

# **NORMANGEE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

## **PARENT and STUDENT HANDBOOK 2018-2019**



Normangee Middle School  
116 Spur 3 – Normangee, Texas – 77871  
936.396.3111 Phone – 936.396.6879 Fax <http://www.normangeeisd.org>

**NORMANGEE ISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MISSION (Aug. 6, 2013)**

The mission of the Normangee Independent School District is to create a safe and secure learning environment that enables students to reach their maximum potential; to employ well-trained, enthusiastic personnel; and to foster positive relationships among students, parents, and the community.

**VISION STATEMENTS (Aug. 6, 2013)**

The District shall endeavor to meet the following:

- SAFETY: The District will ensure student safety;
- ENTHUSIASM: The District will promote enthusiasm on all occasions;
- ACCOUNTABILITY: The District will hold students and staff accountable for all actions through a positive discipline management plan, academic achievement, and all other associated activities;
- STAFFING: The District will employ and retain highly qualified staff, eliminate achievement gaps, and maximize character building for all students ;
- COMMUNITY RELATIONS: The District will promote positive relationships through open lines of communication with the community;
- RESOURCES: The District will provide technology infrastructure, tools and solutions and maximize all available resources to promote the mission and visions of the district; and
- EXTRA-CURRICULAR: The District will support all extracurricular activities and believes they develop and create well-rounded students.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES’ CHARGE TO STUDENTS (Aug. 12, 2013):**

“You are responsible for your actions and your approach to learning. Substandard performance will occur unless you exhibit consistency in your effort to achieve.”

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES’ CHARGE TO ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS (Aug. 12, 2013):**

“You are ethically and professionally obligated to hold yourself and all employees accountable for their actions. If you don’t do it consistently, you are condoning misconduct or substandard performance.”

**ADMINISTRATION**

Principal	Jake George, M. Ed
Director of Curriculum and Special Programs	Tera Phillips, M. Ed
Athletic Director	Keith Sitton
Administrative Assistant	Michelle Biddle
Front Desk Receptionist	Leann Williams

**FACULTY & STAFF**

Tami Dean	6 <sup>th</sup> PE / Health	Jessica Kapchinski	Life Skills
Jonathan Saldana	6 <sup>th</sup> Social Studies	Phyllis Rogers	Life Skills
Natalie Miller	6 <sup>th</sup> Math / Science	Cynthia Cox	Inclusion
Kacey Sams	7 <sup>th</sup> / 8 <sup>th</sup> Math	Clay Todd	Inclusion
Kevin Murillo	7 <sup>th</sup> / 8 <sup>th</sup> Social Studies	Kerry Noey	Instructional Aide
Tiffani McKinney	8 <sup>th</sup> ELA	Diana Norris	Instructional Aide
Cristina Wright	6 <sup>th</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup> ELA	Danielle Johnson	Instructional Aide
Derek Thomas	7 <sup>TH</sup> /8 <sup>TH</sup> Science	Michelle Cornish	ISS
Valerie Del Bosque	HS/MS Spanish		
Preston	HS Math		
John Easterling	HS/MS Band		
Lisa Callaway	Life Skills		

**DISTRICT PERSONNEL**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Superintendent	Mark Ruffin, M.Ed	Andres de la Garza	President
Superintendent's Secretary	Kim Greer	Bill Biddle	Vice President
Business Manager	Jamie Bell	Dr. William A. Bilsing	Member
Counselor	Kimme Tesch M.Ed.	Charlotte Hemphill	Member
Food Services	Tara Green	Waylan Martin	Member
Maintenance & Custodial	Joel Tedder	DeAnn Morton	Member
PEIMS Coordinator	Tammy Patterson		
Technology Coordinator	David DeBrock		
Librarian	Sandy Bouldin		
Transportation Director	Brad Hipple		
Director Special Education	Sandra Welker		

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# WELCOME

Parents, Guardians and Students of Normangee Middle School,

I truly believe the best approach to education is a collaborative one that creates an educational team with parent, student and staff. Normangee Middle School strives to provide an exceptional educational experience for our students and all involved. The purpose of this handbook is to provide clear and consistent expectations for students of Normangee Middle School. Please take the time to read through the handbook with your student. Expectations and policies have been set forth and approved by the Normangee ISD Board of Trustees.

It's a great time to be part of the Normangee school district. GO PANTHERS!

Sincerely,

Jake George

jgeorge@normangeeisd.org

# PREFACE

In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**—with information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook.

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

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Normangee ISD Student Code of Conduct, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document is available in the principal’s office or on the district website at [www.normangeeisd.org](http://www.normangeeisd.org).

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

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

Also, please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications. The district reserves the right to modify provisions of the Student Handbook at any time, whenever it is deemed necessary. Notice of any revision or modification will be given as is reasonably practical under the circumstances.

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

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

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms that are provided by the middle school front office:

1. Acknowledgement of Receipt of (or Electronic Access to) Student Handbook and Code of Conduct;
2. Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Information;

3. Parent's Objection to the Release of Student Information to Military Recruiters and Institutions of Higher Education Form (only required if YOU DO NOT WANT information released);
4. Corporal Punishment;
5. Student Agreement for Acceptable Use of the District Electronic Communication System;
6. Notice of Alcohol-Free and Drug-Free School;
7. Drug Testing Content Form;
8. Bus Safety Rules and Responsibilities Contract

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 4 and **Directory Information** on page 10 for more information.]

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the superintendent's office or online at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/810>

## **SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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This section of the *Normangee Middle School Parent and Student Handbook* includes information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

#### **Working Together**

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child once your child begins enrolling in courses that earn high school credit.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. [See **Academic Counseling** on page 19 and **Academic Programs** on page 14.]
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 936-396-6111 to schedule 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 47.]
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact the principal.]
- Participating in the local chapter of Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO), Athletics Booster Club, or Band Booster Club.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the principal.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 38.]
- 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. Board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the superintendent's office. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

#### **Parent Involvement Coordinator**

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is the elementary principal and may be contacted at 936-396-9999

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

### **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights**

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

### **“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities**

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

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

### **Inspecting Surveys**

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

### **Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff**

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child’s teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

### **Reviewing Instructional Materials**

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

[Also see **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 6 for additional information.]

**Displaying a Student’s Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work** Teachers may display students’ work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, the district will seek

parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the district's Web site, on any campus or classroom Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. The district will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

### **Accessing Student Records**

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child, and
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child's classroom.

[See **Student Records** on page 8.]

### **Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student**

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

- When it is to be used for school safety;
- When it relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity; or
  - When it relates to media coverage of the school.

### **Granting Permission to Receive Parenting and Paternity Awareness Instruction**

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

### **Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom**

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

### **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction**

As a part of the district's curriculum, students receive instruction related to human sexuality. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for such instruction. State law requires that any instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome must:

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

In accordance with state law, a summary of the district's curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction includes safe and healthy friendships, peer pressure and refusal skills, dating and setting limits, and abstinence. As a parent, you are entitled to review the curriculum materials. In addition, you may remove your child from any part of the human sexuality instruction with no academic, disciplinary, or other penalties. You may also choose to become more involved with the development of curriculum used for this purpose by becoming a member of the district's SHAC. Please see the campus principal for additional information.

