

## **PREFACE:**

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Rusk High School Student Handbook is designed to provide basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. The handbook is divided into two sections:

**Section I—PARENTAL RIGHTS**—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, and, where possible, further divided by applicability to ages and/or grade levels, for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Rusk 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 may be found as a separate document sent home to parents and posted at the district website, [www.ruskisd.net](http://www.ruskisd.net), or available in the principal’s office.

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

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

The 2016-2017 Student Handbook will be located on-line. 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 or assistant principal.

Also, please complete the required forms online:

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form;
2. Student Directory Information Form; and
3. Consent/Opt-Out Form.

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

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 school office or online at [www.ruskisd.net](http://www.ruskisd.net).

## **SECTION I:**

### ***PARENTAL RIGHTS***

This section of the Rusk High School Student Handbook includes information related to certain rights of parents as specified in state or federal law.

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

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

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

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

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

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

State law, however, permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

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

When it relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

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

[See Video Cameras for more information, including parent's rights to request video and audio equipment to be placed in certain special education settings.]

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

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district’s policy manual. If you do not want corporal punishment to be administered to your child as a method of student discipline, please submit your request online during online registration.

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

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

### ***Limiting Electronic Communications with Students by District Employees***

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

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

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, The law permits the district to disclose appropriately designated “directory information.” from a child’s education records without written consent. “Directory information” is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

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

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

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

## ***Participation in Third-Party Surveys***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### ***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, below is a summary of the district’s curriculum regarding human sexuality instruction:

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Based on informal observations, evaluative data such as grades earned on assignments or tests, or results from diagnostic assessments, a teacher may determine that a student is in need of additional targeted assistance in order for the student to achieve mastery in state-developed essential knowledge and skills. The school will always attempt to provide tutoring and strategies for test-taking in ways that prevent removal from other instruction as much as possible. In accordance with state law and policy EC, the school will not remove a student from a regularly scheduled class for remedial tutoring or test preparation for more than ten percent of the school days on which the class is offered, unless the student's parent consents to this removal. The school may also offer tutorial services, which students whose grades are below 70 will be required to attend. [Also refer to policies EC and EHBC, and contact your student's teacher with questions about any tutoring programs provided by the school.]

## ***RIGHT OF ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS, CURRICULUM MATERIALS, AND DISTRICT RECORDS***

### **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.

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

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

### **Student Records**

#### **Accessing Student Records**

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

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

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

A federal law, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, affords parents and eligible students certain rights with respect to the student's education records. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education. These rights, as discussed in this section as well as at Objecting to the Release of Directory Information.

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

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20202-5901

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

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

Inspection and release of student records is primarily restricted to an eligible student or a student's 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.

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

When district school officials who have what federal law refers to as a “legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records. School officials would include trustees board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or district medical staff); a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, school resource officer, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility to the school and the student; or investigating or evaluating programs.

To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General’s office, the U.S. Attorney General’s office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, TEA, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture’s office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or other child welfare representatives, in certain cases.

- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.

To another school, school district/system, or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or which the student has received.

- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.

- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.

- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.

- When the district discloses information it has designated as directory information [see Objecting to the Release of Directory Information for opportunities to prohibit this disclosure].

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

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

A parent or eligible student who wishes to inspect the student’s records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wishes to inspect. Records may be inspected

by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

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

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

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the principal's or superintendent's office.

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.

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

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

### ***STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES***

## **Children of Military Families**

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

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

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

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

### **Multiple Birth Siblings**

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

### **Safety Transfers/Assignments**

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the [superintendent OR principal] for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus.
- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE.]
- Request the transfer of your child to [another district campus OR 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 in accordance with policy FDE.

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

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

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

A student who is currently in the conservatorship (custody) of the state and who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by-exam opportunities outside the district's established testing windows,

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

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person 2147499632 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 the timeline prescribed by law once the district receives written consent. The district must give a copy of the evaluation report to the parent. If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to give parents the Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities. Additional information regarding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is available from the school district in a companion document, A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process. Both documents may also be found at <http://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/LandingPage.aspx>. The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- Texas Project First, at <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org>

■ Partners Resource Network, at <http://www.partnerstx.org> The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is Noreen Freeman at 903-683-5592.

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

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

### **Students With Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**

A child determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services, may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine if the child is in need of services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this is defined in federal law. The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is Vicki Beard at 903-683-5401 [Also see policy FB.]

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

Topics in this section of the Student Handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Where possible, the topics are also organized to alert you to the applicability of each topic based on a student's age or grade level. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Scott Schwartz at 903-683-5401.

### ***ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE***

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws—one dealing with the required presence of school-aged children

in school, e.g., compulsory attendance, the other with how a child's attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit— are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

## **Compulsory Attendance**

### **Age 18 and Older**

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. If a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA.]

### **Between Ages 6 and 18**

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.

## **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

### **All Grade Levels**

Education Code 25.087; 19 TAC 129.21(j)(3); FEA(LEGAL) 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;

Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus; and

- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
- ♣ 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.

As listed in Section I, 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

### **Secondary Grade Levels**

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

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

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

An absence of a student in grades 6–12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran will also be excused by the district.

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

#### **All Grade Levels**

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

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 without excuse from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent without excuse on three or more days or parts of days within a four week period.

For a student younger than 12 years of age, the student's parent could be charged with an offense based on the student's failure to attend school. If a student age 12 through age 17 violates the compulsory attendance law, both the parent and student could be charged with an offense.

[See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

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

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student in kindergarten–grade 12 must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends 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 above at Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.

- A 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.

The student or parent may appeal the committee’s decision to the following policy FNG(LOCAL). The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order 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 the (TEA) reflecting attendance at a specific time each day. Official attendance is taken every day during the second instructional hour.

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

### **Documentation after an Absence**

When a student is absent from school, the student—upon arrival or return to school (within 3 days)—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. The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused. Please note that, unless the absence is for a statutorily allowed reason under compulsory attendance laws, the district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence.

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

Within 3 days of returning to school, a student absent for more than 5 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.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW**

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

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;

- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA;
- The performance ratings of the district's evaluation of community and student engagement using the indicators required by law; and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by Federal law.

