix the problem, the student will be sent to ISS for the remainder of the day. It is the responsibility of teachers and the

principal to judge the appropriateness of a student's attire and personal grooming. Students are encouraged to ask the opinion of the principal before purchasing questionable clothing or changing personal appearance in a way that might be considered inappropriate according to these guidelines.

## ***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.

[For graphing calculator applications on computing devices, see **Textbooks, Electronic Textbooks, Technological Equipment, and Other Instructional Materials** on page 116.]

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

Students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices at school unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

**\*\*\*\*New\*\*\*\***

**Students will be allowed to use cell phones before school, during breakfast. Once the first bell (7:45 a.m.) rings all phones must be put away. In each secondary classroom there are hanging pockets for students to place their cell phones. If the student chooses to not place their phone in the designated location; the phone will be taken up if it goes off in the student's backpack or on their person. If the phone goes off while in the designated location, no punishment will be handed down. Students may access their personal devices once the last bell rings (3:45 p.m.). Please be aware that Southland ISD has the right to revoke this privilege at any time it deems necessary. The viewing of pornography or anything deemed inappropriate by the principal will result in disciplinary action.**

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. The student or parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15, for the first offense. \$25 for the second offense. \$35 for the third offense. After the third offense students will not be allowed to have a cell phone on school property. It will become a discipline issue if the student brings the phone back on campus.



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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal telecommunications device may be searched by authorized personnel.

[See **Searches** on page 110 and policy FNF.]

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

### ***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-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 79 and **Standardized Testing** on page 113.]

## ***ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (All Grade Levels)***

A student who is an English language learner is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for an English language learner. 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.

In order 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 then 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 L, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing** on page 75, may be administered to an English language learner, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. 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 language learners who qualify for services.

If a student is considered an English language 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 with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [Also see **Transportation** on page 117.]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at <https://www.uil texas.org/athletics/manuals>; a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request. To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or [curriculum@tea.texas.gov](mailto:curriculum@tea.texas.gov).

[See <http://www.uil texas.org> for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

Student safety in extracurricular activities is a priority of the district. The equipment used in football is no exception. As a parent, you are entitled to review the district's records regarding the age of each football helmet used by the campus, including when a helmet has been reconditioned.

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

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to 15 absences not related to post-district competition, unlimited absences for post-district competition prior to state, and unlimited absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

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

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

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

### ***Offices and Elections***

Elections will be held in the spring for clubs and organizations such as, but not limited to, Student Council, FFA, FCCLA, Cheerleading etc. **Students who run for these offices and who are elected need to understand that they will be expected to attend leadership camps and other workshops and clinics they may be associated with the offices they hold. Students not attending after dues have been paid will be responsible for reimbursing the school.** Students need to take this into consideration when committing to such a position of leadership.

### ***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 reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 117.]
- 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 superintendent's office. [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. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 14 days before the event.

[For further information, see policies FJ and GE.]

### ***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 61.]

## ***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
5	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
10	Grade 11 (Junior)
15	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 104 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:

- Complete the required number of credits established by the state and any additional credits required by the district;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state;

- Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by state law; and

Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by the district, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education (SBOE).

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

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

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

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

State law allows a student to meet EOC requirements by substituting satisfactory performance on norm-referenced 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 113.]

### ***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.

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

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

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

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



## Credits Required

The foundation graduation program requires completion of the following credits:

Courses	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program	Number of Credits: Foundation Graduation Program with an Endorsement
English/Language Arts	4	4
Mathematics	3	4
Science	3	4
Social Studies, including Economics	3	4
Physical Education*	1	1
Speech	0.5	0.5
Language other than English	2	2
Fine Arts	1	1
Locally required courses	0.5 credit in health	0.5 credit in health
Electives**	5.5 credits	5.5 credits
TOTAL	26 credits	26 credits

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.

- **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.

### ***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.

### ***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***

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

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a certificate of attendance. 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.]