### **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags**

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 46 and policy EC(LEGAL).]

### **Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence**

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

### **Requesting Limited or No Contact with a Student through Electronic Media**

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

An employee described above may also contact a student individually through electronic media to communicate about items such as homework or upcoming tests.

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

### **Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct**

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 policy FO(LEGAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

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

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

If you do or do not want corporal punishment to be administered to your child as a method of student discipline, please indicate preference on the form included in the forms packet accompanying this handbook. A signed statement must be provided each year.

You may choose to revoke this request at any time during the year by providing a signed statement to the campus principal. However, district personnel may choose to use discipline methods other than corporal punishment even if the parent requests that this method be used on the student.

### **School Safety Transfers As**

a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided in this circumstance. [See **Bullying** on page 14, policies FDB and FFL.]
- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE(LOCAL).]
- Request the transfer of your child to a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant. [See policy FDE.]

### **Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings**

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

### **Parents of Students with Disabilities with Other School-Aged Children in the Home**

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, the parent or guardian may request that any other student residing in the household be transferred to the same campus, if the appropriate grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

### **Request for the Use of a Service Animal**

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

### **Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services**

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

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts and open enrollment charter schools must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all

students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts and charter schools to meet the needs of all struggling students.

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

#### Special Education Referrals:

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

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

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

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

a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

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

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

#### Contact Person for Special Education Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Middle School Principal

Phone Number: 936-396-3111

#### Section 504 Referrals:

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

Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals:

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

Contact Person: Middle School Principal

Phone Number: 936-396-3111

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

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

### **Accommodations for Children of Military Families**

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

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

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by the district. The district will permit no more than five (5) excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment. Additional information may be found at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=7995>.

### **Student Records**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

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

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

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

- District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions,

the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.

- Various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.
- Individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

The principal is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The superintendent is the custodian of all records for students who have withdrawn or graduated.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of both the principal's and the superintendent's office is PO Box 219, Normangee, TX 77871.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the superintendent. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 47 and **Complaints and Concerns** on page 17 for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at FL(LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at <http://pol.tasb.org/Home/Index/810>. The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

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

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

**Directory Information** The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as “directory information.”

This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. However, release of a student's directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child's first day of instruction for this school year.

[See the “Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information” included in the forms accompanying this handbook.

### **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes**

The district often needs to use student information for certain school-sponsored purposes, including any UIL participation for academics, athletics or fine arts; Honor Roll; Student Council; National Honor Society; extracurricular clubs and organizations (including but not limited to FFA and 4-H); and yearbook. For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child’s name, photograph, honors and awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height if a member of an athletic team. This information will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student, except as described above at **Directory Information**.

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

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

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

## **SECTION II: OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact the campus office.

### **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Teachers or other school personnel will maintain regular contact with parents/guardians regarding absences and tardies for the purposes of communication and collaboration for the benefit of students. In addition, an attendance committee will review attendance and tardiness data and communicate with the principal or directly with parents/guardians regarding concerns and recommendations.

Two state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for a student’s final grade or course credit—are of special interest to students and parents.

#### **Compulsory Attendance**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and may be subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than ten 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.]

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

### **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

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

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or the child of a student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus.
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state;
- Mental health or therapy appointments, or
- Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

A junior or senior student's absence of up to two days, or any additional days approved by the campus principal, related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed. A sibling of a Little Dribbler playing in the National Tournament may attend as an excused absence IF the student is passing all classes and has no more than 8 absences. The absences will count toward semester exemptions, however.

Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the student notifies his or her teachers and receives approval from the principal prior to the absences.

As listed in Section I at Accommodations for Children of Military Families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments. See section on page 8.

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

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

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on 10 or more days or parts of days that are un-excused within a six-month period in the same school year

If a student age 12 through age 18 violates the compulsory attendance law, both the parent and student could be charged with an offense. Truancy prevention measures will be instituted by school officials to encourage daily attendance, including parent conferences; student conferences; teacher/parent communication via email, phone, mail

or other means; reward/incentive systems (such as Perfect Attendance award) and the like. The goal is to help students and parents understand the importance of daily and on-time school attendance. [See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

### **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade**

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten through grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan approved by the principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class.

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

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed on page 11 at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. □ In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.
- Students requiring make-up days in order to be in good standing for attendance will do so in the following manner. Each excessive absence will be made up by attending Saturday school or Administrative Detention in two-hour increments, as assigned by the principal. Two hours will equal ½ day of attendance and four hours will equal 1 day of attendance. If a student fails to attend the scheduled detention or Saturday school, the student will be given **one** opportunity to reschedule.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). The actual number of days a student must be in attendance to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

### **Official Attendance-Taking Time**

The district must submit attendance of its students to Texas Education Agency (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken every day during third period. A student absent for any portion of the day, including at the official attendance-taking time, should follow the procedures below.

### **Documentation after an Absence**

When a student is absent, the student—upon arrival or return to school—must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law. A phone call from the parent

may be accepted, but the district reserves the right to require a written note. Unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence.

#### **Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness**

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than three (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 student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be considered to be in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school in order to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused. [See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

#### **Driver License Attendance Verification**

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to access the student's attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student's attendance information to DPS. A verification of enrollment (VOE) form may be obtained from the office, which the student will need to submit to DPS upon application for a driver license.

#### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

All students are expected to complete their work with integrity and honesty and encourage other students in the same manner. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on relevant assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism (see examples below), and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observations, and/or information from students or other staff.

Examples of plagiarism include turning in someone else's work as one's own; copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit; failing to put a quotation in quotation marks; giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation; changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit; and copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of one's work, with or without credit.

#### **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The school counselor provides students and parents with information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see **Academic Counseling** on page 19 of this handbook and policy EIF.]

#### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

##### **Attendance**

Perfect attendance awards will be given to each student who has not been absent for the school year.

##### **A & A/B Honor Roll**

Students meeting the qualifications for A & A/B honor rolls may be recognized at an end-of-year awards assembly and/or at other appropriate times throughout the year. For further information, see policies at EIC.



## **BULLYING**

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

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

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

Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods, called "cyberbullying."

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, principal, or another district employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. The district will also contact the parents of the victim and of the student who was found to have engaged in the bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district. The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [Also see **School Safety Transfers** on page 7.]

A copy of the district's policy is available in the superintendent's office and on the district's Web site, and is included at the end of this Handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's Web site.

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

[Also see **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20 **School Safety Transfers** on page 7, **Hazing** on page 35, policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the superintendent's office.]

## **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN**

Teachers, counselors, school nurses, administrators and other school personnel are mandated by state law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate authorities.

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.normangeeisd.org](http://www.normangeeisd.org), or a parent may speak to the superintendent by calling 936-396-3111. As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with

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

Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

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

As a parent, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS) also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention\\_and\\_Early\\_Intervention/Programs\\_Available\\_In\\_Your\\_County/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp).