Information about all of these can be found on the district's website at [ruskisd.net](http://ruskisd.net). Hard copies of any reports are available upon request to the district's administration office. TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at <http://www.texaschoolaccountabilitydashboard.org> and <http://www.tea.texas.gov>.

## **AWARDS AND HONORS**

For detailed information see the RHS Academic Handbook

## **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.

A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office, superintendent's office, and on the district's website, and is included at the end of this handbook in the form of an appendix. Procedures related to reporting allegations of bullying may also be found on the district's website. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an investigation may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL).

### ***CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS***

The district offers career and technical education programs in technology applications, agricultural science, DCE, and business education.

Rusk ISD will take steps to ensure that lack of English skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and CTE programs.

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

The district has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at [www.ruskisd.net](http://www.ruskisd.net). As a parent, it is important for you to be aware of warning signs that could indicate a child may have been or is being sexually abused. Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child. Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS). Possible physical warning signs of sexual abuse could be difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches. Behavioral indicators may include verbal references or pretend games

of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior. Emotional warning signs to be aware of include withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

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

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

- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/whatiscan.pdf>
- <http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/child-abuse.html>
- <http://taasa.org/resources-2/>

Reports of abuse or neglect may be made to:

The CPS division of the TDFPS (1-800-252-5400 or on the web at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>).

## **CLASS RANK / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT**

See Academic Handbook

## **CLASS SCHEDULES**

Before an elective schedule change can be considered, parents must request the change in writing and give signed permission for the change to be made. All changes are subject to final approval by the principal and the counselor. At any time during the school year, if it is determined that a student would be more successful in a different level of the same course, changes may be made with parent permission and counselor and principal approval. Classroom performance, test scores and study habits will always be considered when making schedule changes.

Schedule changes will be made only as follows:

- At registration or
- By the third week of the first nine weeks of the semester or
- At the end of the first nine weeks for Pre-AP/AP courses or at the end of the fall semester.

## ***CLOSED CAMPUS POLICY***

Rusk High School operates a closed campus for all students, with the exception of some students involved in our work program. Students are required to remain on campus in designated areas during the academic school day including lunch. **Students who leave campus without permission during the academic school day including lunch, may be assigned to in-school suspension or other disciplinary action**

## **COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS**

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

- Completes the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program\*; or
  - Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.
- \*Beginning with ninth graders in the 2014–15 school year, to be eligible for automatic admission to a Texas four-year college or university, a student must be on track to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program. This means that a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses.

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

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2017 term, the University will be admitting the top seven percent of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

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

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

## **COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES**

See Academic Handbook

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

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

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

### ***Consent to Receive Alert Notification Calls***

Rusk ISD uses Blackboard Connect, an alert and notification service, to notify parents and guardians of school delays or cancellations due to inclement weather, as well as to send reminders about other important issues. The successful delivery of information is dependent upon accurate contact information for each student. If this information changes during the year, please notify the school as soon as possible. I (the parent/guardian/on behalf of the parent) understand that the information provided will be used for this notification service and my acceptance of this handbook grants authorization.

## ***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.

## Disruptions of School Operations

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

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- 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. Note that the first six bullets in the adjacent list reflect the definition of disruptive activities, as defined by state law. Education Code 37.123; FNCL(LEGAL), GKA(LEGAL)
- 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.

Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school 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. Coordinate with any local regulations developed and implemented by the principal in conjunction with parents and/or student leaders. 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. Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school 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. Coordinate with any local regulations developed and implemented by the principal in conjunction with parents and/or student leaders. 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. Please contact the campus principal if you are interested in serving as a chaperone for any school social events.

## ***COUNSELING***

### **Academic Counseling**

High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each year, high school students will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities, as well as information on the importance of postsecondary education. The school counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission, financial aid, housing, and scholarships as these relate to state colleges and universities. The school counselor can also provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

### **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 Mrs. Lanier. 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.

## **COURSE CREDIT**

A student in grades 9–12, or in a lower grade when a student is enrolled in a high school credit-bearing course, will earn credit for a course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-semester (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. The adjacent text reflects that the

district will average semester scores to determine if credit will be awarded. The text also references that the district will offer partial credit and therefore will only require the student to retake the semester in which he or she failed.

## **CREDIT BY EXAM**

### **If a Student Has Taken the Course**

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for the course or subject. Prior instruction may include for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school.

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

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

A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. [For further information, see the counselor and policy EEJA (Local).]

### **If a Student Has Not Taken the Course**

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction or to accelerate to the next grade level. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2016-2017 school year include:

Fall Semester: December 1<sup>st</sup>&2<sup>nd</sup>

Spring Semester: June 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>

A student will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam. If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will not honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the student's parent will be responsible for the cost of the exam. [For further information, see policy EHDC (LOCAL).]

## **DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION**

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

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

## **Dating Violence**

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

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults; name-calling; put-downs; threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household; destroying property belonging to the student; threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship; threats to harm a student's current dating partner; attempts to isolate the student from friends and family; stalking; or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

## **Discrimination**

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

## **Harassment**

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or

derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property. In addition to dating violence as described above, two other types of prohibited harassment are described below.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Retaliation**

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

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

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, school counselor, principal, or other district employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. [See policy FFH(LOCAL) for other appropriate district officials to whom to make a report.] Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

The district will promptly notify the 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 FFH.

### **Investigation of Report**

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

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

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

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

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the district investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL).

### **DISCRIMINATION**

See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

## ***DISTANCE LEARNING***

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills taught through TxVSN and TJC.

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 TxVSN 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]

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 will not recognize and apply the course or subject toward graduation requirements or subject mastery.

## ***DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE, PUBLISHED MATERIALS, OR OTHER 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.

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

### **Non-school Materials from Students**

Student must obtain prior approval from the principal, before posting, circulating, or distributing 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 principal has designated the front office as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal the principal’s decision in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL). Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Materials displayed without the principal’s approval will be removed.