ARD committees will make instructional and assessment decisions for students with disabilities who receive special education services in accordance with state law. 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.

### ***Graduation Activities***

Graduation activities will include:

- Commencement Exercises

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on end-of-course assessments and have not been declared eligible to graduate by an individual graduation committee, if applicable, will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. However, please keep in mind that participating in the activities and 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.

The following students and student groups shall be recognized at graduation ceremonies:

- Valedictorian
- Salutatorian

### ***Graduation Speakers***

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies.

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

[See FNA(LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct. For student speakers at other school events, see **Student Speakers** on page 116.]

### ***Graduation Expenses***

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order 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 76.]

### ***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.

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

## ***HARASSMENT***

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 61.]

### ***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 43 and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

## ***HEALTH—Physical and Mental***

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

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

State rules require 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 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 Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

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

## ***Immunizations (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 by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#). The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are:

- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis;
- Rubeola (measles), mumps, and rubella;
- Polio;
- Hepatitis A;
- Hepatitis B;
- Varicella (chicken pox); and
- Meningococcal.

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

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

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 83, entering college students must also, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five years prior to enrolling in and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus may be subject to this requirement.

[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.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student needs to be picked up from school and 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 their return.

The district will provide notice to parents of elementary school students in the affected classroom without identifying the student with lice. More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](#).

[See policy FFAA for more information.]

### ***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. District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, except that authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:

- Prescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.
- Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.
- Nonprescription medication in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request. **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 92.)

### ***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;
- 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 or Provide a Mental Health Care Service** on page 16 for the district's procedures for recommending a mental health intervention and the mental health liaison's contact information;
- **Counseling** on page 57 for the district's comprehensive school counseling program;

- **Physical and Mental Health Resources** on page 93 for campus and community mental and physical health resources; and
- **Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health** on page 93 for board-adopted policies and administrative procedures that promote student health.

### ***Physical Activity Requirements***

#### ***Elementary School***

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

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

#### ***Junior High/Middle School***

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

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

#### ***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.

#### ***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, Gregg Johnson 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 noninvasive 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)***

[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.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net) for information regarding meningitis.

**Note:** DSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination on or after a student's 11th birthday, unless the student received the vaccine at age 10. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus.[See **Immunization** on page 86.]

### ***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, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. Questions regarding food allergy plans, please contact DeAnn Latham at [dlatham@southlandisd.net](mailto:dlatham@southlandisd.net) or (806)996-5339.

[See **Celebrations** on page 46 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 **Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504** on page 36 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 mental health coordinator Hannah Gomez at (806)996-5339.
- The local public health authority, Texas Department of State Health Services (Public Health Region 1) – City of Lubbock Health Department, which may be contacted at (806)775-2941.
- The local mental health authority, Texas Council of Community Centers, which may be contacted at (432)263-0007.

### ***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 [Southland ISD Board Policy Manual](#).

- 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 Gregg Johnson at [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net) (806)996-5339 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 SHAC coordinator, Gregg Johnson, (806)996-5339.

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

policies at BDF and EHAA. See **Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 21 for additional information.]

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

Southland ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You are encouraged to contact the Principal, Gregg Johnson 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.

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 is thought to have committed certain offenses or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[See policy FL(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 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. If the student returns the same day, the student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return.

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

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

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

### ***During Lunch***

Students are not permitted to leave campus during the lunch period. Southland ISD's campus is a closed campus during all secondary lunches.

### ***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 40.]

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***

#### ***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.]

## ***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, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law in providing education services, activities, and programs, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. The district provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to admission and 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: Bethany Miller, Special Programs, 190 Eighth Street, Southland, TX 79364, [bmiller@southlandisd.net](mailto:bmiller@southlandisd.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 of 504 Coordinator: Amanda Calderon, 806-996-5339
- For all other concerns regarding discrimination, see the superintendent: Toby Miller, 190 Eighth Street, Southland, TX 79364, 806-996-5339, [tmiller@southlandisd.net](mailto:tmiller@southlandisd.net)

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

## ***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 on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all 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 58.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher or the principal, please call the school office at (806)996-5339 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 104.]