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

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

<http://sapn.nonprofitoffice.com>

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

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse1.shtml)

[http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG\\_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/childabuse2.shtml) Reports

of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (1 800252-5400 or on the Web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

## **CLASS SCHEDULES**

All students are expected to attend school for the entire school day and maintain a class/course schedule to fulfill each period of the day. Changes in class schedule must be requested prior to the fifth day of the semester. Requests for changes in schedules to attempt to change teachers will not be permitted. Changes in class schedules may be denied based on a number of factors. Please see the school counselor or principal.

## **COMMUNICATIONS- AUTOMATED**

### **Emergency**

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency situation, which may include real-time or automated messages. An emergency purpose may include early dismissal or delayed opening because of severe weather or another emergency, or if the campus must restrict access due to a security threat. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number previously provided to the district has changed. [See Safety on page 80 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

### **Nonemergency**

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

District contacts you, please contact your child's principal. [See Safety on page 80 for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency situation.]

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or at [www.normangeeisd.org](http://www.normangeeisd.org).

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

## **COMPUTER RESOURCES**

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail and all internet use using a district computer is not private and will be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.]

## **CONDUCT**

### **Applicability of School Rules**

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus as well as on district vehicles—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

### **Corporal Punishment**

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

### **Disruptions of School Operations**

Disruptions of school operations are not tolerated and may constitute a misdemeanor offense. [See FNCI(LEGAL) and GKA(LEGAL).] As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

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

### **Social Events**

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest. A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

### **CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS**

[See **Illness** under **Health-Related Matters** on page 36.]

### **COUNSELING**

#### **Academic Counseling**

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 8-12 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities.

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

#### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse. A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should contact the school office to schedule an appointment. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance. [Also see **Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention** on page 54 and **Suicide Awareness** on page 54.]

#### **Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment**

The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent. Parental consent is not necessary when a psychological examination, test, or treatment is required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse

investigations and reports. [For more information, refer to policies EHBAA(LEGAL), FFE(LEGAL), and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

## **COURSE CREDIT**

Student's in high school courses will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (1 credit) course, the student's grades from both semesters will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. Should the student's combined average be less than 70, the student will be required to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

## **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing the offense. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, namecalling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, threats to harm a student's current dating partner, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

## **Discrimination**

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

## **Harassment**

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

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

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

## **Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment**

Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student are prohibited. Examples of sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

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

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

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

### **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline. Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

### **Reporting Procedures**

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

### **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated.

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

During the course of an investigation, the district may take interim action to address the alleged prohibited conduct. When an investigation is initiated for alleged prohibited conduct, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law. If so, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted. [See policy FFI and **Bullying** on page 14.] If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary action, and, in some cases, corrective action, will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary and corrective action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful.

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

## **DISCRIMINATION**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.]

## **DISTANCE LEARNING**

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 Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established 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 course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the "no pass, no play" rules. [Also see **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations** on page 27.] In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TxVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment and the implications of these assessments on graduation apply to the same extent as they apply to traditional classroom instruction.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or similar course. In addition, the district will not pay for more than three TxVSN courses per school year per student.

NOTE: If a student wishes to enroll in a correspondence course or a distance learning course that is not provided through the TxVSN in order to earn credit in a course or subject, the student must receive permission from the principal prior to enrolling in the course or subject. If the student does not receive prior approval, the district may not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS**

### **School Materials**

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

The school yearbook is one publication available to students. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal. [See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 10.]

### **Non-school Materials...from students**

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

The area outside the main office has been designated as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection. [See policy FNAA.] Any student who posts non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed. A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

### **Non-school Materials...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, FNG, or GF.] Prior review will not be required for:

- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.
- Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD(LOCAL) or a noncurriculum-related student group meeting held in accordance with 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. The area outside the main office has been designated as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection. [See policy FNAA.]

## **DRESS AND GROOMING**

The district's dress code is based on promoting personal growth and student learning, with a focus on respect for self, respect for the school community, and safety. Students should present themselves in a manner that demonstrates these values. The following guidelines are NOT meant to be exhaustive. The principal reserves the right to evaluate any current fashion trends not identified below for appropriateness. The principal will decide whether a student's grooming or clothing meets the school's dress code.

### ***Respect for Self:***

1. Clothing should be reasonable and follow accepted community standards for the student's age group. Clothing should fit, be properly sized, and promote modesty. The following are NOT allowed:
  - sheer or see-through clothing, low-cut necklines (front or back), sagging pants/shorts/skirts (must fit at waist), pajama pants or other sleepwear, leggings worn alone, yoga pants worn without an over shirt or jacket that extends to the fingertips; spaghetti strap tops/camisoles/tube tops worn without an appropriate over-shirt or jacket;
  - clothing with any hole, rip or tear above the fingertips or with a distracting or unsafe hole or tear;
  - skirts, shorts, skorts, or dresses that come any higher than within three inches above the kneecap;
2. Hair should be a natural human color, simple, clean, and not interfere with a student's vision or with another person's ability to see a student's eyes and face. Boys' hair will be above the collar in the back, not below ears or brow. Hairnets, picks, combs, rollers/curlers, and design shavings are not allowed in hair. Mohawks are not be allowed.
3. The board restricts facial hair of any kind (moustache, beard, goatee, shadow, etc.). Students with facial hair will be required to immediately shave in the presence of a staff member using shaving equipment provided by the school.

### ***Respect for Others:***

4. Clothing and accessories should not contain pictures, slogans, symbols or words that are:
  - offensive, morbid, vulgar, obscene or suggestive;
  - associated with gang activity, subversive groups or activities that incite violence or are deemed inappropriate for a school setting;
  - related to or are an advertisement for drugs, alcohol or tobacco products, including registered trademarks of such companies;
  - a promotion of superiority or inferiority based on gender, race, ethnicity or other similar attributes.
5. Tattoos must be covered at all times.
6. Blankets are not allowed at school. Earbuds may be worn by students during breakfast and lunch only. They may not be used in class, and they may not be worn around the neck in the hallways.

### ***Safety:***

7. Sunglasses and headwear (hoods, hats, caps, bandanas, etc.) are not allowed to be worn inside any building.
8. Shoes should be worn at all times. House shoes, house slippers, shower shoes and shoes with wheels are not allowed.
9. Visible body piercings are prohibited, including the tongue. Girls may wear simple earrings. Boys may not wear earrings. Pocket chains, spiked jewelry, or dangling jewelry that could injure or distract is not allowed. No jewelry is allowed to be worn during practices, games, or tournaments.

If a student's appearance does not promote these values above and follow the dress code policy, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem at school. If not corrected, the student may be assigned to in-school suspension for the remainder of the day, until the problem is corrected, or until a parent or designee brings an



acceptable change of clothing to the school. Repeated offenses may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **DRUG TESTING**

The District requires drug testing of any student in grades 6-12 who chooses to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular or co-curricular activities, or who wishes to receive a permit to park on campus. Eligible students shall be tested for the presence of illegal drugs and alcohol randomly throughout the school year.

The purposes of the drug-testing program are to:

1. Undermine the effects of peer pressure by providing a legitimate reason for students to refuse illegal drugs.
2. Reduce the risk of injuries.
3. Ensure counseling and education to students who test positive for drug use.

