



**TEXAS
SCHOOL
OF THE ARTS**

Texas Center for Arts + Academics

**Student Handbook & Code of Conduct
2025-2026**

Texas School of the Arts STUDENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Mission | 3 |
| Admissions | 3 |
| Communication | 4 |
| Fees | 4 |
| Attendance | 5 |
| Homebound Instruction | 9 |
| Student Arrival & Dismissal | 9 |
| After-School Opportunities | 10 |
| Technology & Internet Use | 11 |
| Dress Code | 14 |
| Curriculum | 16 |
| Additional Education Services | 21 |
| Options for Acquiring Outside Credits | 21 |
| Academic Honesty | 22 |
| State Assessment & Required Screenings | 24 |
| Pledges & Moment of Silence | 26 |
| Films in the Classroom | 26 |
| Exemption from Classroom Activity | 26 |
| Field Trips | 27 |
| Health Clinic | 28 |
| Campus Breakfast & Lunch Program | 32 |
| Wellness Policy | 32 |
| Personal Belongings | 35 |
| Religious Activities | 36 |
| Statement of Nondiscrimination | 36 |
| Student & Parent Complaints & Grievances | 40 |
| Visitors to the School | 44 |
| Volunteers | 44 |
| Student Code of Conduct | 47 |

Mission

Our mission is to inspire a lifelong passion for learning and empower students to achieve academic excellence through an arts-based education.

Admissions

Texas School of the Arts (TeSA) is an open-enrollment charter school specializing in an arts-based education for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. As a school of choice, parents are expected to be informed and make an accurate determination whether or not their student(s) will be motivated and excel in a school environment with requirements for active participation in Dance, Music, Theatre, and the Visual Arts. Additionally, the arts are regularly used to deliver and support instruction in the core academic subjects of English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

TeSA is a nonsectarian school and shall not discriminate in admission on the basis of sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic ability, athletic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend. Students who have documented histories of a criminal offense, a juvenile court adjudication, or discipline problems under Subchapter A, Chapter 37 will be excluded from admission in accordance with Texas Education Code §12.111(a)(6)(A). This admissions policy will be revised as necessary to conform to the new Commissioner rules concerning the admission of students to open-enrollment charter schools.

Admission of New Students

Texas School of the Arts will hold auditions to admit students for enrollment. Applications will be collected during the open enrollment period, which occurs during specific dates in January and February. All applicants will be assigned audition times and deadlines for consideration. All audition requirements and materials will be published on the campus website. Auditions and notifications will be completed by mid-March.

The Principal or designee will determine the number of available spaces for each grade level. Audition scores will be used to assign rank order for each grade level. Spaces will be filled in the order of grade-level ranking and those students will be invited to enroll, until all available spaces are filled. If the number of applicants exceeds the number of available openings, the remaining students will be placed on a wait list in ranked order. Individuals will be offered admission as space is available.

TeSA will only accept admissions applications and schedule auditions outside of the open enrollment period if there are available openings at the prospective student's grade level and there is no existing wait list for that grade.

Communication Policy

Non-Urgent Communication

It is the responsibility of the guardian to provide at least one active email account, along with a current mailing address and phone number to be used for school communication. The guardian should immediately inform the front office staff of any changes during the school year. Texas School of the Arts will primarily contact parents/guardians through email or Remind for non-urgent issues. Families are encouraged to check their email frequently for updates from their child's teachers and/or the TeSA administrative staff, as well as read all newsletters published by the principal and grade-level teachers.

Emergency Communication

The decision to close or delay the opening of school due to bad weather or other cause will be made as early as reasonably possible. In addition to alerting families through Remind, communication will also be posted on the website and social media accounts. Weather related closures will also be reported on NBC 5 and ABC 8.

Fees

Texas School of the Arts is a public charter school and, as such, does not charge tuition. Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his/her own classroom supplies such as pencils, paper, erasers, notebooks, and other consumable items, and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits such as the costs for materials for a class project the student will keep, membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations, and fees to attend and/or participate in co-curricular or voluntary extracurricular activities.

Families are also financially responsible for purchasing the basic school uniform and Dance/P.E. attire, including shoes. Families should plan to replace all items at least once per year due to growth. All uniform pieces are available through Flynn O'Hara or the TeSA PTO. See the Dress Code section for more information.

Performances

In the fall and spring of each year, TeSA produces exhibitions to showcase student work in all four Fine Arts disciplines. Participation is required as part of the classroom curriculum and will be graded. There is no fee required. Some personal props and costumes may be required to bring from home.

School Supplies

Each year the TeSA PTO purchases required school supplies in bulk, providing families with money

and time savings when compared with buying these supplies individually. Families are not required to purchase their supplies from the PTO, but they are encouraged to take advantage of the savings opportunity. School supplies lists are available on the Resources tab of the TeSA website. For families that choose to purchase their supplies through the PTO, the fee will be charged per student. These fees will be collected prior to the first day of school.

Miscellaneous Activities

Students may be required to pay fees for other voluntary activities including:

- School pictures, publications, yearbooks, etc.
- Field trips
- Optional competitions and/or performances

Fundraising

School and organization fundraising activities are conducted throughout the year. Participation is strictly voluntary. As a public charter school, Texas School of the Arts receives less funding from the State of Texas than traditional public schools. Our organization receives more than \$1 million less than a comparably sized school. Fundraising is necessary to help decrease that shortfall and enhance our excellent academic and artistic programs.

Attendance

School Hours

School hours are from 7:45 am until 3:15/3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Office hours will be from 7:15 am until 3:45 pm, Monday through Friday. Students may not arrive on campus before 7:15 am and must leave by 3:45 pm each day. Texas School of the Arts assumes no liability for students on campus outside of school hours who are not in an authorized after-school activity.

Closed Campus

After arrival on school grounds, students may not leave campus at any time or for any reason without first signing out in the office. A student requesting to leave school during the day must be signed out by his/her parent/guardian in the school office. A student must have a legitimate (see Decisions on Absences) reason for arriving late or leaving early from school. Every parent/guardian may be requested to show picture identification to school personnel when signing out a child for any reason. If a student becomes ill and needs to be sent home, TeSA will notify the student's parent/guardian.

Attendance Overview

In Texas, all children who are 6 years of age but have not yet reached their 19th birthday are required to attend school unless otherwise exempted by law. Upon enrollment in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, a child shall attend school (Texas Education Code §25.085). A student under the age of 19 is required to attend school daily. Texas education code requires that a student attend school 90% of the days that a class is offered. If students do not meet this requirement, they may be denied

credit and retained for the school year. The TCA+A Board has adopted the 90% policy and students attending TeSA must be in attendance 90% of the required school days.

Under the Texas Education Code any student who voluntarily attends school after his/her 18th birthday is required to attend each scheduled school day for the entire period of the instructional program for which the student is enrolled. However, if the person has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the school may revoke the person's enrollment for the remainder of the school year. TeSA reserves the right to enforce this statute should this situation arise.

If a student has absences beyond the required 90%, the Attendance Review Committee will develop a plan to make up the required time. This plan may include additional attendance on Saturday or after school. If a student does not complete this plan, credit will be denied for the semester/school year. Any student/parent/guardian may appeal the denial of credit.

For purposes of determining whether a student has been in attendance for 90% of the scheduled class time, all absences, both excused and unexcused, will be counted. Determination of the status of excused or unexcused absences shall be the responsibility of the school administration. Any absence, regardless of number, will be considered and dealt with on its own merit.

When a TeSA student incurs unexcused absences for three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school will send a notice to the student's parent, as required by law, to remind the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor his or her child's attendance and to require the student to come to school. The notice will also inform the parent that the school will initiate truancy prevention measures and request a conference between school administrators and the parent. These measures will constitute a truant behavior improvement plan which may include school-based community service, referrals to either in-school or out-of-school counseling or other social services. Any other measures considered appropriate by the school may also be initiated. The Truancy Prevention Facilitator for the school is the campus Principal or designee. If you have questions about your student and the effect of his or her absences from school, please contact the Facilitator or any other campus administrator. A court of law may also impose penalties against a student's parent if a 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 (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year. If a student ages 12 through 18 incurs unexcused absences on ten (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the school, in most circumstances, will file a complaint in truancy court against the student. (Texas Education code §25.085 – §25.0915)

Attendance Review Committee

The Principal shall appoint an Attendance Review Committee to hear petitions for class credit by students who do not achieve the 90% minimum attendance and who do not complete the appropriate makeup plan. The Attendance Committee shall establish guidelines following Texas Education Agency protocols for evaluation of these petitions, and shall have the discretion to award

class credit to students who have exceeded the maximum number of absences. Students/Parents may appeal negative decisions of the Attendance Committee to the Superintendent.

Absences

TeSA supports student success through regular attendance and will combine incentive programs to recognize good attendance with early intervention and prosecutorial enforcement of compulsory attendance laws. A student absent from school or from any class without valid approval from administration will be considered unexcused and subject to disciplinary action.

A student not actually on campus at the time attendance is taken will be considered absent unless the student is temporarily absent due to an appointment with a healthcare professional. A note from the mental health or healthcare professional will be required in order to excuse this time period. The time missed should not exceed the duration of the appointment plus reasonable travel time.

Parents should email the Campus Attendance Clerk when the student is going to be absent and/or late to school. Documentation is required to excuse any absence.

Participation in School Performances and Activities

Any student absent from school will not participate in any after-school performances, rehearsals, or activities on that day without documentation of a medical appointment. Any student signing in to school after 10:30 am (without documentation of a medical appointment or an approved out-of-school performance) will be considered absent for that day and may not participate in after-school activities, including rehearsals and performances. Time missed for an out-of-school performance should be limited to the duration of the performance plus reasonable travel time.

Students absent for an approved performance must return to school before the end of the school day in order to be eligible to participate in after-school rehearsals or performances.

Excused Absences

Students shall be excused for absences for the following reasons:

- Illness - After three (3) consecutive days missed, a doctor's note is required for return to school
- Family illness – A life threatening illness in the immediate family- Excused absence is subject to approval by the Principal
- Death in the family
- Pre-approved family obligation (e.g. funeral, wedding, sibling graduation) with consideration for reasonable travel time as approved by Administration; documentation required
- Health Care Professional Appointment – Must have a note from the Health Care Professional upon returning to school. This includes appointments for mental health.
- Required appearance in court
- Documented/pre-approved performances with professional companies and fine arts organizations. Students must request approval a minimum of two weeks prior to the

anticipated absence. The student/parent must inform teachers of the planned, approved absences and make arrangements for make-up work. Students must be academically eligible and in good standing with attendance and discipline policies in order to be considered for an excused absence. All decisions are at the discretion of the Principal or the Principal designee.