- Becoming a school volunteer. [See **Volunteers** on page 120 and policy GKG for more information.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: Site-Based Decision-Making Committee and Student Health Advisory Council.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees that develop educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. [Contact Mr. Gregg Johnson at (806)996-5339 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 94 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 second Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Business Office at 190 Eighth Street. An agenda for a regular or special meeting is posted no later than 72 hours before each meeting at 190 Eighth Street and online at [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.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 to park on campus.

Students will not be permitted to:

- Speed.
- Double-park.
- 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 22.]

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.

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

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

To be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.

To be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a high-school credit course with a corresponding end-of-course (EOC) assessment, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment. The student will instead take the corresponding EOC assessment.

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

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 113.]

A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two opportunities to retake a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student’s parent will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee.

For the student to be promoted based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous, and the student must complete additional special instruction before beginning the next grade level. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policy EIE for more information.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some classified as English learners—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting will be convened if a student receiving special education services in grade 5 or 8 fails to meet satisfactory performance after the first STAAR administrations in reading or math. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

A student at or above grade 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated examinations will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The district will notify the parent of their child’s participation in this program. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

For any middle-school **or** junior high-school student who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated examinations, a school official will prepare a personal graduation plan (PGP). School officials will also develop a PGP for any middle-school and junior high-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 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 82 for information related to the development of personal graduation plans for high school students.]

### ***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 78.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation** on page 78 and **Standardized Testing** on page 113.]

## ***RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL***

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 96.]

## ***REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES (All Grade Levels)***

Report cards with each student's performance and absences in each class or subject are issued at least once every six (6) weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will receive a progress report if their child's performance in any course/subject area is near or below 75 or is below the expected level of performance. If a student receives a grade lower than 75 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 100 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 the district's grading policy. [See **Grading Guidelines** on page 78 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.

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school within five (5) days. The district may communicate academic information about a student electronically, including for progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature will be accepted by the district, but parents are entitled to request a handwritten signature of acknowledgment instead.

## ***RETALIATION***

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 61.]

## ***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 using the StopIT application.
- 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***

If the board purchases accident, liability, or automobile insurance coverage for students or 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.

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

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

The district will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control 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***

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school may have to rely on previously provided written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, all parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should contact the school nurse to update emergency care information (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.).

### ***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.

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: parents will be notified by the local news media (radio and television stations) and by phone, text or email using the E-Notes program available through the school's website. [See **Communications-Automated, Emergency** on page 54.]

## **SAT, ACT, AND OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTS**

[See **Standardized Testing** on page 113.]

## **SCHEDULE CHANGES (Middle/Junior High and High School Grade Levels)**

All schedule changes must take place before the end of the third (3) week of classes. If changes have to be made after the deadline; due to unforeseen circumstances, approval must come directly from the principal.

## **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 Toby Miller, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at (806)996-5339.

### ***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.

Some students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. The district may share information such as a student's name and eligibility status to help enroll eligible children in Medicaid or the state children's health insurance program (CHIP) unless the student's parent requests the student's information not be disclosed.

Participating students will be offered the same meal options as their peers and will not be treated differently from their peers.

See Dena Basinger to apply for free or reduced-price meal services. [See policy CO for more information.]

### ***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 principal.  
[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 nonchemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to ensure a safe, pest-free school environment.

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

Parents who have questions or who want to be notified of the times and types of applications prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact Toby Miller, the district's IPM coordinator, at (806)996-5339.

### ***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 a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other material available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasures. The library is open each school day at 8:00 a.m. and remains open through the day until the close of the school day. A certified librarian is in charge to assist students, as well as their classroom teachers. The librarian will provide training in the use of library resources during class visits as well as to individual students so that they can become independent library users.