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

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

### ***DRESS AND GROOMING***

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. The student and parent may determine the student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that the student's dress and grooming meets the requirements of the student dress code.

The principal/designee, in connection with the sponsor, coach, or other person in charge of an extra-curricular activity, may regulate the dress and grooming of students who participate in the activity if the principal/designee reasonably believes that the student's dress or grooming:

1. Creates a hazard to the student's safety or to the safety of others.
2. Will prevent, interfere with, or adversely affect the purpose, direction, or effort required for the activity to achieve its goal.

### **Dress Code Violations**

1. If the student's dress or grooming is objectionable under these provisions, the principal/designee shall request the student make appropriate corrections. In order that students not miss valuable class time by going home to change clothing or waiting for a parent to bring clothing, the student will be given alternate clothing to wear that is approved by school administration.
2. If the student refuses to wear the alternative clothing or attempts to remove the clothing before the end of the school day, the student may be subject to ISS (In-school suspension) or being sent home. If a student chooses to go home because of a dress code issue, an unexcused absence will be given for the classes missed.

3. Students who violate the dress code may be subject to immediate disciplinary action.
4. Students who violate provisions of the dress code relating to extra-curricular activities may be removed or excluded from the extra-curricular activities for such period as the principal/designee and activity sponsor may determine.

## Attire

Student attire should be appropriate, decent, and non-disruptive. The school administration will determine whether a student's attire is potentially disruptive.

Guidelines for students are as follows:

1. Wearing articles of clothing that promote gangs, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs is prohibited.
2. Clothing with language, pictures, or drawings, which may be interpreted as obscene, will not be acceptable.
3. Immodest dress will not be allowed, which may include, but are not limited to: strapless dresses, sundresses, see-through materials, tank tops, low cut dresses, blouses, or shirts, inappropriate sleeveless shirts or mini-skirts, clothing which reveals a bare midriff or undergarments. Shirts and blouses must cover the width of the shoulder. Judgment on the modesty of a student's dress lies with administration.
4. **Headdress articles will not be permitted on campus. This includes but is not limited to caps, hats, bandannas, toboggans, visors, and etc.**
5. Sunglasses (except by written permission of physician) or improper eyewear will not be permitted in any building.
6. All shirts, blouses or any top garment must be buttoned appropriately.
7. Shoes must be worn at all times; **no house-shoes allowed.**
8. Prohibited unusual or non-traditional jewelry includes nose wear such as rings or studs, or other body piercing jewelry of any kind, with the exception of pierced ears for female students.
9. Earrings **may not** be worn by male students. This includes clip earrings, pierced earrings or studs, or any item used as a post in a pierced ear such as broom straws, pieces of plastic, etc.
10. Any attire considered in poor taste or judged to be a possible disruption will not be allowed.
11. All garments must meet minimum length requirements. The length is acceptable if the hem of the garment is at the top of the kneecap. Pants with holes above this length are prohibited.
12. Exceptions to the dress code may be made for special events such as pep rallies, spirit days, etc.
13. Gang related tattoos and insignias are forbidden. Excessive tattoos or if a student's tattoo(s) become a distraction to the educational environment, that student may be asked to cover said tattoo(s).
14. Wearing any article of clothing in a way it was not intended is forbidden.
15. Excessively long T-shirts must be tucked in or not worn.
16. **Pants must be worn at the waist. Belts must be worn as needed.**
17. **Pajamas/lounge pants are not allowed.**
18. Blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, etc. are not to be brought to school.

## **Grooming**

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

1. Unusual hairstyles considered to be inappropriate in a school setting will not be permitted. This also includes inappropriate hair coloring, style, length, and/or fad haircuts (ex. mohawks). All styles considered to be potentially disruptive cannot be listed; therefore the school administration will determine whether a particular style is to be considered disruptive and inappropriate.
2. Hair length is deemed to be excessive if it is below the collar in the back and sides of the head, and below the eyebrows in the front.
3. Designs cut into a student's hair will not be permitted.
4. Beards, goatees, excessive sideburns or other inappropriate facial hair are not permitted. Mustaches above the lips are permitted. Students will not be allowed to go home and shave. Disposable razors will be provided for students to use on campus. If a student chooses to go home and shave the student will receive an unexcused absence for classes missed. If a student refuses to shave they will be suspended for the remainder of the day and will not be allowed back until it is taken care of. Numerous violations will result in disciplinary action.
5. Unusual facial make-up or adornments that may be considered to be a possible disruption will not be allowed.
6. It is the responsibility of teachers and administrators to judge the appropriateness of a student's attire and personal grooming. Students are encouraged to ask the opinion of school administrators before purchasing questionable clothing or changing personal appearance in a way that according to these guidelines might be considered inappropriate.

## ***ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES***

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

For safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional periods, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes. Students will be allowed to use mobile phones during passing periods and during lunch. Note: All phones must be turned off when the tardy bell rings. A student must have administrative approval to possess other telecommunications devices such as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device during unauthorized times or without authorization during the instructional period, the device will be confiscated. The parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the front office in accordance with the Telecommunications Policy.

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** and policy FNF.]

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. **The district will not be 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. Ear buds, ear phones, or any listening device that can be placed in the students ears will not be allowed outside of the classroom or it will be confiscated. Use of any listening device in the classroom is at the discretion of the teacher.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Students are prohibited from sending, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment. Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, 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 and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement.

## ***END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS***

See **Graduation**, and **Standardized Testing**.

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

A student who is 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 an English language learner. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible. In order to determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services,

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

Participation in school and 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.

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law as well as rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. [See <http://www.uil.utexas.edu> for additional information.]

The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in any academic class—other than a class identified as an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course, or

honors or dual credit may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ten absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the Board, are subject to these restrictions.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, theatre, FFA and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code Of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization’s standards of behavior. [For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see Meetings of Non-curriculum-Related Groups below.]

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

Students are permitted to meet with non-curriculum-related groups during the hours designated by the principal before and after school. These groups must comply with the requirements found in policy FNAB. A list of these groups is available in the principal’s office.