Exemption from Class for Religious Holy Days

Students shall be excused for the purpose of observing religious holy days, including travel for that purpose, as long as the guardian submits a written request for the excused absence. Absences are subject to prior approval from the principal.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is defined as missing all or part of a school day without parent/guardian and Principal permission. Attendance violations may affect promotion and/or class credit status, and/or student's standing in a performing group.

Documentation of Absence

Upon return to school all absences must be documented through the office with a note from the parent or official documentation from a healthcare professional. All undocumented absences will be considered unexcused. Illness which results in more than three (3) consecutive days of absence should be documented by a healthcare professional. After excessive absences (missing more than nine (9) days in a semester) all additional absences will require documentation from a healthcare professional. Documentation should include name of student, date of absence, and reason for absence.

Decisions on Absences

The decision of determining excused or unexcused absences shall be the responsibility of the principal/designee. Any absence, regardless of the number, will be considered and dealt with on its own merit. Violations of attendance policies may result in disciplinary action and/or affect promotion or class credit status.

Late Arrival/Tardies

School begins promptly at 7:45 am. Students arriving after 7:45 am are considered tardy and must be signed in by an adult in the front office. Students arriving tardy more than 3 times within a grading cycle may have privileges, such as performances and classroom jobs, revoked. Students may also be required to attend Attendance Recovery time before or after-school.

General Education Homebound Policy

General Education Homebound (GEH) services are available for students with significant/severe medical conditions, requiring the student to be confined at home or a hospital for a minimum of four consecutive weeks or at least four weeks throughout the school year. In order for students to qualify for homebound services, documentation of need must be submitted and approved by the Homebound Committee in accordance with the most updated Texas Education Agency requirements.

Additional information regarding Homebound instruction, committee responsibilities, and attendance requirements will be provided by request.

Student Arrival and Dismissal

Drivers should NOT use electronic devices while dropping off or picking up children. Cell-phones and other devices create an unsafe situation. Drivers should drive the posted speed limit on Village Parkway and Cherry Street and decrease speed to 5 mph as they enter the TeSA parking lot.

Drivers should review the map for the appropriate traffic flow.

Morning Arrival Procedures

- Students may arrive at 7:15 am. Students will not be admitted to the building prior to this time unless part of a morning tutorial with one of their grade level teachers.
- Students must stay in their vehicle until they have been admitted into the building.
- Drivers should pull their vehicles all the way to the second set of exterior doors to help with the flow of traffic.
- Students should be ready to exit the vehicle as soon as it comes to a stop.
- Students may not be dropped off in the front parking lot.
- Students arriving after 7:50 am must be checked in through the front office.

Afternoon Dismissal Procedures

- No early dismissals are allowed after 3:00 pm
- Drivers should follow the designated lanes, divided by grade level
- K-1st grade students will dismiss from the South doors at 3:15 pm
- K-1st grade students with siblings may dismiss at 3:30 pm
- All 2nd-5th grade students will dismiss from the South doors at 3:30 pm
- Drivers must display a TeSA-issued dismissal sign. Additional cards may be requested in the front office.
- Drivers may not come into the building to wait for their child(ren).
- After 3:45 pm, students must be picked up from the front of the building.
- Guardians or their designee may wait for their child in the walk-up area on the southwest corner of the building as long as they are holding a TeSA-issued dismissal sign.

Before/After School Rules

- Students are not allowed on the playground immediately before or after school.

- Students must stay with their parents/guardians if they have been released from the teacher.
- Students are not allowed to walk around the building without supervision, even with parent permission.
- Students and parents are not allowed in teachers' rooms before or after school without a teacher or administrator present.
- Before school while children are waiting in the cafeteria, students must whisper and sit in their designated grade level area.

TCA+A After-School Opportunities

TCA+A Art Conservatory

Texas Art Conservatory offers intensive courses of study for students in grades 3-12, designed to develop foundations in technical visual art skills in both 2-D and 3-D media processes. During each year-long, afterschool course, students will create pieces which can be used to begin developing a personal portfolio. Each class will be taught by degreed instructors, who are active local artists with expertise in their art form. As courses are added to the program, Texas Art Conservatory will expand its curriculum, offering courses and workshops year round and establish a progressing path for students to develop their skill and artistry.

With highly credentialed instructors, students will develop critical thinking skills, strengthen their hand-eye coordination, and increase their capacity to problem-solve and connect ideas. As a result of the progressing curriculum, participants will expand their abilities in nonverbal communication and fine motor skills, their ability to create and imagine, and their understanding of art history and important artists. Classes are taught in a safe and supportive environment, nurturing students' natural abilities and building upon them.

TCA+A Dance Conservatory

Texas Dance Conservatory creates technically strong concert style dancers by providing rigorous instruction in high quality classes. Our disciplined training is designed to nurture the growth of young dancers in a fun, accessible and inclusive environment. Primary dance techniques include ballet, modern, and jazz. Classical ballet is the foundation upon which we build balanced training in other styles.

With a sound anatomical approach, dancers increase strength and ability while gaining body awareness and longevity in their dance practice. Through the combination of classical and contemporary studies in each class, versatility in technique is achieved and students build increased vocabulary and understanding of the art form.

Whether dancers have professional aspirations or are interested in recreation, they will feel at home

in our collegial and safe environment while they exercise their talent and creativity.

TCA+A Music Conservatory

Texas Music Conservatory offers both ensemble and private music lessons for developing musicians in grades K-12. During each year-long, afterschool course, students will learn the fundamentals of music literacy, healthy vocal technique, and how to build a sense of self independence and collaboration with their peers. Our curriculum has foundations in Kodaly methods of solfege training and extended artistic training based on the National Core Art Standards and beyond.

Private lesson experiences offer students the opportunity for one on one feedback and skill development. Classes are taught in a safe and supportive environment, nurturing students' natural abilities and building upon them.

Other After-School Organizations

Other contracted after-school programs may be available. Programs will be evaluated each year and all information will be communicated to parents by the Principal or designee and published on the school website.

Technology & Internet Use

TeSA-owned technology resources are for instructional purposes, and may be issued to individual students on or off campus as determined by the Campus Principal. Use of these technological resources, including the district network systems and use of any TeSA-owned equipment is restricted to pre-approved purposes only.

Because of the expense associated with acquiring this technology and the potential for damage to the equipment through misuse, Texas School of the Arts has developed the following specific technology usage rules. Violation of any of the rules listed in this section may result in revocation of technology and/or Internet privileges and any other disciplinary consequences as may be deemed appropriate by the Principal in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct:

- Students are prohibited from erasing, renaming, or making unusable anyone else's files.
- Students are prohibited from using someone else's password, e-mail account, impersonating another individual, or using any method of hiding or manipulating IP addresses.
- Students may not use school resources to make purchases of any kind or to advertise any products for purchase or sale.
- Students may not use school resources for any unlawful purpose such as illegal copying, plagiarizing, or illegal installation of software.
- Students are prohibited from writing or otherwise attempting to introduce any computing code designed to self-replicate, damage or hinder the performance of the computer's

memory or filing system (i.e., introduction of a computer virus, "spamming" the e-mail system, etc.)

- Students are prohibited from using technology to annoy, harass, or bully others with inappropriate language, images or threats. See also the Bullying & Cyber-Bullying section of this handbook.
- Students are prohibited from accessing any internet sites containing obscenities or sexually explicit materials.
- Students are prohibited from using technology to break into secure sites, accounts, or any efforts to hack or other illegal accounts.
- Students are prohibited from assembling or disassembling technology, computer networks, printers, or other equipment except as part of a class assignment or with permission of a classroom teacher.
- Students are prohibited from removing any software, hardware or computer technology from the campus without express permission of the campus principal or principal designee.

Personally Owned Devices

Per House Bill 1481, personal communication devices such as laptops, tablets, cell phones, Bluetooth headphones and smartwatches may not be used at school during the school day. This extends beyond the teacher's classroom to other times of the day, e.g., lunch, etc. The school will not be liable for personally owned devices brought on campus. Students utilizing personal communications as defined above will be subject to discipline.

Technology Tools and Internet User Agreement Policy

Technology tools include computers and accessories, tablets, interactive boards, projectors and any other forms of technology used in the educational process at Texas School of the Arts.

Technology tools and the internet are available to students and staff to enhance the curriculum and promote educational excellence. The purpose of the Technology Tools and Internet User Agreement is to provide the procedures and code of conduct for the use of technology and the internet. Use of school technology materials and internet access will be provided to those who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner, following all school policies. Information created, sent, or received by email, the Internet or other means over the computers available to students and staff is the property of Texas School of the Arts and may be accessed at any time by the school for its review. In the event that a review reveals that this policy has been violated or that a privilege of using a technology tool or the Internet is being abused, disciplinary action will be taken against the individual or individuals involved. The Principal may determine inappropriate use and deny, revoke, or suspend access to specific users.

Security

Security on any devices is a high priority. If a student can identify a security problem within the network, the student must immediately notify a teacher or administrator.

- Students should not demonstrate the problem to other users.
- Students should not use another individual's account, forge messages, or post anonymous messages.
- Attempts to login to any system as any other user may result in cancellation of user privileges.
- Using another user's device under that user's name will result in a consequence of an appropriate nature.

Non-Compliance

Any other form of unauthorized access to the TeSA network will result in immediate cancellation of user privileges. This includes unauthorized use of the wireless network system. Teachers will be notified of the student's loss of privileges. Students will still be expected to complete assignments as assigned.

Violators may be held responsible for reimbursement to the Texas School of the Arts for all incurred expenses. Deliberate violations may also result in disciplinary consequences.

Offenses

The following actions do not comply with the privilege and responsibility that the user assumes with access to technology and the internet and will be dealt with as stated above:

- Intentionally wasting resources
- Using the school's hardware, software, or network for commercial purposes
- Using the school's hardware, software, or network for personal entertainment purposes
- Using the school's network to store personal files, unrelated to academic needs
- Using the school's network to search for, transmit, receive, submit, or publish any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, offensive or illegal material.
- Vandalizing any part of the hardware, software or the network, including theft of any hardware or software
- Downloading, installing, or running executable files from external sources
- Writing or otherwise attempting to introduce any computing code designed to self-replicate, damage, or hinder the performance of the device's memory or filing system (e.g. introduction of a virus, "spamming" the e-mail system, etc.)
- Bypassing school network security measures, either by using a proxy, network tunnel, or any other method
- Snooping on faculty members, other students, or any equipment
- Displaying or sending offensive messages or pictures on the network or while using any school-owned computer
- Participating in videoconferencing or chat without permission
- Using another's login or password
- Revealing passwords to others

- Trespassing in another's files, or misusing, or deleting another's files
- Interfering with the integrity of the network system and/or the e-mail system.
- Violating copyright laws including plagiarism or making illegal copies of school-owned software
- Using email, or any other electronic communication, without permission and supervision
- Using social media sites without permission and supervision
- Taking video or audio recording of students, staff, or administrators without permission and supervision

Dress Code

Texas School of the Arts (TeSA) and its performing groups are uniformed organizations. The following provides general guidelines for all students. In addition to the school uniform, additional uniform items, costumes and accessories may be required depending on a student's performances.