The policy is included in full in this section of the handbook, and the consent form is provided to students/parents under separate cover. The District shall invite parents and students to an informational meeting (e.g. Open House) to inform parents and students of the policy and answer questions. Educational information on the harmful effects of drug and alcohol abuse shall be provided at appropriate times in the year. Student attendance at an orientation meeting at the start of school is mandatory. Parent attendance at the informational meeting is encouraged but not required.

Before a student is eligible to participate in extracurricular or co-curricular activities or receive a parking permit, the student shall be required 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 or co-curricular activities or receive a parking permit.

Drug test results shall be used to determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular or co-curricular activities or for parking privileges. Positive drug test results shall not be used to impose academic penalties. Bylaws and policies of the individual extracurricular or co-curricular programs shall also apply. Nothing in this policy shall limit or affect the application of state law, local policy, or the Student Code of Conduct. A student who commits a disciplinary offense shall be subject to consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Drug test 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. Drug test results shall be destroyed when a student graduates. The Board shall contract with a certified drug testing laboratory to conduct testing of students' urine and saliva samples. Testing laboratories shall not release statistics regarding the rate of positive drug tests to any person or organization without consent of the District.

The District shall make available to students and parents this list of the substances eligible for testing:

1. Alcohol
2. Amphetamines/methamphetamines
3. Barbiturates
4. Benzodiazepines
5. Cocaine metabolite
6. Ecstasy
7. LSD
8. Marijuana
9. Synthetic marijuana
10. Methadone
11. Opiates: codeine, heroin, morphine
12. Steroids, or other performance-enhancing drugs

Personnel from the drug-testing laboratory shall collect urine or saliva 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.

A student who refuses to be tested when selected, who fails to produce a sample in the allotted time, or who is determined to have tampered with a sample shall receive the same consequences outlined below of a student who has tested positive. The student shall be required to submit to testing at the next testing period and must receive a negative test result to participate in extracurricular or co-curricular activities or to receive parking privileges.

An initial positive test shall be confirmed by a second test of the same specimen before being reported as positive. The medical review officer shall contact the parents or student to determine if there is a medical explanation for a positive result.

**A student who has a confirmed positive drug test shall be subject to the following consequences:**

1. Upon receiving results of a positive drug test, the District shall schedule an in-person or telephone conference with the student, the student's parent if the student is under the age of 18, the principal, and if applicable, the coach or sponsor of the extracurricular activity to review the test results and discuss consequences.
2. The student shall be restricted from any extracurricular or co-curricular activities, including practices for 30 days. The suspension will begin on the date in which the superintendent receives notification of the second positive test from the testing clinic. In addition, parking privileges shall be revoked until the student has received a negative drug test.
3. The student shall complete a drug-counseling program approved by the District. The student shall show proof that the student has started drug counseling within ten days of the student/parent meeting. If the student refuses counseling, the consequences of a second positive drug test shall be imposed.
4. The student shall be retested at each random testing date for one calendar year from the date of the last positive test. In order for a student to resume extracurricular or co-curricular activities or parking privileges, the principal, director, coach, or sponsor must give permission for reinstatement.

**A student who has a second confirmed positive drug test result shall be subject to the following consequences:**

1. Upon receiving results of a second positive drug test, the District shall schedule a meeting with the student, the student's parent if the student is under the age of 18, the principal, and if applicable, the coach or sponsor of the extracurricular activity to review the test results and discuss consequences.
2. The student shall be suspended from any extracurricular or co-curricular activities, including practices, for **60** calendar days. The suspension will begin on the date in which the superintendent receives notification of the second positive test from the testing clinic. In addition, parking privileges shall be revoked until the student has received a negative drug test.
3. The student shall complete a drug-counseling program approved by the District. The student shall show proof that the student has started drug counseling within ten days of the student/parent meeting. If the student refuses counseling, the consequences of a third positive drug test shall be imposed.
4. The student shall be retested at each random testing date for one calendar year from the date of the last positive test. In order for a student to resume extra-curricular or co-curricular activities or parking privileges, the principal, director, coach, or sponsor must give permission for reinstatement.

**A student who has a third confirmed positive drug test shall be subject to the following consequences:**

1. Upon receiving results of a third positive drug test, the District shall schedule a meeting with the student, the student's parent if the student is under the age of 18, and the coach or sponsor of the extracurricular activity to review the test results and discuss consequences.
2. The student shall be excluded from participation in any extracurricular activity for a minimum of two calendar years.
3. A student may apply for reinstatement at the end of the first calendar year provided the following conditions are met:
  - a. The student shall complete a drug-education program recommended by the District.
  - b. The student shall be retested at each random testing date for the remainder of his or her high school career.
  - c. If a student tests positive for a fourth time, the student shall be suspended from all extracurricular activities for his or her high school career.

All students in grades 6-12 shall be eligible to participate voluntarily in the District's drug-testing program. A student's parent, or an adult student, may sign the consent form to participate voluntarily. After receipt of the consent form, the student shall be eligible for random mandatory drug testing.

Parents of students who test positive shall be notified. The District shall require students who test positive to attend approved counseling programs. Students not attending the required programs shall not be permitted to continue in the voluntary program.

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.

\*Students who test positive during a random drug screening will be excluded from receiving any special award associated with any co-curricular activity in which the student is a participant in at the time of the positive test.

[For further information, see policy FNF(LOCAL). Also see **Steroids** on page 53.]

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

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

Normangee Middle School permits students to possess cell phones or smart phones, not only for safety reasons, but also because the school believes these can be powerful devices for student learning in the classroom. Phones and other electronic devices must be off or silenced and stored out of sight unless student has approval to use during a learning activity. A student must have approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers; however, these devices are encouraged for student learning and student engagement in the classroom as long as the student follows school rules, applicable policies, and the user agreement signed by the student and student's parents.

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

If a student uses a cell phone other than an approved instructional activity, the student will be subject to disciplinary referrals and disciplinary consequences. A student may have a cell phone confiscated if they are not in compliance with this policy. A student who is in violation of this policy on multiple occasions will have the right to possess a cell phone on campus revoked. A student who refuses to turn over a device when requested will face disciplinary action. The student or parent may pick up the confiscated device from the principal's office at the end of the school day for a fee of \$10.00. The fee applies from the second instance and every instance thereafter. After the third instance, the parent will be required to pick up the telecommunication device.

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 50 and policy FNF.]

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

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

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

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** on page 50 and policy FNF.]

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

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

In some cases, teachers may create an instructional activity that involves students using personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices while on campus. Students must sign a user agreement that contains applicable rules for use (separate from this handbook). When students are not using the devices for approved instructional purposes as designated by the teacher, all devices must be silenced and put away during the instructional day. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

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 55.]

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, music or other activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. [See <http://www.uil texas.org> for additional information.]

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than a dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, government, or economics—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.

- Students who do not meet the 90% rule for compulsory attendance may become ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities in any given semester.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year unlimited absences related to extracurricular activities as long as that student is within the 90% rule on compulsory attendance.
- 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.

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see **Meetings of Noncurriculum-Related Groups** on page 50.]

### **National Junior Honor Society**

See Sponsor for Constitution.

### **Cheerleaders/Mascot**

For more information, see the sponsor.