## ***ELECTIONS AND OFFICES***

Election criteria are determined by the group, club, or organization to which the election is pertaining. Elective offices will be guided by the following policy, which is applicable for the current school year. If there are questions concerning any elective office, be certain to contact the principal before proceeding. Election information can be obtained as follows:

- Cheerleader elections: see cheerleader sponsor
- Student Council elections and class elections: see Student Council sponsor

## ***FEES***

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds and are 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.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires use of facilities not available on District premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for 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 to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network(TxVSN).

### ***FLOWERS / GIFTS, ETC.***

The delivery of flowers and gifts to school or special events presents a problem and interrupts the instructional program. Local florists have been advised that flowers/gifts and mums should not be delivered to local schools.

### **FOOD SERVICE- CHARGE POLICY**

**Lunches will now cost \$2.75.**

**All meals should be paid for in advance or on a daily basis.**

Rusk ISD accepts prepayments and online payments which allows customers to establish accounts for future use.

Parents can stay informed of lunch accounts and review deposits, purchases, and balances using the district's Family Access system. We encourage all parents to take advantage of this useful tool. Parents can obtain a username and password for Family Access through the Central Office.

Parents are encouraged to take advantage of the Free and Reduced Lunch Program if eligible. Free and Reduced Applications are available at all campuses, on the District's website, and at the Rusk ISD Food Service Department office. Students/Parents are responsible for payment of meals for their Child/Children before free or reduced lunch applications are approved.

**High School Students** will be allowed to charge one time and receive a reimbursable lunch and then will be provided an alternate lunch for up to two additional days until their account is paid in full. A charge is made any time there is not enough money on the student's account to pay for the full cost of the

lunch. Partial payments are applied to the account's negative balance first. If the account is not paid in full after these three days are exhausted, students will not be provided any type of meal.

A la carte items and beverages may not be charged.

The alternate lunch will include a peanut butter sandwich and a carton of juice. Adjustments will be made to the alternate lunch for food allergies.

Rusk ISD will utilize the district's automatic phone notification system every day the student charges or receives an alternate lunch in an effort to keep parents informed. Letters will also be sent home with the student on a regular basis informing the parent of the student's negative balance.

### ***FUND-RAISING***

Student groups or classes, outside organizations, and/or parent groups occasionally may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 10 days before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

### ***GANG FREE ZONES***

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

### ***GRADE CLASSIFICATION***

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

<u>Credits Earned</u>	<u>Classification</u>
5	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
10	Grade 11 (Junior)
15	Grade 12 (Senior)

### ***GRADING GUIDELINES***

1. Every student **will** be assigned a grade that reflects that student's relative mastery of an assignment.

2. The high school **will not** require a classroom teacher to assign any minimum grade for an assignment.
3. Students **will** have a reasonable opportunity to make up or redo a class assignment or examination for which the student received a failing grade in all regular and special education classes. The grade received for redoing a failed assignment will not exceed the score of 70. Students **may not** be offered a chance to make up or redo failing grades on Major Projects or Labs.
4. Teachers of Pre AP, AP, and Dual Credit classes **may** offer an opportunity to make up or redo assignments or examinations for which the student received a failing grade.
5. Teachers **will** record a minimum of 3 examination grades for each class per grading period. This may include the 9 weeks exam.

In grades 9–12, achievement is reported to parents as:

A	=	90-100	Superior
B	=	80-89	Good
C	=	70-79	Average
F	=	0-69	Failure

### Semester Exam Incentive

Nine weeks averages count 80% and the semester exam counts 20% when calculating semester grades. Teachers are required to administer semester exams in all classes. All students may be awarded an incentive according to the following RHS Incentive policy:

1. All students must take each exam.
2. Absent students must make up exams. **Exams must be made up no later than 1 week after the last day of each semester**. Failure to make up an exam will result in the student receiving a zero. Extenuating circumstances will be taken into consideration by the principal.
3. In order to be awarded an incentive the following criteria must be met:
 

<u>Grade average of 90-100 in all classes and :</u>	OR	<u>Grade average of 80-100 in all classes and:</u>
✓ A total of 0-21 period absences excluding lunch; 5 or more absences in a class will result in		✓ A total of 0-14 period absences excluding lunch; 5 or more absences in a class will result in

- no incentive\*
- ✓ 0-4 tardy's (all classes)
- ✓ No suspensions, ISS, accumulation of 3 or more referrals

- no incentive\*
- ✓ 0-4 tardy's (all classes)
- ✓ No suspensions, ISS, accumulation of 3 or more referrals.

\*All absences EXCEPT school activity absences count toward exemptions.

## **GRADUATION**

### **Requirements for a Diploma**

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully:

- Complete the required number of credits;
- Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the state; and
- Depending on the year in which the student is scheduled to graduate, pass a statewide exit-level exam or achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (EOC) assessments.

Also see **Standardized Testing** for more information.

Beginning with students who entered grade 9 in the 2011–2012 school year, students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and United States History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments.

If a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an EOC assessment, the district will provide remediation to the student in the content area for which the performance standard was not met. This may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours or at times of the year outside normal school operations.

Also see **Standardized Testing** on page for more information.

### **Graduation Programs**

The district offers the graduation programs listed below.

All students entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2014-2015 need to refer the Academic Planner that was given to them. If you do not have a hard copy of the Academic Planner it will be available online in Mid-September. If you have any questions, please contact the 9<sup>th</sup> grade counselor.

All students grade10-12 are required to enroll in the Recommended Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Program will be granted only if a written agreement is reached among the student, the student’s parent or person standing in parental relation, and the school counselor or appropriate administrator. In order for a student to take courses under the Minimum Program, the student must be at least 16 years of age; have completed at least two credits each in English language arts, math, science, and social studies courses that are required for graduation; or have failed grade 9 one or more times. [See policy EIF(LEGAL).]