The Dress Code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards, and create a sense of equality and unity on our campus. Uniform compliance is a positive learning experience for students involved in professional training and will help individual students learn specific responsibilities. Once a student is enrolled in school, he/she should obtain the required uniform items. Some items can be purchased through any store. TeSA specific items must be purchased through a TeSA PTO Resale or the approved uniform vendor:

<https://flynnohara.com/>

Flynn O'Hara
Montgomery Plaza
363 Carroll Street
Fort Worth, TX 76107

General Uniform Guidelines

Tops

- Red or Navy Short or Long Sleeve Polo Shirt with TeSA logo
- White or Light Blue Short or Long Sleeve Oxford Shirt, available from any source
- Solid Red, White, or Navy Long Sleeve Shirt (worn underneath uniform shirts as needed)
- Navy Cardigan Sweater with TeSA logo
- Sweatshirt with TeSA logo
- Jacket with TeSA logo

Bottoms

- Khaki Slacks, Shorts, Skorts, or Skirts, available from any source
- Plaid #36 Skort, Skirt, or Jumper
- All shorts and skirts should be no shorter than two inches above the knee.
- Shorts or White, Black, Grey, or Navy Tights/Leggings are recommended under skirts and

jumpers.

Footwear

- Closed-Toe and Closed-Heel Shoes
- Ballet Shoes (for dance class only)
- Athletic Shoes (may be worn all day or just for P.E.)

Dance & P.E. Uniform

Appropriate attire is an important component of dance because it allows the student to move freely without being restricted. Dance attire also allows both the student and instructor to see body alignment clearly, which leads to more advanced technique and injury prevention.

Hair should be pulled away from the face for Dance & P.E. Students should come with hair ties or headbands as needed. Teachers will not style student's hair for Dance or P.E. classes.

A white space is provided on all Dance/P.E. items to label the student's name. To prevent confusion and loss of purchased items, all required uniform pieces should be clearly labeled upon receipt before wearing to school.

All 2nd-5th grade students must wear:

Dance

- Tops: TeSA Dance/P.E. Shirt or Solid Black Leotard (strongly recommended)
- Bottoms: TeSA Dance/P.E. Shorts, Leggings, or Sweatpants or Pink, Black, or Flesh-toned Tights (if wearing a leotard), sheer black dance skirt (if wearing a leotard)
- Footwear: Ballet Shoes
 - Ballet shoes should never be worn outside of the dance room.
 - Ballet shoes may be replaced throughout the year due to growth or wear and tear.
 - A specific color of ballet shoes will be required for performances.

P.E.

- Tops: Dance/P.E. Shirt or any TeSA field day, COWTOWN, or spirit shirt
 - A black dance leotard may be worn underneath.
- Bottoms: Dance/P.E. Shorts, Leggings, or Sweatpants
 - A student may choose one or a combination of any of the three official Dance/P.E. bottom wear choices.
- Footwear: Athletic/Tennis shoes
 - Velcro/laces are preferred for safety.

Dress and Grooming

- Shall not lead school officials to believe that such dress or grooming will disrupt, interfere with, disturb, or detract from school activities.
- Shall not create a health hazard to the student's safety or to the safety of others.
- Crocs, high heels, shoes with wheels, and other specialty footwear may only be worn with

specific permission.

- Sweatpants should not be worn outside of P.E. unless part of a themed or free dress day.
- Clothing which exposes the stomach and hips shall not be worn.
- Jumpers, skirts, and shorts may not be hemmed shorter than two inches above the kneecap.
- Student names may be monogrammed on uniform tops, including the sweatshirt, hoodie, and sweater. The monogram should be on the right side of the garment, opposite from the TeSA logo. The monogram should be no larger than the TeSA logo, in keeping with the colors of our uniform.
- No hats or scarves are to be worn inside the building except for special days.
- Girls may wear non-distracting hair accessories.
- Khaki slacks must be fitted at the waist with no sagging. Pants should have no more than four (4) pockets; two in the front and two in the back, (no cargo pockets).
- Jewelry and hair accessories must be quiet and non-distracting. Jewelry with bells, lights, should only be worn when requested for costuming, group projects, etc.
- Only uniform jackets, sweatshirts, and sweaters may be worn inside the classroom. Non-uniform coats and jackets may be worn outside of the building for recess or designated activities.

The school administration shall have the right to appraise any clothing issue. The administrator's decision shall be final. Coming to school out of dress code is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Spirit Days

Spirit Days will be held every Friday. On Spirit Days, students can wear any approved TeSA shirt. All shirt choices must be worn with official TeSA uniform bottoms or blue jean shorts, skirts, skorts, jumpers, overalls, or pants with no holes. Students will also need to bring clothing for Dance and/or P.E. unless specifically stated otherwise.

Free Dress Days

Free Dress Days may be held any day of the week with Principal approval, and will be communicated at least one week prior to the event. Free dress consists of clothing of the student's choice, excluding shorts more than 2 in above the knee, spaghetti straps, short skirts, inappropriate t-shirts, etc. Closed toe, closed heel shoes should still be worn with free dress. Students will also need to bring clothing for Dance and/or P.E. unless specifically stated otherwise.

Curriculum

Texas School of the Arts' curriculum are Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). We have a strong belief in challenging academics, and, in keeping with our fine arts mission, we offer all four Fine Arts disciplines at all grade levels. In order to prepare our students for higher education and training, TeSA has developed a rigorous curricular program.

Grading & Student Assessment

As students progress towards mastery of skills and concepts outlined in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), teachers should use various indicators to monitor and assess this progress. Beginning, middle, and end-of-year testing will be utilized to monitor students' growth and guide plans for individual, small, and whole group instruction.

Additionally, a variety of classroom activities, with emphasis given to an individual student's learning style and applicability to the content, will be graded and averaged for student Progress Reports and Report Cards, include a combination of the following,:

- Teacher observations
- Compositions
- Class discussions
- Oral interviews
- Projects
- Demonstrations
- Book reviews/reports
- Homework
- Daily work
- Portfolios
- Participation
- Tests/Quizzes

Grades K-2nd Skills-Based Grading Scale

| <u>Quality of Work</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Meeting Standard | 3 |
| Approaching Standard | 2 |
| Below Standard | 1 |

Grades 3rd-5th Numerical Grading Scale

| <u>Quality of Work</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Excellent progress | A = 90-100% |
| Above average progress | B = 80-89% |
| Average progress | C – 70-79% |
| Unsatisfactory progress; failing | F = 69-0% |
| Incomplete grade | I = Not passing |

K-5th Fine Arts & Physical Education Grading Scale

| <u>Quality of Work</u> | <u>Grade</u> |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Excellent | E |
| Satisfactory | S |
| Needs Improvement | N |
| Unsatisfactory | U |

| Fine Arts & P.E. Grading Rubric | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Responsibility | Engagement | Citizenship |
| E (Excellent) | Student is <i>always</i> prepared for class with designated assignments, materials, supplies, and uniform. | Student <i>always</i> participates and demonstrates full engagement, and is <i>always</i> willing to accept and apply corrections. | Student <i>always</i> follows directions, and <i>always</i> possesses a positive attitude. |
| S (Satisfactory) | Student is <i>mostly</i> prepared for class with designated assignments, materials, supplies, and uniform. | Student <i>mostly</i> participates and demonstrates engagement, and is <i>mostly</i> willing to accept and apply corrections. | Student <i>mostly</i> follows directions, and <i>mostly</i> possesses a positive attitude. |
| N (Needs Improvement) | Student is <i>sometimes</i> prepared for class with designated assignments, materials, supplies, and uniform. | Student <i>sometimes</i> participates and demonstrates engagement, and is <i>sometimes</i> willing to accept and apply corrections. | Student <i>sometimes</i> follows directions, and <i>sometimes</i> possesses a positive attitude. |
| U (Unsatisfactory) | Student is <i>seldom</i> prepared for class with designated assignments, materials, supplies, and required uniform. | Student <i>seldom</i> participates and demonstrates engagement, and is <i>seldom</i> willing to accept and apply corrections. | Student <i>seldom</i> follows directions, and <i>seldom</i> possesses a positive attitude. |
| Students will be assessed in Art, Dance, Music, Theatre, and Physical Education separately, during each class session. Students may have an additional minus (-) or plus (+) listed on their progress report and/or report card to reflect the average of all work during the grading cycle. | | | |

Citizenship Grading

At the end of the grading period, a citizenship letter grade will be given on the report card based on an accumulation of recorded classroom disciplinary incidents within the grading cycle. All incidents will be recorded by the teacher and reported to the student's family through the student's planner or binder. Any major infractions, resulting in an office referral, will be additionally reported by the Campus Principal, School Counselor, or designee.

- E (Excellent) = 0-1 incidents
- S (Satisfactory) = 2-4 incidents
- N (Needs Improvement) = 5-7 incidents
- U (Unsatisfactory) = 8 incidents

Progress Reports & Report Cards

The academic year will be divided into six grading cycles. Progress Reports will be available for guardians of 3rd-5th grade students to view after the third or fourth week of the cycle. K-2nd grade students will not have Progress Reports available, however; when assessment data is collected for beginning, middle, and end-of-year or major curriculum-embedded assessments, these reports will be sent home in conjunction with the closest report card cycle. Report Cards will be available the week following the grading cycle. Guardians are strongly encouraged to check the Parent Portal to view grades weekly and reach out to the teacher(s) with any questions.

The Report Card grades for Cycles 1-3 will be averaged together by subject to reflect the Semester 1 grades, and the Report Card grade for Cycles 4-6 will be averaged together by subject to reflect the Semester 2 grade. These semester averages may not be automatically published, but will be used when considering retention.

Final report cards will not be issued until all records are clear. Students must pay for lost or damaged books and curricular materials in order to have a clear record. In some cases, students who have missed assignments and/or concepts in a class may be given an incomplete grade. All work pertaining to an "I" must be completed and turned in by the designated deadline.

Kindergarten-2nd Grading Policy

- K-2nd grade students are graded and assessed using a skills-based model.
- Each grading cycle, students will be assessed over TEKS that have been taught for that grading cycle and assigned a quality of work grade of 1, 2, or 3 to indicate their level of mastery.
- If a student has a skill that has not been mastered in Language Arts and/or Math, it will be retaught and reassessed the following grading cycle.