#### **General Library regulations are as follows:**

- All reference/reserve-books (encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.) are used in the library. However, special arrangements may be made with the librarian to check some of these books out for one period during the school day or for overnight use, depending on circumstances.
- All other library books may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed for another two weeks, if not needed by another student.
- Lost or damaged books must be paid for or replaced. The librarian will

determine charges for damaged books. The charge for a lost book will be the replacement cost of the book. If a lost book is paid for, and returned to the library, the price of the book minus the fine will be refunded.

- Students with overdue books may not be permitted to check out other library materials until their record is cleared.
- A fine of 10 cents a day for each school day that a book is overdue will be charged. The maximum overdue fine per book will be \$10.00 for all books.
- Current issues of magazines or newspapers are to be used in the library only.
- Individual students coming to the library from their classroom must carry a library pass *and* a note from their teacher specifying the purpose of the student's visit.
- Students are reminded to work quietly in the library at all times; they should remember that the library is a place for studying, reading, or researching. Students who do not display proper library behavior will lose their library privileges.

### ***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
- Gymnasium

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 Non-curriculum-Related Groups (Secondary Grade Levels Only)***

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

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

### ***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.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need.

## ***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 the 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 72 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.

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

***Appeals:*** A student or parent may appeal a decision made under this policy in accordance with FNG(LOCAL). The student shall be ineligible for participation in extracurricular activities while the appeal is pending.

***Collection Procedures:*** Personnel from the drug-testing laboratory shall collect urine samples under conditions that are no more intrusive than the conditions experienced in a public restroom. When selected for testing, a student shall be escorted to the school's testing site by a District employee and shall remain under employee supervision until the student provides a sample.

Samples shall be produced by a student from behind a closed restroom stall. A

District employee of the same gender as the student shall be present when any samples are collected.

**Confidentiality:** Drug-testing results shall be confidential and shall be disclosed only to the student, the student's parents, and designated District officials who need the information in order to administer the drug-testing program. Drug test results shall not be maintained with a student's academic record. Results shall not be otherwise disclosed except as required by law.

**Consent:** Before a student is eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, the student shall be required annually to sign a consent form agreeing to be subject to the rules and procedures of the drug-testing program. If the student is under the age of 18, the student's parent or guardian shall also sign a consent form. If appropriate consent is not given, the student shall not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities.

**Consequences:**

**First Offense**

The student shall be suspended from any extracurricular activity and from driving or parking on District property for 30 school days following the date the student and parent are notified of the test results.

During the period of suspension, the student shall not be permitted to participate in practices. The student shall be required to complete two hours of drug and alcohol abuse counseling.

Documentation to verify completion of the counseling must be submitted to the principal prior to the student's reinstatement in any extracurricular activities.

**Retesting**

If the student wishes to return to participation in extracurricular activities, the student must be retested at the end of the period of suspension and have a negative test result; the student shall be retested on the next six random test dates.

**Drug Abuse Prevention**

The District shall notify the parent and student of free drug and alcohol abuse prevention resources available in the area.

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see **Steroids** on page 88.]

**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 61.]

## **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 Mr. Gregg Johnson at (806)996-5339.

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

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

### **Secondary Grade Levels**

#### **SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)**

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

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

#### **TSI (Texas Success Initiative) Assessment**

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The TSI assesses the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that freshmen-level students need to perform effectively as undergraduates in Texas public colleges and

universities. This assessment may also be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the 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

State law requires successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 for a student to be promoted to the next grade level. A student may be exempt from this requirement if:

- The student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student’s current grade level; or
- The student is enrolled in a special education program and the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee concludes the student has made sufficient progress in his or her individualized education plan (IEP).

[See **Promotion and Retention** on page 102.]

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

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

### **High School Courses End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments**

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

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

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments 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 78.]

### ***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 is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state, sometimes referred to as substitute care).