### **FEES**

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

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- 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 or textbooks.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- 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 55.]
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student



## **HARASSMENT**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.]

## **HAZING**

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

Hazing will not be tolerated by the district. If an incident of hazing occurs, disciplinary consequences will be handled in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. It is a criminal offense if a person engages in hazing; solicits, encourages, directs, aids, or attempts to aid another in hazing; or has firsthand knowledge of an incident of hazing being planned or having occurred and fails to report this to the principal or superintendent. [Also see **Bullying** on page 14 and policies FFI and FNCC.]

## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

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

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is common and most people recover fully. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

- What are the symptoms?

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

Children (over 2 years old) and adults with bacterial meningitis commonly have a severe headache, high fever, and neck stiffness. Other symptoms might include nausea, vomiting, discomfort looking into bright lights, confusion, and sleepiness. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

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

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

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

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

- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest, can help prevent infection. Using good health practices such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and washing your hands frequently with

soap and water can also help stop the spread of the bacteria. It's a good idea not to share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

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

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>.

\*Please note that the TDSHS requires at least one meningococcal vaccination between grades 7 and 10, and state guidelines recommend this vaccination be administered between age 11 and 12, with a booster dose at 16 years of age. Also note that entering college students must show, with limited exception, evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination within the five-year period prior to enrolling in and taking courses at an institution of higher education. Please see the school nurse for more information, as this may affect a student who wishes to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus. Also refer to **Immunizations**, below, for more information.

### **Food Allergies**

The district requests to be notified when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially those allergies that could result in dangerous or possibly life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic, as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the school nurse or campus principal if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy. As part of the district's plan, training will be provided to appropriate staff related to food allergies. [For more information, see policy at FFAF(LOCAL).]

### **Head Lice**

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. Because lice spread so easily, the district will exclude any student found to have live lice until after one treatment of an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse, which can be purchased from a drug store or grocery store. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent and inform the parent that the child will need to be picked up from school and will need to stay home until after an initial treatment is applied. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and prevent their return.

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

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



[http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p\\_dir=&p\\_rloc=&p\\_tloc=&p\\_ploc=&pg=1&\\_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=97&rl=7](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.TacPage?sl=R&app=9&p_dir=&p_rloc=&p_tloc=&p_ploc=&pg=1&_tac=&ti=25&pt=1&ch=97&rl=7)

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

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions. A full list of notifiable conditions can be obtained from the school nurse or at the following location: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/IDCU/investigation/Texas-NotifiableConditions.doc>. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

### **Pink Eye**

Conjunctivitis may be bacterial, viral, or allergic in origin. A child with redness of the sclera (white part of the eye), drainage (clear or yellow), swelling, and complaint of pain, itching or discomfort will be sent home. He/she may return to school when symptoms have subsided, antibiotic drops have been given for a full day or a doctor sends a note stating the child may return.

### **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council will hold at-least 2 meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the district nurse, who serves as the SHAC liaison, at 936-396-9999. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

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 BDF and EHAA.]

[See **Removing a Student from Human Sexuality Instruction** on page 6 for additional information.]

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

#### ***Asbestos Management Plan***

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please contact the Director of Maintenance and Transportation, the district's designated asbestos coordinator, at 936-396-2540.

#### ***Pest Management Plan***

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

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who have further questions or who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the Director of Maintenance and Transportation, the district's IPM coordinator, at 936-396-2540.

### ***Physical Fitness Assessment***

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

### ***Tobacco Prohibited***

Students are prohibited from possessing or using any type of tobacco product, including electronic cigarettes, while on school property at any time or while attending an off campus school-related activity.

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

### ***Vending Machines***

The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the Director of Food and Custodial Services. [See policies at CO and FFA.]

## **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the school counselor who serves as the district’s Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths at 936-396-6111.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is a necessary and required component of the educational process. Its intent is to help students practice and demonstrate their understanding of material taught by the teacher. Homework assignments are considered daily grades. Parents can help students do their best by providing a quiet, structured place in the home for students to complete their homework. Teachers can help students by ensuring that homework is meaningful for learning.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

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

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

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

As noted at **Bacterial Meningitis** on page 36, entering college students must, with limited exception, furnish evidence of having received a bacterial meningitis vaccination within five years prior to enrolling and attending classes at an institution of higher education. A student wanting to enroll in a dual credit course taken off campus

may be subject to this requirement. [For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the TDSHS Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

## **INTERNET SAFETY AND RESPONSIBLE USE**

The District provides internet access to students to promote educational excellence in our schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. If a NISD user violates any of these provisions, he/she will be subject to loss of privileges on the district's system and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. This could result in loss of student credit. A system user is defined as an employee, contracted personnel, or student of NISD who has access to the computers and/or electronic communication system.

### **Regulations and Guidelines**

The superintendent or designee will oversee the district's electronic communications system. The district's system will be used only for administrative and educational purposes consistent with the district's mission and goals.

### **Etiquette on the Internet**

All users of the District computers and networks are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. Informal rules of behavior have evolved for the use of communication on the Internet and other online services. Breaches can result in "flaming" – harsh criticism by others on the Internet – or restricted access to some resources on the Internet. These rules of behavior include but are not limited to:

- Be polite. Do not become abusive in your messages to others. Messages typed in capital letters are the computer equivalent of shouting and are considered rude.
- Use appropriate language. Do not swear or use vulgarities, ethnic or racial slurs, or any other inflammatory language.
- Do not reveal address or phone number or that of other students or colleagues.
- Do not pretend to be someone else when sending/receiving messages. The use of the District system/network is for instructional purposes only.

### **System Access**

Access to the district's electronic communications system will be governed as follows:

Upon agreeing to the NISD's Internet Safety and Responsible Use Policy contained herein, students will be granted access to the district's system. Any student user identified as a security risk or having violated district and/or campus computer-use guidelines may be denied access to the district's system. Other consequences may also be taken.

### **System Conduct**

1. All students using the internet and NISD network will be responsible at all times for its proper use.
2. The system may not be used for illegal purposes, in support of illegal activities, or for any other activity prohibited by district policy.
3. System users may not redistribute copyrighted programs or data without the written permission of the copyright holder or designee. Such permission must be specified in the document or must be obtained directly from the copyright holder or designee in accordance with applicable copyright laws, district policy, and administrative regulations.
4. Real-time discussions such as chat room and instant messaging are prohibited.
5. Students may not distribute personal information about themselves or others by means of the electronic communication system.

6. System users may not send or post messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, illegal, or violent.
7. System users may not purposefully access or redistribute materials that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, illegal or violent.
8. System users may not waste district resources related to the electronic communication system.
9. System users may not gain unauthorized access to resources or information.
10. All system users are prohibited from playing any type of computer or network game, downloading music, or accessing streaming media not directly related to an approved NISD curriculum.

### **Forgery**

Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Attempt to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited.

### **Information Content/Third Party Supplied**

System users and parents of students with access to the district's system should be aware that use of the system may provide access to other electronic communications systems in the global electronic network that may contain inaccurate and/or objectionable material.

A student who gains access to such material is expected to discontinue the access as quickly as possible and to report the incident to the supervising teacher.

A student knowingly bringing prohibited materials into the school's electronic environment will be subject to a suspension and/or a revocation or privileges on the district's system and will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. This could result in loss of credit for students.