3rd-5th Grading Policy

- Tests/Major Work will constitute 40% of the overall grade for each grading cycle.
- Daily Work will constitute 60% of the overall grade for each grading cycle.
- Teachers will determine and communicate which class projects, papers, assignments, etc., will be considered "Major Work" vs "Daily Work."
- A minimum average of two grades per week must be offered for English Language Arts/Reading and Math, and a minimum average of one grade per week must be offered for Science and Social Studies.
- A student may have the option to correct major work and/or daily work in which they earned a grade below 70. Corrections must be completed by the time designated by the instructor. Under no circumstances may a student turn in corrections after the grading period has ended.
- Partial credit may be earned for incomplete or late work without prior arrangements. Under no circumstances may a student turn in late work after the grading period has ended unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor and approved by an administrator.
- Partial credit may be earned for assignments in which the student's name is not included.

- Students must complete work assigned during an absence by the time designated by the instructor. Any assignments handed in after the designated deadline will be treated in the same manner as other late work and will receive a reduced grade.
- All tests/major work due on the day of an absence will be due on the day the student returns.

Posting/Communication of Grades

- Teachers are required to post grades in their online grade book at least once per week.
- Teachers are expected to contact parents regarding missing and/or failing grades as needed.
- Parents are encouraged to sign up for parent access to view the online grade book and check it weekly with their child.
- Any student/parent concerns regarding graded assignments or grading policies should be directed to the classroom teacher.

Fine Arts and Physical Education (P.E.) Curriculum

All TeSA students will participate in Art, Dance, Music, Theatre, and Physical Education as part of their academic curriculum. Performance and engagement in class will be assessed daily. If a student is required to be excused from physical activity for any reason, a parent note is required. If a student must remain inactive for more than three days, a doctor's note, including a release date or date for reexamination is needed. Once a doctor's note has been provided, a parent note will not release a child from the doctor's documentation. Students unable to participate will be expected to actively watch class and alternative assignments may be provided.

As part of the curriculum, all students will learn Dance, Music, and Theatre content for at least two performances per year. In order to perform on stage, students must meet minimum requirements for attendance and participation, as outlined in a specific contract for each show. Students not meeting the minimum requirements may be removed from parts or all of the performance and required to complete an alternative assignment. Additionally, all students will be required to produce artwork for at least two TeSA exhibits. All artwork must meet the requirements of the assignment in order to be displayed.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Teachers and parents are encouraged to stay in frequent contact regarding the student's progress. This can be accomplished through emails, phone calls, and face-to-face or online conferences. Parents may email teachers to make an appointment for a conference during the teacher's designated planning time during the school day.

The teacher must document and communicate with a parent/guardian immediately when a student's behavior becomes disruptive in the classroom and/or when a student's academic performance is below passing.

K-2nd Grade Promotion

A student's promotion from kindergarten, first grade and second grade is based on attendance, social/emotional readiness, and academic performance, which includes: the skills based report card, early childhood literacy assessments, formative and summative classroom assessments, RtI Committee recommendations, and teacher observations. The decision to retain a student will be made collaboratively by the teacher, principal, and parents.

3rd-5th Grade Promotion

Students shall be promoted from third, fourth, and fifth grades based on academic performance and attendance. Parents should refer to the Attendance section of the handbook for minimum attendance standards for promotion. At a minimum, students must pass English Language Arts/Reading and Math both semesters of the academic year. However, if a student earns less than 70% in one semester, but the average of both semesters is above 70%, both semesters may be considered passing.

Additional Education Services

Texas School of the Arts is committed to providing a quality education for all students. Additional services may be provided for students with documented needs. All special services programs are detailed in the Texas School of the Arts Special Services Handbook. Each program follows the policies required by the Texas Education Agency, and therefore, some sections of the Special Services Handbook are directly quoted from the TEA website.

Options for Acquiring Outside Credits

Options for receiving credit outside of Texas School of the Arts due to failure or for acceleration vary by class type. To ensure credit may be granted, parents should discuss all future plans with the TeSA Principal before enrolling in a program. TeSA is not financially responsible for assisting students in taking outside classes.

English, Math, Science, Social Studies

To obtain elementary school level credit, students can take a Credit by Exams or courses through an accredited Texas Education Agency approved program. Students must take the test or complete the course for both semesters with an average grade of 80 or above.

Art, Dance, Music, Theatre

Credit will not be granted for any Fine Arts class taken outside of TeSA. No other elective credits will be granted.

Physical Education

All elementary school students must complete Physical Education classes each year. TeSA will not accept participation in outside activities or TeSA Dance classes for PE credit.

Accelerating Grade Level

A request to accelerate a grade will only be approved if there is an available spot for the student in the student's desired grade level. Parents/guardians must notify TeSA of their intention to accelerate a grade no later than the last day of the first semester and must submit all required test scores no later than the last day of the academic school year.

Credit Recovery

A request to complete Credit by Exam to recover credit due to absences or failures must follow the guidelines set by the Attendance Committee or Grade Placement Committee.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty at Texas School of the Arts means demonstrating and upholding the highest integrity and honesty in all academic work. Students are expected to use their own thoughts, ideas, and beliefs to complete assignments or assessments in every grade/subject area. Student work must be authentic, meaning that the student's original ideas and understandings must be presented if applicable.

Whenever the ideas of an additional source are included, that source must always be accurately and appropriately cited as is grade-level appropriate.

Students at Texas School of the Arts can display academic honesty by:

- Accurately citing sources when presenting/submitting assignments
- Submitting original and independent work
- Producing his/her own work where applicable
- Using technology as a tool and a resource to craft one's thoughts and ideas

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty includes the use of ideas, thoughts, and works or resources and presenting them as one's own without giving the primary source notable credit. Plagiarism, cheating, and fabrication are examples of academic dishonesty. See the Code of Conduct for possible disciplinary actions assigned for Academic Dishonesty.

Cheating involves unauthorized use of information, materials, devices, sources, or practices in completing academic activities. Cheating may include, but is not limited to:

- Using a classmate's work as one's own
- Attempting to or stealing teacher materials
- Looking on a classmate's paper (assignments, tests, or homework)
- Using technology to search for solutions to a test/task

- Copying someone else's work, answer for answer or allowing someone to copy
- Allowing someone else to complete assigned work (friends, family, tutor, etc.)
- Interacting with other students during an independent assignment or exam.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating in which an individual adopts another person's ideas, words, design, art, music, etc., as his or her own without acknowledging the source, or, when necessary, obtaining permission from the author. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to:

- Copying and pasting material from a website into one's own document without proper citations
- Submitting assignments, or pieces of work, that are not one's own (art pieces, music samples, etc.)
- Excluding quotation marks, author's name, and document information when directly quoting a source
- Not giving credit for the thoughts, ideas, and/or work of others
- Excluding a bibliography or works cited page

Fabrication involves the intentional use of invented information or falsification of information and academic resources with the intent to deceive. Fabrication may include, but is not limited to:

- Creating false crisis' to receive immunity or special exemption
- Citing information from false sources
- Submitting assignments with false data and/or evidence
- Making claims of submitting assignments that have not been completed or turned in

ChatGPT/Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI systems are under a broad category of machine learning that can produce various types of content including images, text, and audio. AI has been around since the 1960s but has recently become popular due to easier to use models, such as ChatGPT. AI is a powerful tool that can enhance learning and research, but also poses ethical and academic challenges.

It is the responsibility of all students to ensure they are complying with district and campus policies regarding academic integrity, including but not limited to plagiarism.

Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty when using AI in your assignments, projects, and exams. Students who use ChatGPT and similar tools on assignments without permission, or who use them in improper ways, are violating the academic integrity rules of Texas School of the Arts.

The following policy outlines the principles and rules that govern the use of AI in academic work:

- Acknowledge and cite any AI sources or tools that you use in your work, such as websites, apps, software, or online services.
- Indicate the extent and purpose of your use of AI, such as generating, editing, summarizing, translating, or analyzing data or text.
- Do not use AI to plagiarize, which means to copy or use someone else's words, ideas, data, or work without giving proper credit or permission.
- Do not use AI to fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent any data or text that you submit as your own

work.

- Do not use AI to bypass or undermine any academic requirements or assessments, such as by generating answers, solutions, or essays that you do not understand or have not learned.
- Do not use AI to harm others or violate their privacy, such as by creating or spreading false or malicious information, impersonating others, or accessing unauthorized data or systems.
- Respect the intellectual property rights of others when using AI, such as by obtaining permission, paying fees, or following licenses when using copyrighted or proprietary data or software.
- Follow any additional guidelines or instructions provided by your campus administrators and teachers.

ChatGPT/Artificial Intelligence Compliance

Violations of this policy will be considered as academic misconduct and subject to disciplinary action, such as a grade penalty or course failure. An honor council composed of staff and students will review instances where students are accused of academic dishonesty due to the improper use of AI. The District reserves the right to use AI tools to detect and prevent any violations of this policy. Questions or concerns about this policy or the use of AI in academic work should be directed to campus administration.

Role of Administrators, Teachers, and Parents

Administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians can all play a part in helping students maintain academic honesty. At Texas School of the Arts, teachers and administrators will help students by promoting academic honesty and providing students with clear directions and requirements as grade-level appropriate. Parents can provide support and promote Texas School of the Arts' policy with their children by monitoring their assignments and encouraging honesty in all matters.

State Assessment and Required Screenings

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

STAAR is the state's testing program and is based on state curriculum standards in core subjects including reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. STAAR tests are designed to measure what students are learning in each grade and whether or not they are ready for the next grade. The goal is to ensure that all students receive what they need to be academically successful. Students in 3rd-5th grade are required to take the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness, or STAAR® in the spring for the grades and subjects listed below.

- Grades 3–5 Mathematics
- Grades 3–5 Reading
- Grades 5 Science

Every student who takes the STAAR test receives a STAAR Report Card that helps parents see where their child is doing well and where he or she may need extra help.

HB1416

Texas law requires all students who do not achieve approaches or higher on STAAR grades 3 through 8 or EOC assessments be provided accelerated instruction. These requirements, modified by House Bill 4545 of the 87th legislature and recently updated with the passage of House Bill 1416 in the 88th legislature, provide that qualifying students must be:

- Assigned a Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) designated teacher for the subsequent school year in the applicable subject area;

OR

- Provided supplemental instruction aligned with the research on high impact tutoring in the TEKS for the applicable grade levels and subject area in the following manner:
 - No less than 15 or 30 hours depending on student performance and is provided in the summer or at least once per week in the school year;
 - Limited to two subjects per year, prioritizing math and RLA;
 - Provided in a group of no more than four students, unless the parent or guardian of each student in the group authorizes a larger group;
 - Designed to assist the student in achieving satisfactory performance in the applicable grade level and subject area and includes effective instructional materials designed for supplemental instruction;
 - Provided by a person with training in the applicable instructional materials for the supplemental instruction and provided by one person for the entirety of their accelerated instruction.