All students must meet the following credit and course requirements for graduation under the programs listed:

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Number of credits Minimum Program</b>	<b>Number of credits Recommended Program</b>	<b>Number of credits Advanced/ Distinguished Achievement Program</b>
English/Language Arts	4	4	4
Mathematics	3	4	4
Science	2 or 3	4	4
Social Studies	2.5 or 3.5	3.5	3.5
Economics	0.5	0.5	0.5
Physical Education	1	1	1

<b>Courses</b>	<b>Number of credits Minimum Program</b>	<b>Number of credits Recommended Program</b>	<b>Number of credits Advanced/ Distinguished Achievement Program</b>
Speech	0.5	0.5	0.5
Language other than English		2	3
Fine Arts	1 (effective for grade 9 in 2010–2011 school year and thereafter)	1	1
Locally required courses	__ credit in ____ __ credit in ____	__ credit in ____ __ credit in ____	__ credit in ____ __ credit in ____
Electives	7.5 credits (prior to 2010–2011) 6.5 credits (2010–2011 and thereafter)	5.5 credits	4.5 credits
Miscellaneous			Completion of 4 Advanced Measures*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>	<b>26 credits</b>

\* A student who is unable to participate in physical activity due to a disability or illness may be able to substitute a course in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies for the required credit of physical education. This determination will be made by the student’s ARD committee, Section 504 committee, or other campus committee, as applicable.

\*\* State rules prohibit a student from combining a half-credit of a course for which there is an EOC assessment with another half-credit of an elective credit course to satisfy an elective credit requirement. However, the district will allow a student to satisfy a graduation requirement for which there are multiple options with one-half credit of one allowable option and one-half credit of another allowable option, if neither course has an EOC assessment.

\*\*\* A student graduating under the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program must also achieve a combination of four of the following advanced measures:

1. An original research project or other project that is related to the required curriculum. These projects must be judged by a panel of professionals or conducted under the direction of a mentor and reported to an appropriate audience. Please note that no more than two of the four advanced measures may be received from this option.
2. Test data where a student receives:
  - a. A score of three or above on an Advanced Placement (AP) exam;
  - b. A score of four or above on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam; or
  - c. A score on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) that qualifies the student for recognition as a commended scholar or higher by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, as part of the National Hispanic Recognition Program (NHRP) of the College Board, or as part of the National Achievement Scholarship Program of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT/NMSQT score will count as only one advanced measure regardless of the number of honors received by the student.
3. College academic courses, including those taken for dual credit, and advanced technical courses, including locally articulated courses, provided the student scores the equivalent of a 3.0 or higher.

Information regarding specific courses required or offered in each curriculum area, along with a description of advanced measures available to students in the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program from the options listed above, will be distributed to students each spring in order to enroll in courses for the upcoming school year.

Please be aware that not all courses are offered at every secondary campus in the district. A student who wants to take a course not offered at his or her regular campus should contact the school counselor about a transfer or other alternatives. If the parents of at least 22 students request a transfer for those students to take a course in the required curriculum other than fine arts or CTE, the district will offer the course for the following year either by teleconference or at the school from which the transfers were requested.

### **Certificates of Coursework Completion**

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

## **Students with Disabilities**

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee, a student with disabilities may be permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her individualized education program (IEP).

A student who receives special education services and has completed four years of high school, but has not met the requirements of his or her IEP, may participate in graduation ceremonies and receive the certificate of attendance. Even if the student participates in graduation ceremonies receive the certificate of attendance, he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.[See policy FMH (legal)]

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

If a student receiving special education services is scheduled to graduate under the Minimum Program or in accordance with the provisions of his or her IEP, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the general EOC assessment is an accurate measure of the student's achievement and progress or whether an alternative assessment is more appropriate. STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternate are the alternative assessments currently allowed by the state. [See **STANDARDIZED TESTING** for additional information.] If a student takes the STAAR Modified or STAAR Alternate assessment, the student's ARD committee will determine whether the score on an EOC assessment will count as 15 percent of a student's final grade, as well as whether successful performance and a cumulative score on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation.

## **Graduation Ceremonies**

Students who have met coursework requirements for graduation but have not yet demonstrated satisfactory performance on exit-level tests or end-of-course assessments will be allowed to participate in graduation activities. However, please keep in mind that participating in the activities and ceremonies is not synonymous with graduating. Ultimately, the final awarding of a diploma will be contingent upon the student's completion of all applicable requirements for graduation.

## **Graduation Speakers**

Only students who are graduating and who hold one of the following positions of honor based on neutral criteria shall be eligible to use the limited public forum: the top five academically ranked graduates. A student who shall otherwise have a speaking role in the graduation ceremonies is ineligible to give the opening and closing remarks. Students who are eligible shall be notified and given an opportunity to volunteer. Students are not eligible to serve if they are in a disciplinary placement during any part of the spring semester.

## **Graduation Expenses**

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

## **State Scholarships and Grants**

See Academic Handbook.

- Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program may be eligible under the Texas Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ (Legal)]

## ***HALL PASSES***

No student will be permitted in the halls during class time without a hall pass issued by a teacher. Teachers will issue hall passes only in necessary cases or upon request from the principal, assistant principal, counselors, or nurse.

## ***HARASSMENT***

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

## **HAZING**

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

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

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

## ***HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS***

### **Student Illness**

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she won't be attending that day. It is important to remember that schools 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.

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

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority.

The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

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

### **Bacterial Meningitis**

State law specifically requires the District to provide the following information:

- 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 most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential

for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

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

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. 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. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes). 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 overcomes the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.
- How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?  
Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss. While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It 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 Texas Department of Health office to ask about 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 Texas Department of Health, <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us>.

## **Food Allergies**

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

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, which addresses employee training, dealing with common food allergens, and specific strategies for dealing with students diagnosed with severe food allergies. When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed through the school nurse.

Also see policy FFAF.

## **Head Lice**

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones. If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the child will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. 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>.

### ***School Health Advisory Council***

Information regarding the District's School Health Advisory Council, including the number of meetings scheduled or held during the year and information regarding vending machines in District facilities and student access to the machines is available from the principal. [See also policies 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 school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, and employee wellness. See policies at BDF and EHAA.

[See Removing a student from Sexuality Instruction for additional information.]