### **Sexting**

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, students and parents should review information found at <http://beforeyoutext.com>, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

### **Vandalism**

Any malicious attempt to harm or destroy district equipment or materials, data of another user of the district's system, or any of the agencies or other networks that are connected to the Internet is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of district policy and administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses.

Vandalism as defined above will result in the cancellation of system use privileges and will require restitution for costs associated with system restitution, hardware, or software costs.

### **Termination of Access**

The district may suspend or revoke a system user's access to the district's system upon violation of district policy and/or administrative regulations regarding acceptable use. The termination of a student's access will be effective on the date the principal or district coordinator receives notice of student withdrawal or of revocation of system privileges, or on a future date if so specified in the notice.

## Consequences of Improper Use

Improper or unethical use may result in disciplinary actions consistent with the existing Student Code of Conduct and , if appropriate, the Texas Penal Code, computer crimes, Chapter 33, or other state and federal laws. This may also require restitution for costs associated with system restoration, hardware or software costs.

## Disclaimer

The district's system is provided on an as-is, as-available basis. The district does not make any warranties, whether expressed or implied, including, without limitation, those of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose with respect to any services provided by the system and any information or software contained therein. The district does not warrant that the functions or services performed by, or that information or software contained on, the system will meet the system user's requirements, or that the system will be uninterrupted or error-free, or that defects will be corrected.

Opinions, advice, services, and all other information expressed by system users, information providers, service providers, or other third party individuals in the system are those of the providers and not the district. The district will cooperate fully with the local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the district's electronic communication system.

## LATE WORK

It is an important college and career skill to complete work on time. This demonstrates appropriate work ethic and personal character, now and in the future. To that end, we will follow the late work policy described below.

- |                                       |                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 day late   | 11 point deduction                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 days late  | 21 point deduction                                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 days late  | 31 point deduction and parent contact                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After 3 days | Detention until work satisfactorily completed and possible grade of zero |

An exception to this policy is for a long-term major grade (such as research paper or project) that has been preassigned with a specific future due date, typically weeks in advance. In this case, work turned in one day late will receive a 21 point deduction. Preassigned major work that is more than one day late will not be accepted.

Turning in late work may also demonstrate or produce a lack of understanding of class material. A student who repeatedly turns in work late in a course will be required to attend tutorials. Mandatory tutorials may be extended if a student continues to turn in work late.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

### Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation. In other circumstances:

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

### Students Taken Into Custody

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

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.

- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

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

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

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been 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 in regards to a student who is required to register as a sex offender. [For further information, see policies FL(LEGAL) and GRAA(LEGAL).]

### **LEAVING CAMPUS**

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

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

- A parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required. □ If a high school student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day. If a student is 18 years of age or is an

emancipated minor, the student may produce a note on his or her own behalf. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will be required.

- If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released.

### **During Lunch**

Normangee ISD has a closed lunch campus, which means students are not permitted to leave campus during lunch.

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

Middle school students are not authorized to leave campus for any other reason during the school day unless signed out by a parent or guardian. Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

A student with limited English proficiency (LEP), sometimes referred to as an English Language Learner in certain state statutes and state rules, 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 a LEP student.

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 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 50 may be administered to a LEP student, or, for a student up to grade 5, a Spanish version of STAAR. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I and II end-of-course (EOC) assessments. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to LEP students who qualify for services.

If a student is considered LEP and receives special education services because of a qualifying disability, the student's ARD committee will make these decisions in conjunction with the LPAC.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

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

### **MAKEUP WORK**

#### **Because of Absence**

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

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

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding “attendance for credit or final grade.” [See also **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** on page 12.]

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

### **Because of Extracurricular Activity**

All students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. This is a vital aspect of the school experience. Even so, work missed must be turned in based on the following policy.

- All pre-assigned work must be submitted to the teacher on the day it is due; if a student is leaving before school begins, all work should be placed in the teacher’s mailbox by the sponsor of the activity before leaving on the trip.
- All students must obtain an Extracurricular Absence Assignment form from the sponsor/coach the day before a scheduled event. Each teacher must sign the form and give any assignments to the student, which he/she will need to hand in upon return to school. ALL assignments listed on the Extracurricular Absence Assignment form are due the day the student returns to campus. A copy of the completed form must be on file with the front office by the end of the day before the scheduled activity.
- If an assignment was given on the day of the extracurricular absence, the student will have one day for each day absent plus one additional day to complete and return the assignment.

### **Because of Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP)**

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

### **Because of In-school Suspension (ISS)**

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

### **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions. Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:

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



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

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication. If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse or principal. In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse or principal for information. [See policy FFAF(LEGAL).]

### **Psychotropic Drugs**

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policy FFAC.]

### **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Normangee ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The superintendent is the district representative who has been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements:

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender.
- ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination. [See policies FB(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL).]

### **NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

[See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 32.]

### **PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS**

All students in grades 9 and 11 who participate in UIL athletic activities must have a physical exam record on file with the athletic director. All Health Department requirements will be followed. A student wishing to participate in UIL athletic activities will need to receive a physical upon entering the first year in junior high athletics and in their first and third years in high school. This amendment would also require the UIL Medical History form be completed annually and that the UIL Physical and Medical History forms authorized by the Medical Advisory Committee be required by all schools.

## **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 6.]

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

## **PRAYER**

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

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION**

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

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR. In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 8 STAAR assessment.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 8 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 52.]

Certain students—some with disabilities and some with limited English proficiency—may be eligible for exemptions, accommodations, or deferred testing. For more information, see the principal, school counselor, or special education director.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student in middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment or is determined by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year following enrollment in grade 9. The PGP will be designed and implemented by a school counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will, among other items, identify the student's educational goals, address the parent's educational expectations for the student, and outline an intensive instruction program for the student. [For additional information, see the school counselor and policy EIF(LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

[See **Leaving Campus** on page 43.]

## **REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks. The report card or unsatisfactory progress report will state whether tutorials are required for a student who receives a grade lower than 70 in a class or subject. Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school by the end of the week.

At the end of the first 3 weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 3 for how to schedule a conference.]

Teachers follow grading guidelines that have been approved by the principal pursuant to the board-adopted policy and are designed to reflect each student's relative mastery of each assignment for the grading period, semester, or course. State law provides that a test or course grade issued by a teacher cannot be changed unless the board determines that the grade was arbitrary or contains an error, or that the teacher did not follow the district's grading policy. [See policy EIA(LOCAL) and **Grading Guidelines** on page 31.]

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).

## **RETALIATION**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.]

## **SAFETY**

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

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

## **Accident Insurance**

Soon after the school year begins, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that would help meet medical expenses in the event of injury to their child.

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

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

## **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, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of

doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **Emergency School-Closing Information**

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

If the campus must close or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will alert the community in several possible ways: local television station KBTX channel 3 in Bryan, radio stations 96.1 FM in College Station and 100.5 in Madisonville, district Web site.

### **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

Students wishing to change their schedule will have an opportunity to do so. All schedule change requests must be submitted to the school counselor no later than the fifth day of the school. Although schedule change requests will attempt to be honored, no guarantee is made to students and/or parents.