Texas School of the Arts will provide the required accelerated instruction for each designated student during the school day in small groups of no more than 6 students unless parents request a smaller group in writing. Additional before or after-school instruction and/or summer sessions may also be provided.

Texas English Language Proficiency System (TELPAS)

TELPAS is an assessment program for students in Texas public schools who are learning the English language. TeSA must annually assess the English language proficiency of students who have been identified as English learners (ELs) in four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS evaluates the progress that each EL makes in becoming proficient in the use of academic English.

Students in grades K-12 that have been identified as an EL are required to take TELPAS. This includes ELs whose parents have declined English as a Second Language (ESL) program services. They will stop participating in TELPAS when their language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) determines that they are proficient in the English language and have met exit criteria. This applies to all ELs, even those who are not in an ESL program. Once a student has met the state's exit criteria, they will no longer be identified as an EL and will not have to participate in TELPAS.

K-2nd Reading Proficiency Assessments

All districts are required to collect data regarding student reading proficiency using a TEA-approved tool. TeSA Kindergarten students will be assessed through Texas Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TX-KEA), and in 1st and 2nd, students will be assessed through the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). TeSA will schedule three early childhood assessment windows for testing in the beginning, middle, and end of the academic year and all data will be used to plan instruction and interventions.

Dyslexia Screening

A reading diagnostic assessment or screening is required for all K-2nd grade students each year. Parents are notified if their child is determined to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties based on the results of this screening.

Pledges of Allegiance & Moment of Silence

State law requires a moment of silence following the pledges. Students may pray, meditate, or complete any other silent and still activity during this time. The state also requires a minute of silence each year in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11th, 2001.

Films in the Classroom

To be shown during class time, commercial films must be rated G unless they have been reviewed and pre-approved by the Campus Principal.

All video footage borrowed, streamed, rented or owned shall be used in the schools for education purposes only. All media shall be appropriately licensed for display in an instructional setting and shall not be shown to a class for entertainment purposes. The fair use exemption permits limited use of copyrighted materials in classroom situations. That exemption does not permit free use of copyrighted materials for extracurricular activities such as after-school programs. Video performances for reward or entertainment purposes require the purchase of a performance license from suppliers such as Movie Licensing USA. The performance shall be presented by instructors or students, occur in the course of face-to-face teaching activities, and take place in a classroom or similar place for instruction. It is required that teachers document each video performance in their lesson plans to indicate the correlation between the video and the current lesson in the prescribed curriculum.

The subject of the video must align to a topic addressed in that grade level curriculum, and the topic is being taught during the time period of the video performance. Movie segments must be utilized in accordance with guidelines as specified in District administrative procedures. Movies rated "R" or "X" are strictly prohibited.

Exemption from Classroom Activity

Parents who have a religious objection to a classroom activity may request that their child be removed from the classroom while that activity is conducted. Parents may also object to their child's participation when they feel that a class activity is controversial in nature for any reason. The TeSA Administration shall listen to the parent's concern and attempt to reach an agreement regarding the child's participation in the class activity that is being questioned.

Field Trips

Field trips should supplement and enrich classroom instruction by providing learning experiences in an environment outside the school, arouse new interests among students, help students relate school experiences to the reality of the world outside of school, bring the resources of the community within the students' learning experience, and afford students the opportunity to study real things and real processes in their actual environment.

All field trips must be approved by the Principal. Grade level teams are encouraged to propose field trips as they relate to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Teachers are responsible for planning field trips but may elicit parent help. Field trips are considered a privilege. Students who do not follow the Student Code of Conduct may be denied this privilege. Students are subject to all school rules when on a field trip and are subject to disciplinary measures.

On the Bus

- Students must be seated and facing forward.
- Students must speak in a low volume.
- Students must stop talking when the bus stops (including stop lights).
- Students must keep their hands and feet to themselves.
- Students must comply with the student code of conduct at all times.

Inside Buildings

- Students must quietly enter the building.
- If in a seated area, students must sit down with feet in front.
- Students must stay where directed until told to move to another area.
- Students must be quiet and attentive during performances, with clapping and reactions as appropriate.
- Students must comply with the student code of conduct at all times.

Outside exhibits

- Students must stay with the group at all times.
- Students must always walk—no running.
- Students must not touch exhibits unless given permission by an adult.
- Students should use a regular voice level—no shouting.
- Students must comply with the student code of conduct at all times.

Transportation

All TeSA students may be transported in passenger vans or buses for field trips. According to Texas state law, with the exception of buses, all children ages eight years and younger are required to ride in a booster seat while in a passenger vehicle. The only exception to this law is if the child is 4'9" or taller.

Because of this safety issue, every student in second grade and under will be required to use a booster seat while riding in the vans for field trips. If a child does not have a booster seat on the day of the field trip they will not be able to attend.

Health Clinic

Nurse/Health Clinic

Texas School of the Arts employs one full-time nurse to care for the students and staff and oversee the Health Clinic. The Health Clinic is equipped to treat minor injuries, perform mandatory state and federal health screenings, and serve as a semi-private space for students who become ill during the school day.

Administration of Medication

The School allows administration of prescription medication and over-the-counter medication. In order for the school to administer any medication, the medication must be in its original container, properly labeled, with dosage instructions.

- Prescribed medicines must be labeled with the student's name, dosage, physician's name, pharmacy, and date filled.
- Prescription medicines can only be given if the TeSA Medication Form is signed by a doctor.
- Over-the-counter medications may be distributed with parent's written permission.
- Students are not permitted to carry any prescription or over-the-counter medications at School or at
- School-related activities unless permission is obtained from the Principal.
- Parents may request that their student be allowed to carry inhalant medication(s) by completing a written request.
- The School will not administer prescription medication obtained outside the United States.
- The School shall not administer vitamins, herbal remedies (such as herbal teas) or other home remedies to any student.

Administration an Opioid Antagonist for Emergency Use

The campus nurse is authorized and trained to administer an opioid antagonist to a student who is reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis on campus; and at an off-campus school event or while in transit to or from a school event. Parents and/or guardians will be contacted prior to administering for parent/guardian consent.

Communicable Disease

State law prohibits all public schools from allowing children with certain communicable diseases to attend school. Communicable diseases are those that may be passed directly or indirectly from one person to another. Common communicable diseases include, but are not limited to, vomiting and/or diarrhea, fever 100 or above, strep throat, ringworm of the scalp, unknown rashes, pink eye, scabies, hepatitis, impetigo, hepatitis, mononucleosis, measles (initial outbreak), chickenpox (initial outbreak) and whooping cough.

Students with symptoms should not attend school. Students who develop symptoms during the school day will be evaluated by the nurse. If requested to leave campus due to possible contagious symptoms, it is the parent's responsibility to pick up the student as quickly as possible.

The student should be symptom free for twenty-four (24) hours before returning to school.

A student may be readmitted to School when one of the following occurs:

- The School receives a medical clearance from the student's physician in writing;
- The School receives a readmission permit from the local Health District; or
- The guidelines published by the Texas Commissioner of Health show that the communicable disease in question (e.g., chickenpox) is no longer considered contagious.

Refer to the Texas Center for Arts & Academics website for the most up-to-date COVID-19 Health and Safety policies and procedures.

Lice

In accordance with Texas Education Code Section 38.031, a head check may be performed by the school nurse or appropriate school official as needed. In compliance with state law, a student with live lice shall be sent home from school. Prior to returning to school, the child's condition must be treated with medicated shampoo or lotion. Upon returning, parents should provide the dates of onset and treatment to the nurse.

If a student is found to have head lice:

- The parent or guardian will receive written or electronic notice as soon as practicable, but no later than 48 hours after the identification.
- Parents or guardians of all students in the same classroom will be notified in writing or electronically within five school days of the identification.

Immunization Policies

In compliance with state law, each student shall be fully immunized against the following diseases:

- Diphtheria/ Tetanus
- Rubella/Measles/Mumps
- Varicella (or documentation of having chicken pox disease)
- Poliomyelitis
- Meningitis * for students on or after 11th birthday
- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A

Each student shall be required to provide proof of immunization upon enrollment and then provide updated copies each year. The school shall recognize the following exceptions to the immunization requirement:

- Student's parent/guardian has submitted to the School a signed affidavit stating that the

immunizations conflict with the tenants and practice of a recognized church or religion of which the student is a member except that this exception does not apply in time of epidemic or emergency as declared by the Commissioner of public health.

- Student submits an affidavit signed by a licensed physician stating that, in the physician's opinion, the immunization(s) would be injurious to the health of the student or the student's family or household.

Persons who knowingly falsify student health information when enrolling are in violation of the law and are subject to prosecution.

Students may be provisionally admitted to the School if the student has begun the required immunizations and continues to receive the necessary immunizations as soon as is medically possible.

The School shall keep an individual immunization record for each student during the term of attendance at the School. These records shall be kept in compliance with all laws and regulations governing inspection of such records. These records may be transferred to other schools with or without parental or student consent as required by law.

Vision and Hearing Screening

The School shall cooperate with the State Board of Health to provide screening for students in designated grade levels to detect vision and hearing disorders and any other special senses or communication disorders specified by the Board of Health. The Campus Nurse shall insure that each student receives the appropriate screening within the time period established by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

A parent or guardian may substitute one or more evaluations performed by an outside professional chosen by the parent for the required screenings. The School shall not reimburse the parent for private or outside evaluations obtained in these areas.

A student may be exempted from the screenings if the screening procedure conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religion of which the student is a member. The School Nurse must receive an affidavit signed by the student, or student's parent or guardian if a minor, on or before the day of admission, stating the objection to the screening.

The School Nurse shall maintain records of the screenings on forms provided by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Such records shall be available for inspection by the State and/or local health departments.

Abnormal Spinal Curvature Screening

The School shall comply with State law and regulations promulgated by the State Department of Health and shall conduct or otherwise arrange a program for mandatory spinal screening for abnormal spinal curvature for girl students in 5th grade.

The School may engage a non-health practitioner to conduct the screenings, but the School shall insure that any individual conducting the screenings is properly trained and certified. If any screening indicates a student may have abnormal spinal curvature, the individual conducting the screenings, shall fill out the report form prescribed by the Department of Health. A copy of any such report shall be mailed to the student's parent or guardian, and a copy shall be kept with the School Nurse.

A parent or guardian may substitute one or more evaluations performed by an outside professional chosen by the parent for the required screenings. The School shall not reimburse the parent for private or outside evaluations obtained in these areas.

A student may be exempted from the screenings if the screening procedure conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religion of which the student is a member. The School Nurse must receive an affidavit signed by the student, or student's parent or guardian if a minor, on or before the day of admission, stating the objection to the screening.