Please contact Mr. Gregg Johnson, who has been designated as the district's foster care liaison, at (806)996-5339 with any questions.

[See **Students in Foster Care** on page 115.]

### ***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 campus 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, Mr. Gregg Johnson at (806)996-5339.  
[See **Students Who Are Homeless** on page 115.]

### ***STUDENT SPEAKERS (All Grade Levels)***

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: Student speakers shall be given a limited public forum at the following school events:

- Student assemblies for election of officers to student council, classes, and other school- sponsored organizations; and
- Any other event at which the District explicitly permits a student to express his or her own thoughts.

For the speaker, the District may set time, place, and manner restrictions appropriate for the school event.

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 policy FNA(LOCAL) regarding other speaking opportunities and **Graduation** on page 78 for information related to student speakers at graduation ceremonies.]

### ***SUMMER SCHOOL (All Grade Levels)***

A student's attendance record (excessive absences) and/or performance in their classes, could require them to attend summer school.

### ***TARDIES (All Grade Levels)***

Each teacher keeps up with their own classroom tardies. When a student is late for the fourth time to a class, they will be given a discipline referral and punished accordingly. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*.

### ***TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT, and OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (All Grade Levels)***

The district provides textbooks and other approved instructional materials to students free of charge for each subject or class. Students must treat any books with care and place covers on them, as directed by the teacher. The district may also provide electronic textbooks and technological equipment to students, depending on course objectives.

If a student needs a graphing calculator for a course and the district does not provide one, the student may use a calculator application with graphing capabilities on a phone, laptop, tablet, or other computing device.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

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

### ***TRANSFERS (All Grade Levels)***

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another.

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments** on page 30, **Bullying** on page 43, and **Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services** on page 33, 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 110.]

#### ***Buses and Other School Vehicles***

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students.

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

Because students in these areas might encounter hazardous conditions when traveling to and from school independently, the district will provide transportation to these students. Please contact Mr. Gregg Johnson at [gjohnson@southlandisd.net](mailto:gjohnson@southlandisd.net) or (806)996-5339 for additional information.

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

designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact (806)996-5339.

[See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the DAEP.]

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

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; the privilege to ride in a district vehicle, including a school bus, may be suspended or revoked.

### ***VANDALSIM (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 superintendent, who the district has designated to coordinate the implementation of and compliance with this law.  
[See policy EHBAF(LOCAL) for more information.]

## ***VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL (All Grade Levels)***

### ***General Visitors***

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. 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 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 will not be permitted.

### ***Unauthorized Persons***

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

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

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

[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***

In both the Fall and Spring semesters, 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 Mr. Gregg Johnson at (806)996-5339 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 from the 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.



## **Glossary**

**Accelerated 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.

**EOC (end-of-course) assessments** are state-mandated and are part of the STAAR program. Successful performance on EOC assessments are required for graduation. These examinations will be given in English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History.

**ESSA** is the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

**FERPA** refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 years of age or older directs the school not to release directory information.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Except under limited circumstances, students must perform successfully on some state-mandated assessments to be promoted and students must pass the STAAR EOC assessments to graduate. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle; 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.

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

**TSI** stands for the Texas Success Initiative, an assessment designed to measure the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering college-level freshmen students should have if they are to be successful in undergraduate programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

**TXVSN** stands for the Texas Virtual School Network, which provides online courses for Texas students to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts. Courses are taught by qualified instructors and are equivalent in rigor and scope to a course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

**UIL** refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide, voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

## **APPENDIX I: Freedom from Bullying Policy**

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit [www.southlandisd.net](http://www.southlandisd.net).

STUDENT WELFARE: FREEDOM FROM BULLYING FFI(LOCAL)

Adopted on [REDACTED]

**APPENDIX II:  
Acknowledgment Form—Amendment**

My child and I have received a copy of the Southland ISD Student Handbook Amendment # \_\_\_\_\_  
dated \_\_\_\_\_.

Print name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_