### **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

#### **Use By Students Before and After School**

Certain areas of the school will be accessible to students before and after school for specific purposes. Students are required to remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place. The cafeteria is open to students before school beginning at 7:30 am. The library is also open to students before school beginning at 7:45 am. Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

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

#### **Conduct Before and After School**

Teachers and administrators have full authority over student conduct at before- or after-school activities on district premises and at school-sponsored events off district premises, such as play rehearsals, club meetings, athletic practices, and special study groups or tutorials. Students are subject to the same rules of conduct that apply during the instructional day and will be subject to consequences established by the Student Code of Conduct or any stricter standards of behavior established by the sponsor for extracurricular participants.

#### **Use of Hallways During Class Time**

Loitering or standing in the halls during class is not permitted. During class time, a student must have a hall pass to be outside the classroom for any purpose. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

#### **Cafeteria Services**

The district participates in the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See the Director of Food Services and Custodial to apply. The cafeteria does not accept charges for meals. Parents are encouraged to pay money into a student account ahead of time or send money with their child daily. If a child does not have money in their account or with them to pay for the day's meals, the child will receive a sandwich and milk.

#### Current Charges:

Students	Breakfast (PreK-12)	\$1.50
	Lunch (PreK-12)	\$2.50

Adults	Breakfast	\$2.25
	Lunch	\$3.25
Visitors	Breakfast	\$2.25
	Lunch	\$3.25

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO(LEGAL).]

**Library**

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. The library is open Monday-Friday 7:45-3:00 pm for independent student use with a teacher permit. A

**Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups**

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

**SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law.

**Drug Testing**

[See **Drug Testing** on page 24.]

**Metal Detectors**

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

**Students’ Desks and Lockers** Students’ desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student. Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations or keys are not available to others.

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present. The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student’s desk or locker.

**Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices**

Use of district-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by the district. [See policy CQ for more information.]

Any searches of personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated in order to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed. [See policy FNF(LEGAL) for more information.]

**Trained Dogs**

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.]

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the counselor or principal.

### **Advanced Academic Services**

A “Gifted and Talented student” means a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who exhibits high performance capability in an intellectual area or areas. Normangee ISD recognizes that its gifted and talented students have special learning needs and the district will make a sincere effort to:

- Identify students who demonstrate a need for advanced academic services and to establish the area of their giftedness.
- Provide effective staff development for teachers, administrators, and parents that enable Normangee ISD to meet the needs of its gifted and talented students.
- Offer quality programs and choices for gifted and talented students that challenge their special learning needs, and will enable them to achieve advanced-level performance and create advanced products.
- Develop and continually update differentiated curriculum that meets the needs of students in the four core subject areas: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.
- Ensure parental and community involvement and support for the gifted and talented program and participants.

This process includes a nomination phase. Students can be nominated by parents, teachers or community members at any time. The scheduled time for nominations is each spring. A screening phase (following written permission by the parent students will be tested), and a selection phase (standardized profiles are presented to the A.A.S. committee for review).

Procedures for students transferring in and out of the District as well as those wishing to exit the program have been established. Students can apply for a furlough from the program with the counselor. Finally, a parent appeal process has been established for parents not satisfied with the process.

### **Dyslexia Screening**

Dyslexia screening is available at both the elementary and secondary levels at Normangee ISD. Services are provided in regular and special education settings for students who need them. If you believe your child may have dyslexia, speak with the school counselor.

### **English as a Second Language**

To serve a child in ESL, signed parent permission is required in order to test the student’s English proficiency level. Unless other needs arise, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee meets in the fall and spring of each school year to determine the progress of each ESL student and offer assistance to parents and students. Students who have limited English proficiency are provided services through a certified ESL teacher.

### **Special Education**

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district’s overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the

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

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

### **State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)**

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for promotion.

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

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be limited English proficient (LEP) and who require this type of testing accommodation.

## **STEROIDS**

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use. Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at <http://www.uiltexas.org/health/steroid-information>.

## **STUDENTS IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY OF THE STATE**

In an effort to provide educational stability, the district strives to assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in a temporary or permanent conservatorship (custody) of the state of Texas with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

A student who is placed in the custody of the state and who is moved outside of the district's attendance boundaries is entitled to continue in enrollment at the school he or she was attending prior to the placement until the student reaches the highest grade level at the particular school. In addition, if a student in grade 11 or 12 is transferred to another district and does not meet the graduation requirements of the transferring district, the student can request to receive a diploma from the previous district if he or she meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

Please contact the principal or school counselor, who has been designated as the district's liaison for children in the conservatorship of the state, at 936-396-6111 with any questions.

## **STUDENT SPEAKERS**

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: football games, opening announcements and greeting for school day, NHS induction ceremonies, Veteran's Day program, pep rallies, award programs and banquets, and student-led assemblies. 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).

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

If you are worried that your child may be using or is in danger of experimenting, using, or abusing illegal drugs or other prohibited substances, please contact the school counselor. The school counselor can provide you with a list of community resources that may be of assistance to you. The TDSHS maintains information regarding children's mental health and substance abuse intervention services on its Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhsa-childadolescent-services/>

## **SUICIDE AWARENESS**

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access the following Web sites or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention and to find mental health services available in your area:

- <http://www.texassuicideprevention.org>
- <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhservices-search/>

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Normangee middle school students will be required to attend summer school if they failed the STAAR assessment or a math or reading class. Notification of required summer school will be sent to parents/guardians prior to the end of the spring semester.

## **TARDINESS**

A student is tardy if they arrive after the tardy bell has ended for any given period. If a student is tardy the teacher will document that tardy in the attendance report. A tardy report will be ran and administration will keep up with tardies and consequences. Consequences for excessive tardies are outlined below.

Tardies in any class count toward the cumulative total of tardies for the semester. Tardy count will restart at the beginning of a new 6 weeks.

- |                    |                                                 |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Tardies 1 and 2:   | Verbal warning                                  |
| Tardies 3 thru 5:  | Lunch detention                                 |
| Tardies 6 and 7:   | 9 <sup>th</sup> period (after school detention) |
| Tardies 8 or more: | Principal Discretion                            |

Examples of excused tardies include illness (pass from nurse is required), death of family member, emergencies beyond the control of the student in the principal's judgment. Examples of unexcused tardies include car trouble, oversleeping, alarm not going off, ride did not show up, etc. The principal determines whether a tardy is excused or unexcused.

## **EXCESSIVE TARDINESS**

A student who is excessively tardy to class by more than 10 minutes will be counted as absent from class, unless the student arrives to class with an excused pass from the office. Repeated instances (3 or more) of excessive tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action, in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Tardies in any class count toward the cumulative total of tardies for the semester. Tardy count will restart at the beginning of a new 6 weeks.



- 1<sup>st</sup> Referral: Verbal warning  
2<sup>nd</sup> Referral: Lunch detention  
3<sup>rd</sup> Referral: Administrative detention (two-hour detention after school)  
4<sup>th</sup> Referral: In School Suspension

Skipped lunch detention will result in administrative detention. Skipped administrative detention will result in an additional administrative detention. After the third two-hour administrative detention a student has been assigned for tardies, a student may be assigned to ISS or be required to attend Saturday School, which may include paying a fee imposed by the district. Grounds clean-up or other school service are possible required activities during Saturday School.