Bacterial Meningitis

State law specifically requires the school 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 overcome 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 (7) to ten (10) days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

- Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine.

Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

Campus Breakfast & Lunch Program

The TeSA breakfast and lunch program requires prepayment on all meals. All payments may be made online through the designated system or with cash/check. Parents will be charged a transaction fee per online transaction. Once an account is established, parents will be notified by email when their student has reached a low balance. Parents may contact the Kitchen Manager directly regarding negative balance plans.

Instead of purchasing at school, students may bring their lunch and beverage. All food brought to school must be ready to eat. A microwave or fridge is not available to students. Students should also bring their own napkins and utensils. No glass containers are allowed.

Pricing

The price of breakfast and lunch will be listed on the monthly menu. Due to possible increases in the cost of food, specific ingredients and/or supplies, and transportation/delivery, TeSA reserves the right to increase the cost of meals if needed.

Additional Considerations

- Adult meals cannot be purchased with student accounts.
- A student is not allowed to purchase items for another student.
- A lunch tray is a set price; students are not required to take the milk.
- Additional items, such as cookies or extra helpings of entrée items, may be available for an additional fee.
- Parents/Guardians will only receive a low account balance email alert if they have set up

online payments.

- Students with a negative balance are not allowed to purchase additional items, such as cookies.
- Students with a negative balance may be served an alternative entree.
- If parents/guardians prefer their child NOT purchase additional items, they must email or send a signed note with specific instructions.
- All concerns regarding the nutrition program should be addressed to the Kitchen Manager.

Celebration Treats

Treats and small prizes are allowed for celebrations at school. Due to potential allergens, non-food items are highly recommended. If food items are brought to campus, the following guidelines must be met:

- It is the donor's responsibility to discuss any classroom allergies with the teacher before bringing any food items to school, and to make sure there is something for every child.
- Due to the risk of allergic reactions due to ingredients or cross contamination, no homemade items will be accepted.
- Celebration Treats must be wrapped, store bought items, and accompanied by a nutritional label.
- Treats will be distributed by the teacher or designated volunteer at the teacher's discretion in the homeroom classroom.

Parents/Guardians of students with food allergies/sensitivities may bring a box of wrapped treats at the beginning of the school year so that when there are special treat days, the approved treat is already provided.

Water Bottles

Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school daily. All water bottles must be spill proof. Bottles with open spouts or straws are not allowed. Water bottles should be able to fit in the student's backpack. It is the student's responsibility to carry the water bottle to and ensure it is always closed tightly.

Wellness Policy

The Texas School of the Arts shall support the general wellness of all students by implementing measurable goals to promote sound nutrition, student health, and to reduce childhood obesity.

Wellness Plan

• The wellness plan shall, at a minimum, address:

- strategies for soliciting involvement by and input from persons interested in the wellness plan and policy;
- objectives, benchmarks, and activities for implementing the wellness goals;
- methods for measuring implementation of the wellness goals; and
- the manner of communicating to the public applicable information about the school's wellness policy and plan.

Nutrition Guidelines

The school's nutrition guidelines for all other foods and beverages sold/made available or marketed to students during the school day shall be designed to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. The guidelines shall be at least as restrictive as federal regulations and guidance, except when the school allows an exemption for fundraising activities as authorized by state and federal rules.

Wellness Goals: Nutrition Promotion & Education

The school shall implement, in accordance with law, a coordinated school health program with a nutrition education component. The school's nutrition promotion activities shall encourage participation in the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and any other supplemental food and nutrition programs offered by the school.

The school establishes the following goals for nutrition promotion:

- the School's food service staff, teachers, and other school personnel shall consistently promote healthy nutrition messages in cafeterias, classrooms, and other appropriate settings;
- the School shall share educational nutrition information with families and the general public to promote healthy nutrition choices and positively influence the health of students; and
- the School shall ensure that food and beverage advertisements accessible to students during the school day contain only products that meet the federal guidelines for meals and competitive foods.

The school establishes the following goals for nutrition education:

- the School shall deliver nutrition education that fosters the adoption and maintenance of healthy eating behaviors;
- the School shall make nutrition education a school-wide priority and shall integrate nutrition education into other areas of the curriculum, as appropriate; and
- the School shall provide professional development so that teachers and other staff responsible for the nutrition education program are adequately prepared to effectively deliver the program.

Wellness Goals: Physical Activity

The School shall implement, in accordance with law, a coordinated health program with physical education and activity components and shall offer at least the required amount of physical activity for all grades.

The school establishes the following goals for physical activity:

- The School provides an environment that fosters safe, enjoyable, and developmentally appropriate fitness activities for all students, including those who are not participating in physical education classes or competitive sports;
- The School provides appropriate staff development and encourage teachers to integrate physical activity into the curriculum where appropriate;
- The School provides appropriate training and other activities available to school employees in order to promote enjoyable, lifelong, physical activity for school employees and students; and
- The School encourages parents to support their children's participation, to be active

role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

Parents/guardians may request in writing their child's physical fitness assessment results at the conclusion of the school year.

School-Based Activities

The school establishes the following goals to create an environment conducive to healthful eating and physical activity and to promote and express a consistent wellness message through other school-based activities:

- the School allows sufficient time for students to eat meals in cafeteria facilities that are clean, safe, and comfortable;
- the School promotes wellness for students and their families at suitable school and campus activities; and
- the School promotes employee wellness activities and involvement at suitable school and campus activities.

Outdoor Activities

As part of the wellness program, all K-5th students will have the opportunity to participate in recess daily. Recess will be held outside when possible. When students are not permitted outside, teachers will designate allowable indoor activities.

The recommended temperature to allow students to participate in outdoor activity for a prolonged time period is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or above, including the wind chill. If campus staff determine a student does not have sufficient warm clothing for outdoor activities, the student may be excused or given an alternative assignment.

Students should not participate in prolonged outdoor activities when the temperature or heat index is greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

Active lawn care, construction, weather alerts/watches, lightning, storms, and Air Quality Index (Ozone Alert Days) will be monitored and determined on a case-by-case basis by the Campus Principal.

Implementation

The Principal shall oversee the implementation of this policy and the development and implementation of the wellness plan and appropriate administrative procedures.

Evaluation

The school shall comply with federal requirements for evaluating this policy and plan, as well as the school's level of compliance. Annually, the SHAC shall assess and prepare a report of the school's progress toward meeting the goals listed in this policy and in the wellness plan, including a summary of the school's major activities and events tied to the wellness program.

Personal Belongings

Responsibility

TeSA is not, at any time, responsible for students' private possessions. Students should mark all personal items, including ALL uniform items. Students who ride bicycles to school should park and secure them in the assigned place immediately upon arrival.

Students shall be responsible for their own personal belongings while at TeSA. Students are discouraged from wearing or bringing expensive items of clothing, jewelry, or watches to campus. TeSA shall NOT be responsible for any personal items that are lost, damaged, or stolen at school or at school-related activities.

Students may bring a small purse or toiletry bag to transport personal items between classes or to the bathroom.

Oversized and rolling backpacks are not allowed without advanced permission.

School administrators may search a child's backpack, locker, or other personal items brought to school if there is a reasonable suspicion of a code of conduct violation or in order to investigate a smell that may attract insects or rodents.

Lost and Found

A Lost and Found area will be available for all students. Students are encouraged to look for items immediately before and after school. Parents may check into the office to look through the lost and found area as needed. At the end of each grading period, all uniform items with no name will be donated to the TeSA PTO Resale. All non-uniform items will be donated.

Religious Activity

Students may individually, voluntarily and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt the instructional or other activities of the school.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Texas Center for Arts + Academics and TeSA prohibit discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of School policy.

Discrimination

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

Prohibited Harassment

Prohibited harassment of a student is defined as physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on the student's race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

- affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Sexual Harassment by an Employee

Sexual harassment of a student by a School employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following: 1. An employee of the recipient conditioning the provision of an aid, benefit, or service of the recipient on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;

Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the recipient's education program or activity; or "Sexual assault" as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1092(f)(6)(A)(v), "dating violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(10), "domestic violence" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(8), or "stalking" as defined in 34 U.S.C. 12291(a)(30).

Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and School employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a School employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

Sexual Harassment by Others

Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

- Affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment;
- Has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance; or
- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Retaliation

The School prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation.

A student who intentionally makes a false claim, offers false statements, or refuses to cooperate with a School investigation regarding discrimination or harassment is subject to appropriate discipline.

Prohibited Conduct

In this policy, the term “prohibited conduct” includes discrimination, harassment, and retaliation as defined by this policy and/or the Student and Parent Handbook, even if the behavior does not rise to the level of unlawful conduct.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited conduct or believes that another student has experienced prohibited conduct should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, principal, or the appropriate Compliance Coordinator listed in this policy.

Any School employee who suspects or receives notice that a student or group of students has or may have experienced prohibited conduct shall immediately notify the appropriate Compliance Coordinator listed in this policy, and take any other steps required by this policy.

Definition of Compliance Coordinators

For the purposes of this policy, Compliance Coordinators are the Title IX Coordinator, the Special Populations Coordinator, and the Superintendent.

Title IX Coordinator

Reports of discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment, may be directed to the Title IX coordinator. The School designates the Principal to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, as amended. The coordinator may be contacted through the school office.

Special Populations Coordinator

Reports of discrimination based on disability may be directed to the Special Populations Coordinator. The School designates the following person to coordinate its efforts to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The coordinator may be contacted through the school office.

Superintendent

The Superintendent shall serve as the Compliance Coordinator for purposes of the School’s compliance with all other anti-discrimination laws.

Alternative Reporting Procedures

A student shall not be required to report prohibited conduct to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct by the Title IX Coordinator or the Special

Populations Coordinator may be directed to the Superintendent. Reports of prohibited conduct by the Superintendent may be made directly to the Board of Directors (the “Board”). If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall designate an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

Timely Reporting

Reports of prohibited conduct shall be made as soon as possible after the alleged act or knowledge of the alleged act. A failure to promptly report may impair the School’s ability to investigate and address the prohibited conduct.

Notice to Parents

The School shall promptly notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by a School employee, another adult, or another student.

Investigation of the Report

The School may request, but shall not insist upon, a written report. If a report is made orally, the School official receiving the report shall reduce the report to written form. The receiving School official shall immediately notify the appropriate Compliance Coordinator of the report.

Upon receipt or notice of a report, the designated Compliance Coordinator shall determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by this policy. If so, the Compliance Coordinator shall immediately authorize or undertake an investigation, regardless of whether a criminal or regulatory investigation regarding the same or similar allegations is pending.

If appropriate, the School shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the course of an investigation.

The investigation may be conducted by a Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by the School, such as an attorney. When appropriate, the Superintendent may be involved in or informed of the investigation.