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

- **Tobacco Prohibited:** The District and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property or at school-sponsored or school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct and policy GKA.]
- **Asbestos Management Plan:** The District's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the Superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Greg Dover.
- **Pest Management Plan:** The District applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their student's school assignment area may contact Brian Hicks at (683-2770).
- **Physical Fitness Assessment :** Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the principal to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.
- **Vending Machines:** The district has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the principal. [See policies at CO and FFA]

### **HOMELESS STUDENTS**

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, Theresa Gates at (903) 683-5592.

### **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reason 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, Immunization Branch, can be honored by the District. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 75714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. 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, Rubella (Measles), Rubella (German Measles), Mumps, Tetanus, Pertussis, Poliomyelitis, 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 Texas Department of Health. 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 any member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB and the Texas Department of Health web site <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

### ***JUNIOR HIGH CAMPUS***

Students are not allowed on the Junior High campus at any time. This includes before or after school or at lunch. Students are not to drive or ride through the Junior High campus. Violators will be disciplined according to school board policy.

### ***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 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.

- The principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

#### **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 custody action, notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The District is also required by state law to notify:

All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.

All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or adjudicated of delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors. [For further information, see policies FL (LEGAL) and GRA(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:

For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.

For students in high school, the same process will be followed. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may

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

If a student becomes ill during the school day and the school nurse or other district personnel determines that the student should go home, the nurse will contact the student's parent and document the parent's wishes regarding release from school. Unless directed by the parent to release the student unaccompanied, the parent or other authorized adult must follow the sign-out procedures as listed above. If a student is allowed to leave campus by himself or herself, as permitted by the student's parent, or if the student is age 18 or is an emancipated minor, the nurse will document the time of day the student was released. Under no circumstances will a child in elementary or middle school be released unaccompanied by a parent or adult authorized by the parent.

## **During Lunch**

RHS is a closed campus and no student is allowed to leave during lunch.

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

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

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

## ***LOST AND FOUND***

A "lost and found" collection box is located Next Mrs. Stingley's 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***

### **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 to help him/her master the essential knowledge and skills or meet subject or class 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. Students will be given one day to contact teachers upon returning to school.

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

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

1. If a student knows in advance that the student is to be excused from classes to participate in a school sponsored activity he/she should discuss make-up work with the teacher as soon as the student knows the date that he/she will be absent. These arrangements should be made with the teacher *prior* to the absence. The student must contact the teacher *immediately* upon return to arrange to make up work and or tests missed.
2. Pupils who have been absent for any reason should contact their teacher as soon as they return to school. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the teacher about make-up work. It is not the duty of the teacher to seek out the student for such a conference.
3. Students will be given one day to contact teachers and arrange to make-up work missed. (This deadline is to make arrangements for make-up, not for the work itself.) The teacher will give the student a due date for the make-up work.
4. Incompletes will not be given. Any student who has not completed coursework prior to the end of a grading period, due to an excused absence, must make arrangements with the teacher to complete the missing work in a timely manner. The principal in cases of extreme illness or hardship may give special consideration.
5. Students who are suspended may not make up work until after their suspension period is over and they return to school.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB.]

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.

### **Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Makeup Work**

A student removed to a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, 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 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 FOCA.]

### **In- School Suspension (ISS) Makeup Work**

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:

1. Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:
  - Prescription medication in the original, properly labeled container provided by a 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 if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
2. In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
  - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor, and
  - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care professional. 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.]

## **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 medical health professional can recommend that

a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate.[For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

### ***STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION***

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Rusk ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The following district staff members have been designated to coordinate compliance with these legal requirements.

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Betty Collins, Director of Instructional Programs, 203 E. Seventh St. Rusk, TX, (903) 683-5592.
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Theresa Gates, Director of Special Programs and Assessment, 203 E. Seventh St., Rusk, (903) 683-5592.
- All other concerns regarding discrimination: See the superintendent, Scott Davis, 203 E. Seventh, Rusk, TX, (903) 683-5592.

### ***NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS***

Rusk High School offers a dropout recovery program open to senior students. Placement into the dropout program is dependent on the counselors and the principal.

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

In accordance with UIL rules, a physical exam is required before students are permitted to participate in UIL sponsored activities.

### ***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**].

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 require, encourage, 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.

A Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) will be prepared for any student in a middle school or beyond who did not perform satisfactorily on a state-mandated assessment test 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 guidance counselor, teacher, or other staff member designated by the principal. The plan will identify the student's educational goals and include consideration of the parent's educational expectations for the student. [For additional information, see the counselor or principal and policy EIF.] 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.

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 counselor or principal and policy EIF (LEGAL)].

## ***RELEASING STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL*** **(See Leaving Campus).**

## ***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 9 weeks.

At three week intervals of a grading period parents will be given a written unsatisfactory progress report if their child's performance in any course is near or below 75, or is below the expected level of performance.

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

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).

## **RESTROOMS**

- Students are to use the restrooms between class periods and not expect to use class time for this purpose. Vandalism in the restrooms will be dealt with in the same manner as any other case of vandalism. If vandalism occurs the restrooms will be locked during class time.

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## **RETALIATION**

- [See Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.]

## **SAFETY**

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

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 safety hazards, such as intruders on campus and 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 will help meet medical expenses, in the event of injury to their child.

## **Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies**

From time to time, students, teachers, and other District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner. The high school may use the intercom system instead of bells when conducting a drill.

### **Fire Drill Bells**

3 bells	leave the building
1 bell	halt; stand at attention
2 bells	return to the classroom

### **Tornado Drill Bells**

1 continuous bell	move quietly but quickly to the designated locations
2 bells	return to the classroom

## **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 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. The district will use this information to notify parents via Global Connect, our automated phone service.

Also, in the event that the school must close early during the school day or remain closed for a day or indefinite time, parents will be notified by the local news media (radio and television stations): KFOX 95.5 FM, KOOI 106.5, KWRW 97.7, KETK Channel 56, KLTV Channel 7, and KYTX Channel 19.

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

See Standardized Testing.

## **SCHOOL FACILITIES**

### **Used by Students Before and After School**

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

The following areas are open to students before school beginning at 7:45 a.m.