Examples of excused tardies include illness (pass from nurse is required), death of family member, emergencies beyond the control of the student in the principal's judgment. Examples of unexcused tardies include car trouble, oversleeping, alarm not going off, ride did not show up, etc. The principal determines whether a tardy is excused or unexcused.

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

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technological equipment may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives. A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technological equipment until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

## **TRANSFERS**

The principal is authorized to transfer a student from one classroom to another. [See **School Safety Transfers** on page 7, **Bullying** on page 14, and **Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services** on page 7 for other transfer options.]

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. A parent may request in writing that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent. All such requests must be approved by the principal in advance of the activity.

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

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school and on the district's Web site. Bus routes and stops will be designated annually, and any subsequent changes will be posted at the school and on the district's Web site. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact the Director of Maintenance and Transportation at 936-396-2540.

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:

- Be at assigned pick-up location 5 minutes prior to the set arrival/departure time.
- 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 on 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 buses, may be suspended or revoked

## **VANDALISM**

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

## **VIDEO CAMERAS**

For safety purposes, video and audio recording equipment is used 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 routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, parents and all other visitors should be prepared to show identification to any school personnel who requests it.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment. Even if the visit is approved prior to the visitor's arrival, the individual must check in at the main office first. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted.

### **Visitors Participating in Special Programs for Students**

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

### **VOLUNTEERING**

We appreciate so much the efforts of parent and grandparent volunteers who are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering in any of the myriad ways that volunteers may serve, please contact a PTO representative for an application. Information can also be obtained from the main office. For the safety of our students and staff, all school volunteers are required to submit to and pass a criminal background check. An offense obtained from the criminal background check does not necessarily preclude volunteering. The principal and/or superintendent will discuss with the prospective volunteer any issues that arise from the background check.

### **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the school counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record. A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

## GLOSSARY

**Accelerated instruction** is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level and/or as a result of a student not meeting the passing standard on a state-mandated assessment.

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

**ARD** is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student 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.

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

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

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

**IEP** is the written record of the individualized education program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or districtwide tests; whether successful completion of state-mandated assessments is required for graduation, etc.

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

**NCLB Act** is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

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

**SAT** refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Assessment Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

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

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

**STAAR** is the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, the state’s system of standardized academic achievement assessments, effective beginning with certain students for the 2011–2012 school year.

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

**STAAR Linguistically Accommodated (STAAR L)** is an alternative state-mandated assessment with linguistic accommodations designed for certain recent immigrant English language learners.

**State-mandated assessments** are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the 11 exit-level TAKS or STAAR EOC assessments, when applicable, is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

**Student Code of Conduct** is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board and identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from a classroom, campus, or district vehicle. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student’s violation of one of its provisions.

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

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

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

## **APPENDIX I: Freedom from Bullying FFI(LOCAL)**

### **Adopted February 17, 2012**

Note that school board policies may be revised at any time. For legal context and the most current copy of the local policy, visit <http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/810?filter=FFI>. Below is the text of District policy FFI(LOCAL) as of the date that this Handbook was finalized for this school year.

The District prohibits bullying as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the District and that:

1. Has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student’s property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s person or of damage to the student’s property; or
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

This conduct is considered bullying if it:

1. Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
2. Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

Examples of bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism.

### **Retaliation**

The District prohibits retaliation by a student or District employee against any person who in good faith makes a report of bullying, serves as a witness, or participates in an investigation. Examples of retaliation may include threats, rumor spreading, ostracism, assault, destruction of property, unjustified punishments, or unwarranted grade reductions. Unlawful retaliation does not include petty slights or annoyances.

### **False Claim**

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation regarding bullying shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Reporting**

Reports of bullying shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to immediately report may impair the District's ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct. A report may be made orally or in writing. The principal or designee shall reduce any oral reports to written form.

To obtain assistance and intervention, any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee. Any District employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced bullying shall immediately notify the principal or designee.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, including dating violence and harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability. If so, the District shall proceed under policy FFH. If the allegations could constitute both prohibited conduct and bullying, the investigation under FFH shall include a determination on each type of conduct.

### **Investigation of Report**

The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report. The principal or designee shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within ten District business days from the date of the initial report alleging bullying; however, the principal or designee shall take additional time if necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

The principal or designee shall prepare a final, written report of the investigation. The report shall include a determination of whether bullying occurred, and if so, whether the victim used reasonable self-defense. A copy of the report shall be sent to the Superintendent or designee.

If an incident of bullying is confirmed, the principal or designee shall promptly notify the parents of the victim and of the student who engaged in bullying.

### **Corrective Action**

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the District shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the District's Student Code of Conduct and may take corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

A student who is a victim of bullying and who used reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying shall not be subject to disciplinary action. The discipline of a student with a disability is subject to applicable state and federal law in addition to the Student Code of Conduct.

Examples of corrective action may include a training program for the individuals involved in the complaint, a comprehensive education program for the school community, follow-up inquiries to determine if any new incidents or any instances of retaliation have occurred, involving parents and students in efforts to identify problems and improve the school climate, increasing staff monitoring of areas where bullying has occurred, and reaffirming the District's policy against bullying.

If the investigation reveals improper conduct that did not rise to the level of prohibited conduct or bullying, the District may take action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or any other appropriate corrective action.

### **Other Action**

The principal or designee shall refer to FDB for transfer provisions.

The principal or designee shall notify the victim, the student who engaged in bullying, and any students who witnessed the bullying of available counseling options.

### **Confidentiality**

To the greatest extent possible, the District shall respect the privacy of the complainant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary in order to conduct a thorough investigation.

### **Appeal**

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through FNG(LOCAL), beginning at the appropriate level.

Retention of records shall be in accordance with CPC(LOCAL).

This policy and any accompanying procedures shall be distributed annually in the employee and student handbooks. Copies of the policy and procedures shall be posted on the District's Web site, to the extent practicable, and shall be readily available at each campus and the District's administrative offices.

## **APPENDIX II: Parent Statement Prohibiting Corporal Punishment**

A parent has the responsibility of submitting a signed statement to the principal each year, either allowing or prohibiting the use of corporal punishment with his or her child. The signature form is provided in the separate packet that accompanies this handbook. A parent who prohibits the use of corporate punishment may reinstate permission at any time during the school year by submitting a signed statement to the principal or the principal's designee. Corporal punishment will be administered in accordance with the law, district policy, and the Student Code of Conduct (SCOC). [See FO and the SCOC]

Corporal punishment will be administered as soon as possible after an offense and will not be administered in anger. The principal or a designee may choose not to use corporal punishment even if the parent has requested its use. Any use of corporal punishment will be documented on a district form. The principal or a designee will inform the parent when corporal punishment is used. Paddles used for administering corporal punishment will not be generally displayed and will be under the control of the principal or designee. Corporal punishment will be limited to spanking or paddling and will consist of an appropriate number of strikes based upon the size, age, and the physical, mental, and emotional condition of the student. Before corporal punishment is used, the district may give, but is not required to give, the student a choice between other disciplinary measures and corporal punishment.