The investigation may consist of personal interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. The investigation may also include analysis of other information or documents related to the allegations.

Concluding the Investigation

Absent extenuating circumstances, the investigation should be completed within fifteen (15) school business days from the date of the report. If the investigator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or issue a report, he or she shall inform the complainant in writing of the necessity to extend the time for investigating or responding and a specific date when the report will be issued. Notwithstanding, the School shall promptly take interim action calculated to prevent prohibited conduct during the entire course of the investigation. The Compliance Coordinator or designee shall prepare a written decision on the matter.

School Action

If the results of an investigation indicate that prohibited conduct occurred, the School shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct.

The School may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the conduct did not rise to the level of prohibited or unlawful conduct.

Confidentiality

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

Appeal

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the grievance process beginning at Level Two. A student or parent shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Records Retention

Retention of records shall be in accordance with the applicable schedule published by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Access to Policy

Information regarding this policy shall be distributed annually to School employees and included in the Student and Parent Handbook. Copies of the policy shall be readily available at each campus and the School's administrative offices.

Student & Parent Complaints & Grievances

Informal Process

The Board of Directors encourages students and parents to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate teacher, principal, or other campus administrator. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

A parent or student may request an informal conference with the Principal within five (5) school business days of the time the parent or student knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. If the parent or student is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, he or she may submit a written grievance form to the Principal. The grievance form can be obtained from

the school's main office.

Formal Process

If an informal conference regarding a complaint fails to reach the outcome requested by the student or parent, the student or parent may initiate the formal process described below by timely filing a written complaint.

Even after initiating the formal complaint process, students and parents are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A student or parent whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time.

The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or Board policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

Freedom from Retaliation

Neither the Board nor any Texas Center for Arts + Academics (the "Organization") employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any student or parent for bringing a concern or complaint.

Notice to Parents and Students

The Superintendent or designee may develop more detailed grievance procedures. The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that all students and parents are informed of the Organization's grievance procedures.

Complaints

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning. This policy shall apply to all student and parent complaints, except as provided below.

Exceptions

This policy shall not apply to:

- Complaints concerning loss of credit on the basis of attendance;
- Complaints concerning expulsion;
- Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504;
- Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; or
- Complaints regarding the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program.

Filing

School administrators addressing parent and student complaints are expected to resolve such complaints at the lowest possible level.

Student and/or parent complaints shall be submitted in writing. Copies of documents that support the complaint shall be attached to the complaint form or presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted unless their existence was unknown to the complainant before the Level One conference. A complaint that is incomplete may be dismissed.

For purposes of this policy, “days” shall mean school business days and announcement of a decision in the student’s or parent’s presence shall constitute communication of the decision. If an administrator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or issue a decision, the administrator shall inform the complainant in writing of the necessity to extend the time for investigating or responding and a specific date by when the decision will be issued.

Level One – Principal Review of Complaint

The student or parent shall request in writing a conference with the Principal or designee within sixty (60) school business days of the time the parent or student knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint. If a parent or student has been engaged in the informal attempts to resolve the grievance, the grievance must be filed the later of ninety (90) school business days from the date the parent first knew or should have known of the facts giving rise to the grievance or thirty (30) school business days from the date on which the district provided information to the parent on how to file the grievance.

The Principal or designee shall serve as the Level One Grievance Officer, and will schedule a conference with the parent or student within ten (10) school days of receipt of the written complaint to consider the grievance. The Level One Grievance Officer will provide a written response to the complaint within twenty (20) days of the meeting.

Note: Level One complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be filed within thirty (30) calendar days.

Level Two –Executive Director of Admissions Review of Complaint

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level One decision, or if no decision is provided within the time allotted, the student or parent may request in writing a conference with the Executive Director of Admissions within twenty (20) school days of the Level One decision or the response deadline if no decision is made. The appeal must be specific, reference the law or policy alleged to have been violated, or the dissatisfaction raised by the student or parent and requested remedies. Additionally, the student or parent shall submit any evidence supporting the complaint, and the date and results of the conference with the Level One Grievance Officer.

The Executive Director of Admissions or designee shall serve as the Level Two Grievance Officer, and will schedule a conference with the parent or student within ten days of receipt of the Level Two appeal. The Level Two Grievance Officer shall have twenty (20) school days following the conference to

issue a decision.

Level Three – Superintendent Review of Complaint

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Two decision, or if no decision is provided within the time allotted, the student or parent may request in writing a conference with the Superintendent within twenty (20) school days of the Level Two decision or the response deadline if no decision is made. The appeal must be specific, reference the law or policy alleged to have been violated, or the dissatisfaction raised by the student or parent and requested remedies. Additionally, the student or parent shall submit any evidence supporting the complaint, and the date and results of the conference with the Level Two Grievance Officer.

The Superintendent or designee shall serve as the Level Three Grievance Officer, and will schedule a conference with the parent or student within ten days of receipt of the Level Two appeal. The Level Three Grievance Officer shall have twenty (20) school days following the conference to issue a decision.

Level Four – Board of Directors Review of Complaint

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Three decision, or if no timely decision is provided, the student or parent may submit to the Superintendent a written request for a hearing before the Board. The request must be filed within twenty (20) days of the Level Three decision or the response deadline if no decision is made. The appeal request shall be directed to the President of the Board of Directors, and the Superintendent or designee shall deliver the complaint to the Board. The appeal request must include a copy of the written complaint to the Level Three Grievance Officer, with his or her response.

The School shall place the matter on the agenda of a future Board meeting, not later than 60 days after the day on which the previous decision on the grievance was made. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

The Board shall hear the student or parent complaint, and may set a reasonable time limit for presenting the complaint. Only written documentation and issues previously submitted and presented by the student or parent and the Organization will be considered. An audiotape recording of the hearing shall be made.

The Board shall communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing within thirty (30) days of the board meeting to hear the grievance. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the last decision below shall be upheld. The Board may delegate the authority to hear and decide a grievance to a committee of at least three members composed of only members of the board of trustees. Any decision made by the Board is final and may not be appealed, aside from an appeal to the Commissioner of Education under Texas Education Code §7.057.

If the complaint involves concerns or charges regarding a student or School employee, it shall be heard by the Board in closed meeting unless the employee and/or student against whom complaints have been made requests that it be heard in public.

Visitors to the School

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the school to volunteer or attend performances/events. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher, and only as long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must report to the front office upon arrival and comply with all applicable school policies and procedures. All visitors must sign in and receive a visitor's badge, and check out in the front office before exiting the building.

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

It is preferred not to have non-school aged children in the building during instructional time. However, if they are, they must remain with and under the control of a parent or adult guardian at all times.

Adults coming to eat lunch with a student must be listed on the student's approved lunch and dismissal list. During lunch, they must sit at the designated visitor tables with only their student. Other students are not permitted to join the table unless the visiting adult is also on their approved list.

Volunteers

Volunteers are welcomed and appreciated at TeSA. There are many forms of volunteerism. Teachers are allowed to request volunteers but are not required to do so. Some teachers may choose to use volunteers for parties or chaperoning field trips. Some may use volunteers in the classroom.

Volunteers are not allowed in the class during instructional time unless invited by a teacher. If a teacher needs a volunteer, s/he will contact the parents and request assistance.

Volunteers may not gather in the building or at the front desk unless permitted by a school official as

part of the volunteers' responsibilities. Each employee has responsibilities that preclude them from being able to socialize with volunteers during work hours.

Background checks are required of volunteers. For the safety of our students and our school community, anyone who fails to submit to or to pass a background check will not be allowed to volunteer and may be restricted in their participation at school activities, as required by law.

Volunteer Policy

Purpose

Volunteers may be used in the Organization to provide assistance in areas of support and enhance teaching and learning, the welfare of students, the schools, the conservatories, and the staff, and other areas of need that support the Organization.

Authority

Volunteers may be used in the Organization to work under the supervision of the principal or designee in whose building they are assigned. All volunteers shall follow all federal and state laws, organization policies, and regulations.

Volunteer Application Process

A volunteer may not perform any volunteer duties until:

- The volunteer has turned in a notarized Volunteer Application.
 - If the form is notarized off site, they will need to scan and email the document to the front office.
 - If the form needs to be notarized by the campus, they must present their driver license simultaneously.
- The volunteer has provided to the Organization a driver license or another form of identification containing the person's photograph issued by an entity of the United States government;
- The Organization has obtained from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) the criminal history record information that relates to the volunteer. The Organization, at the Board's and/or President & Chief Executive Officer's discretion, may obtain additional volunteer criminal history record information from any other law enforcement agency, criminal justice agency, or private consumer reporting agency, including but not limited to national criminal history record information from DPS through the Fingerprint Application Clearinghouse of Texas (FACT Clearinghouse); and
- The volunteer has fully completed the Organization's volunteer application provided by the

Organization and such application and criminal history record information has been reviewed by the principal or designee of the Organization to whom the volunteer has been assigned.

Applicability

The application and criminal history record review requirements apply to a volunteer or person who has indicated, in writing, an intention to serve as a volunteer of the Organization. The application and criminal history record review are required to be renewed every school year.

Costs

The Organization may require a volunteer or volunteer applicant to pay any costs related to obtaining criminal history record information.

Governing Criteria for Volunteer Clearance Decisions

Volunteer clearance is contingent upon the application and criminal history record being reviewed and approved by the Organization in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Regarding moral turpitude, an applicant who is a sexual offender or listed in a sex offender registry or database will be denied.
- An applicant who has been charged with, convicted of, or received probation or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor for the following crimes will be denied:
 - Child abuse;
 - Indecency with a child;
 - Injury to a child
 - Neglect of a child/elderly person/or disabled individual;
 - Molestation;
 - Child pornography;
 - Prostitution of a child; or
 - Sexual or human trafficking.
- If an applicant has been charged with, convicted of, or is currently on probation for a felony criminal offense of the following, the volunteer may be denied:
 - Theft;
 - Burglary;
 - Fraud;
 - Alcohol/drug abuse or distribution;
 - Criminal trespassing;
 - Vandalism;
 - Deliberate violence; or
 - Any other acts as determined by the Organization as dangerous to staff, students, or Organization property.

NOTE: The Organization may, at any time, deny any applicant from volunteering when the volunteer demonstrates behavior that is disruptive to the academic environment or behavior that is dangerous to Organization personnel, students, or property.