Cafeteria	Classrooms for tutorials	Library
Band Hall	Office	Commons Area for tutorials

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus. After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, 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 rehearsal, club meetings, athletic practice, 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 code of conduct for extracurricular participants established by the sponsor in accordance with Board policy.

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

Loitering or standing in the halls between classes 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 Sandy Collins to apply.

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 for student use during the following times with a teacher permit: The library is open each school day at 7:45 a.m. and remains open through the day and until 3:45 p.m. A certified librarian is in charge to assist students. The librarian will provide training in the use of library resources during class visits as well as to individual students so that they can become independent library users.

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

- All reference/reserve-books (encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.) are used in the library. However, special arrangements may be made with the librarian to check some of these books out for one period during the school day or for overnight use, depending on circumstances.
- All other library books may be checked out for two weeks and may be renewed for another two weeks, if not needed by another student.
- Lost or damaged books must be paid for or replaced. The librarian will determine charges for damaged books. The charge for a lost book will be the replacement cost of the book. If a lost book is paid for and returned to the library the price of the book minus the fine will be refunded.
- Students with overdue books may not be permitted to check out other library materials until their record is cleared.
- A fine of 5 cents a day for each school day that a book is overdue may be charged. The maximum overdue fine per book will be \$3.00.
- Current issues of magazines or newspapers are to be used in the library only.
- Individual students coming to the library from their classroom must carry a library pass.
- Individual students coming to the library at lunch must have a pass from a teacher in order to use the computers.

*Students are reminded to work quietly in the library at all times. The library is a place for studying, reading, or research. Students who do not have proper library behavior will lose their library privileges.*

## **SEARCHES**

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

## **Students' Desks and Lockers**

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of the assigned desks and lockers.

Students must be certain that the locker is locked, and that the combination is 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 District 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.

## **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.]

## **Vehicles**

- Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the ***Student Code of Conduct.***]

## **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 on lockers and 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. A locker, a vehicle, or an item in a classroom to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

## ***SPECIAL PROGRAMS***

The District provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, migrant students, students with English language learners, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the District or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the Special Programs Director at 903-683-5592.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

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

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year.

The ACT or SAT may be available at no cost to students. In addition, students in grades 8 and 10 may have the opportunity to take the corresponding preparation assessments at no charge. Please check with the counselor for details.

### **STAAR/End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments for Students in Grades 9–12**

Beginning with ninth graders in the 2011–2012 school year and, as modified by House Bill 5, end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I

- English I and English II,

- Biology

- United States History

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

There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR Alternate or STAAR A, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee. These particular EOC assessments may have different testing windows than the general assessments, and the ARD committee will determine whether successful performance on the assessments will be required for graduation.

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be English language learners) and who require this type of testing accommodation. Also see **Graduation** for additional information.

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

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual-credit course offered through the district as well. Beginning in fall 2013, all Texas public colleges and universities will begin administering a new TSI assessment, which will assist as one of several factors in determining whether the student is considered ready to enroll in college-level courses or whether the student needs to enroll in what is termed developmental education courses prior to enrollment in college level courses.

## ***STERIODS***

Parents and students should be aware that 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.

Under state law, body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL web site at <http://www.uil texas.org/health/steroid-information>.

## ***STUDENT SPEAKERS***

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce the following school events: football games; opening announcements and greetings for the school day; and student assemblies.

Students are eligible to use the limited public forum if they: are attending the school, and are not in a disciplinary placement at the time of the speaking event. As determined by the principal, students who have been selected for special honors, such as captain of an athletic team, student council officers, leaders of school-sponsored organizations, homecoming king or queen, or prom king or queen may also address school audiences at designated events.

## ***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-child-adolescent-services/>.

## ***SUICIDE AWARENESS***

The district is committed to partnering with parents to support the healthy mental, emotional, and behavioral development of its students. If you are concerned about your child, please access <http://www.texasuicideprevention.org> or contact the school counselor for more information related to suicide prevention services available in your area.

## ***SUMMER SCHOOL***

Rusk High School offers certain classes during the summer depending on student need and teacher availability. Please check with administration in order to see what is being offered each summer. Credit Recovery is also offered by Rusk High School in the summer. Students are allowed to make up credit in classes they have failed only if they have passed the appropriated EOC test.

## **TARDINESS**

- Students need to arrive in class promptly in order to maximize the time allotted for instruction. While many students are never late to class, some students willfully choose the consequences of tardiness over getting to class on time. Usually students are tardy because they take time to socialize with their friends between classes. RHS policy for handling tardy's is designed to provide an immediate consequence for tardiness.
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- When a student is tardy more than two (2) times, he/she will be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the student code of conduct.
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- Tardy Policy can be found on RHS website under Asst. Principals corner.

## **TEXTBOOKS, ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOKS, AND TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT**

State-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. 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 paid for by the parent. However, a student will be provided textbooks and equipment for use at school during the school day.

## **TELEPHONE AND MESSAGES**

The office phone is for emergency use only. Students will be called from classes only for urgent messages from parents or guardians. Only emergency calls will be allowed during class time. **Students are NOT to use school telephones other than the one at the front desk.** Students must have a hall pass with them in order to use the phone during class time. Permission to use the telephone during school hours must be secured from the classroom teacher and the front desk or principal.

## **TRANSFERS**

Class Changes: The campus principal shall be authorized to investigate and approve transfers of students from one classroom to another.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **School-Sponsored Trips**

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

### **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. 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 route. For information on bus stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Nickey Tarrant, Transportation Director, at 903-683-5566.

See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary alternative education program.

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

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts on buses that are equipped with seat belts.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

## **TUTORIALS**

Tutorials are offered before school and after school each day. Students are encouraged to make arrangements with teachers when necessary.

## **U.I.L. ELIGIBILITY**

U.I.L. competition eligibility requirements for the 2016-2017 school year:

- 1st year students must have been promoted from the 8th grade
- 2nd year students must have 5 credits
- 3rd year students must have 10 credits or, during the preceding 12 months, must have earned 5 credits.
- 4th year students must have 15 credits or, during the preceding 12 months, must have earned 5 credits.

Please note: Sponsors of student clubs and performing groups such as the band, choir, and drill and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior—including consequences for misbehavior—that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization. [For further information, see policies FM and FO.]

## **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 in the coming years—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.

## **VEHICLES ON CAMPUS**

- All students parking on the RHS campus must have a valid parking permit permanently attached to the vehicle. A tag placed incorrectly on the automobile will not be considered valid. This tag should be obtained before the vehicle is brought to school. Permits are available in the front office upon request. A valid Texas drivers' license and proof of insurance must be presented to secure a parking tag. The cost is \$5.00.

### ***Every student will be assigned a parking space that will correspond with their parking permit number.***

All students must park their vehicles in their assigned parking space immediately upon arriving on campus. Their car must remain in that space the entire time during the school day. Students driving to school and parking in the student parking lot must be able to show a driver's license and proof of insurance to the principal.

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- Parking lot rules are to be obeyed or the privilege of bringing a vehicle to school will be taken away.
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- The rules are as follows:
  1. Every vehicle parked on the campus must have a valid parking permit hanging from the rearview mirror in the vehicle.
  2. Speed limit on all parking lots and grounds must not exceed **10 mph**.
  3. Parking will be within the marked spaces of their **assigned parking space**. Parking outside this space will be considered a violation.
  4. All students must park their vehicles in their assigned space immediately upon arrival on campus.
  5. Specified parking areas are as follows:
    - Teachers are assigned to the front of the building. Students are not to park in this area. To do so will be considered a violation.
    - **No driving or parking is allowed around or behind the Ag shop, Band Hall and junior high buildings.**
    - All students will use the large parking lot on the east side of the building. Parking may be done in the designated spaces only. To park incorrectly will be considered a violation.
  6. A student riding with a non-student should share with him/her the rules and regulations of Rusk High School. During the school day a student is always under the guidelines of the school, but a non-student falls under the laws of our county and city and can be arrested if school rules are not followed. Students riding with non-students are responsible for violations that occur at that time.
  7. Any and all conduct on the parking lot that endangers the safety of others will be considered a violation.
  8. One violation will indicate that a corrective measure needs to be taken. This usually should constitute removing the parking privilege temporarily. Upon any additional violation the vehicle could be banned from the campus for the remainder of the current school year.
  9. When there is a violation involving two or more vehicles in a contest of speed, etc., the vehicles will be banned from the campus for the remainder of the current school year. The drivers will be dealt with using regular disciplinary procedures.

***Using the parking lot is a privilege. Continued misconduct or misuse will indicate to school personnel that you are not concerned about the rights of others and the privilege of parking will no longer be yours.***

### **VIDEO CAMERAS**

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

Upon request of a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member, or a board member, state law requires the district to place video and audio recording equipment in a classroom in which the student spends at least 50 percent of his or her instructional day, referred to in the law as a self-contained classroom. The majority of students in this type of classroom must also be students who receive special education services. Before the district places a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which your child receives special education services, the district will provide notice to you. Please speak directly with the principal for further information.

### **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

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 front office, and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

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

### **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. A withdrawal form may be obtained by the parent from the attendance office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance and equipment; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the attendance office 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 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 sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

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

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

**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.

**LAT** stands for linguistically accommodated testing, which is an assessment process for recent immigrant English language learners who are required to be assessed in certain grades and subjects under the NCLB Act.

**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 Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

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

**Section 504** is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined 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 grade 11 exit-level test or end-of-course assessments, when applicable, is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

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



## **SERVICES FOR THE HOMELESS AND FOR TITLE I PARTICIPANTS**

Other designated staff you may need to contact include:

- Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, who coordinates services for homeless students:
- Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs:

Betty Collins

903-683-5592

## **PARENT'S RIGHT TO KNOW—NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

TO: All Parents

FROM: Rusk Independent School District

DATE: Aug. 5, 2013

As a parent of a student at Rusk High School, you have a right to know the professional qualifications of the classroom teachers who instruct your child. Federal law allows you to ask for certain information about your child's classroom teachers, and requires us to give you this information in a timely manner if you ask for it. Specifically, you have the right to ask for the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether TEA/SBEC has licensed or qualified the teacher for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether TEA/SBEC has decided that the teacher can teach in a classroom without being qualified under state regulations because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major; whether the teacher has any advanced degrees and, if so, the subject of the degrees.
- Whether any teacher's aides or similar paraprofessionals provide services to your child, and if they do, their qualifications.

If you would like to receive any of this information, please contact Scott Schwartz at 903-683-5401.

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## **NOTIFICAIÓN PARA PADRES**

PARA: Todos los padres

DE PARTE DE: La Zona Escolar de Rusk (Rusk ISD)

FECHA: El 5 de agosto de 2013

Como los padres de estudiantes que asiste a la escuela Secundaria de Rusk (RHS), ustedes tiene el derecho de conocer las calificaciones profesionales del maestro/a que tiene su niño/a en la sala de enseñanza. La ley federal de los Estados Unidos permite que usted haga ciertas preguntas acerca de las calificaciones del maestro/a que está en la clase con su niño/a, y se requiere que le demos la información en un tiempo oportuno. Especificamente, usted tiene el derecho de obtener la siguiente información acerca de cada maestro/a que su niño/a tenga en sus clases de estudios:

- Si el Department de Educación de Tejas ha licenciado o calificado el/la maestro/a para enseñar en el grado o en la material que el/ella enseña.
- Si el Departamento de Educación de Tejas ha decidido que el maestro o la maestro puede enseñar en el salon de estudios sin tener licencia o calificaciones bajo las reglas y requisitos del estado debido a circunstancias especiales.

- El estudio principal académico del maestro/a; sí el/la maestro/a tiene estudios o bachilleratos avanzados, y si los tienen, en que material(s) es su(s) bachillerato(s).
- Si hay para-profesionales o asistentes de maestro/a que proveiden servicios a su niño/a, y si lo hacen, qué son sus calificaciones.

Si usted quisiera recibir cualquiera de esta información, por-favor hable con Sr. Scott Schwartz al numero (de telefon) 903-683-540

(Date)