Texas School of the Arts

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Application of the Code | 48 |
| Expectations for Student Conduct | 48 |
| Prohibited Conduct | 49 |
| Bullying/Cyber-Bullying | 51 |
| Determining Appropriate Discipline | 54 |
| Investigation of Discipline Issues | 55 |
| Discipline of Students with Special Needs | 55 |
| Types of Disciplinary Measures | 57 |
| Expulsion | 60 |
| Discipline Appeal Process | 63 |
| Definitions | 63 |

Application of the Code

Texas School of the Arts has adopted this Student Code of Conduct (the “Code”) in accordance with Texas Education Code §12.131, in order to clearly communicate standards for expected student conduct, the disciplinary consequences which may be applied to students who violate those standards, and the applicable procedures for the implementation of disciplinary consequences. All students must comply with the Code. Definitions of words and phrases used throughout this Code are provided at the end of the Code.

Parents and students are encouraged to contact campus administration with any questions or concerns regarding the requirements and provisions of the Code. Parents and students are expected to review and be familiar with the provisions of the Code. Lack of knowledge or awareness about any School rules, including this Code, will not excuse violations of the Code. Parents and students will be required to sign a statement acknowledging receipt and understanding of the Code. A copy of this Code is available on the Resources page at www.artsacademics.org or at the school office.

The School has the authority to create and enforce rules related to student conduct and behavior while on school property, traveling to or in attendance at a school-sponsored or school-related event or activity, whether on or off campus. The School has the authority to issue disciplinary consequences for certain other student conduct that relates to, affects, or shares a nexus with the School, its students, or its employees regardless of when or where the conduct occurs. The School may also issue discipline based on a student’s use of electronic media, whether on or off campus.

Other School rules, codes, or policies may apply to a student’s misconduct, and may result in multiple disciplinary consequences issued for the same conduct.

If a student who would otherwise be ineligible for admission to the School provides false information on an admissions application or other enrollment document and as a result of the false information is admitted to the School, the student shall be immediately withdrawn from enrollment from the School upon discovery of the falsification. Falsification of information for the purpose of gaining enrollment in a public school is a criminal offense under the Texas Penal Code §37.10. The School may elect to report the falsification to law enforcement or take any other action permitted by law.

Expectations for Student Conduct

All students are expected to follow the campus rules at all times. Expectations will be taught in each classroom and communicated to parents. Parent cooperation is essential to achieving TeSA’s mission and ensuring that students learn in a safe, secure and positive environment. Parental involvement and cooperation is vital in the discipline process. Parents should understand and follow the Code while on campus or at school-related events, ensure that his or her child understands and seeks to comply with

this Code, and assist the school in counseling students regarding appropriate behavior.

Because of the significant variations in student conduct, it is not always possible for the Code to address each and every act of student misbehavior. To that end, the District retains discretion to address student misconduct that is inconsistent with these standards, even though the conduct may not be specifically listed in the Code.

Threat Assessment and Safe and Supportive School Team

The District will also establish a "threat assessment and safe and supportive school team" to serve at each campus of the district and will recommend policies and procedures for the teams. The team is responsible for developing and implementing the safe and supportive school program, as well as conducting threat assessments. These will include assessing and reporting individuals who make threats of violence or exhibit harmful, threatening, or violent behavior, gathering and analyzing data to determine the level of risk and appropriate intervention (including referring a student for mental health assessment and implementing an escalation procedure, if appropriate based on the team's assessment), and providing guidance to students and school employees on recognizing harmful, threatening, or violent behavior that may pose a threat to the community, school, or individual.

Before a team may conduct a threat assessment of a student, the team must notify the parent of or person standing in parental relation to the student of the assessment. In conducting the assessment, the team shall provide an opportunity for the parent or person to: (1) participate in the assessment, either in person or remotely; and (2) submit to the team information regarding the student. After completing a threat assessment of a student, the team shall provide to the parent of or person standing in parental relation to the student the team's findings and conclusions regarding the student.

Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct constitutes a violation of the Code. Any student found to have engaged in such conduct shall be subject to one or more disciplinary consequences as identified within the Code.

General Student Behavior

1. Cursing, using offensive language, name calling, ethnic, racial or gender slurs, other derogatory statements, or yelling;
2. Disrespectful behavior towards adults;
3. Failure to follow directives;
4. Disruption of instruction or other school activities or operations;
5. Unexcused or excessive tardiness;

6. False statements or false accusations;
7. Bullying (*including cyberbullying*), teasing, or targeting other students;
8. Inappropriate cell phone or electronic media use;
9. Consensual hugging, touching, or other displays of affection
10. Horseplay, roughhousing, and other playful behavior that, though not intended to harm, presents a reasonable risk for harm, threatens the safety of others, or actually causes injury to others.
11. Hitting, pushing, or attempting to hurt another student.
12. Engaging in conduct that can or does cause bodily injury.
13. Inappropriate verbal (oral or written), or physical contact toward another student or a District employee, official, or volunteer, regardless of whether it is consensual.
14. Retaliating against a student for reporting violation of the Code.

Violation of School Rules and Policies

15. Failure to comply with the Student Handbook, or other School or campus rules;
16. Leaving the classroom, school building, mandatory school activities or events, or adult supervision without permission;
17. Skipping a class period or other mandatory activity, in whole or in part, without permission;
18. Violation of School or campus policies or rules related to the use of electronic media, including personal or School-owned electronic devices (*e.g.*, cell phones, tablets, game systems, computers, cameras), or the School's network or Internet connection;
19. Truancy or other failure to attend school without excuse;
20. Defacing, destroying or otherwise modifying School property without authorization;
21. Taking photographs or making video or audio recordings of students, employees, or other persons without the consent of the other person;
22. Soliciting or attempting to solicit another student to violate the Code, School policies and rules, or the law;
23. Taking steps toward violation of the Code even if the act is not completed, as determined by an appropriate School administrator;
24. Failing to follow school directives and classroom rules and expectations;
25. Disobeying rules and expectations regarding school transportation;
26. Inappropriate or unauthorized use of School property, including posting or distributing literature or materials without School authorization;
27. Stealing from others, including the District.
28. Marking District property included, but not limited to; textbooks, lockers, furniture, or equipment.

Violent, Illegal, and Other Serious Offenses

29. Propping open or opening any exterior door for another person
30. Possession of prohibited items;
31. Conduct which meets the elements of a criminal offense, as determined by the School;
32. Inappropriate physical or sexual behavior, including jokes, comments, gestures or unwelcome physical conduct or contact;
33. Inappropriate verbal (oral or written), physical, or sexual contact/harassment toward another student or a District employee, official, or volunteer, regardless of whether it is consensual.
34. False statements or false accusations;

35. Hazing or initiations;
36. Participation in a gang, or soliciting or attempting to solicit participation in a gang;
37. Possessing, distributing, using or being under the influence of tobacco products, electronic cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances, including prescription drugs if the student has not been prescribed the drugs or is taking the drugs in excess of the dosage specified by the prescription;
38. Possessing drug paraphernalia;
39. Stealing, lying, cheating, or copying the work of another without authorization (plagiarism);
40. Deliberately, and without School authorization, accessing, damaging, or altering School data and records, including but not limited to confidential records, electronic data, networks or systems;
41. Violence of any kind, including dating violence;
42. Fighting;
43. Gambling;
44. Setting or attempting to set a fire;
45. Inappropriate or indecent exposure of body parts/touching one's own private body parts in a sexual manner;
46. Retaliation of any form against other students or School personnel;
47. Conduct which requires the student's registration as a sex offender;
48. Possession or distribution of pictures, text messages, electronic messages or other material of a sexual or obscene nature;
49. Endangering the health or safety of others;
50. Engaging in physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse as a means to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person in a current or past dating relationship.
51. Engaging in oral or written threats to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, a District employee, official, or volunteer, or school property, including threats made using the Internet or other technology resources at school. Students may be disciplined for threats made outside of school, including website or Internet postings, whether or not such threats are meant to be taken seriously;
52. Engaging in oral or written threats of any kind of violence, violent acts, or harm to another student or staff member, Obtaining and using another person's identifying information or personal data; or
53. Other conduct as identified within this Code.

Bullying & Cyber-Bullying

Texas Education Code (TEC), §37.0832

- ensure and appropriately integrate into instruction research-based content designed to reduce bullying for students in that age group, which are:
 - for students in early primary:
 - explicit direct instruction designed so students can recognize bullying, including cyberbullying, behaviors, and how to report them;
 - age-appropriate classroom culture-building discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying occur; and explicit direct instruction that

characterizes bullying as a behavior that results from the student's need to acquire more mature social or coping skills, not an immutable trait;

- for students in secondary:
 - explicit direct instruction on the brain's neuroplasticity so the student recognizes bullying, including cyberbullying, the behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an immutable trait; and
 - classroom-culture or school-culture-building discussions that portray bullying as undesirable behavior and means for attaining or maintaining social status in school, and to dissuade students from using bullying as a tool for reputation management;
 - explicit direct instruction is designed so students recognize the role reporting plays in promoting a safe school community
- define how positive school culture and building healthy relationships between students and staff will be measured in alignment with the school and LEA's mission, vision, and values, using an age-appropriate survey that includes relevant questions on bullying, including cyberbullying, that includes appropriate privacy controls in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g), and define who is responsible to develop and oversee the implementation of action plans based on the results that address student concerns regarding bullying, including cyberbullying;
- require each LEA campus to establish a committee, which must include parents and secondary level students and may be incorporated into an existing committee that otherwise meets the requirements of these minimum standards, to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives;
- develop a policy for the reporting of bullying, including cyberbullying, incidents:
 - the policy must outline an easy mechanism(s) for reporting bullying, including cyberbullying, incidents both anonymously and identifiable by students and staff to an appropriate campus staff member(s)
 - the policy should recognize that, while one or more staff members may be designated, students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to any trusted staff member, and that any staff member aware of such incidents must relay any reports to the appropriate designated staff member(s); and
 - the policy should provide for a tracking mechanism to allow for LEA-level staff to periodically monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents, and that declines in the count of bullying incidents may represent not only improvements in the campus culture because bullying declines but also declines in the campus culture because of a decline in openness to report incidents;
- provide support for research-based interventions taken both for the students who engage in bullying behaviors and the students who were targeted by the bullying behaviors;
- include a rubric or checklist to assess an incident of bullying and to determine the LEA's response to the incident.

- in connection with the policy in subsection 4 and the rubric/checklist in subsection 6 any actions taken in response to bullying, including cyberbullying, must comply with state and federal law regarding students with disabilities.

Bullying Definition

Bullying is a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct directed at another student that (1) occurs on or is delivered to School property or to the site of a School-sponsored or School-related activity on or off School property; (2) occurs on a publicly or privately owned School bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from the School or a School-sponsored or School-related activity; and

- exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator(s) and the student victim(s);
- has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; or
- is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student;
- materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school;
- infringes on the rights of the victim at school; and
- includes cyber-bullying.

Cyber-bullying means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including cellular telephone, a computer, a camera, e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Cyber-bullying includes conduct that occurs off School property or outside of a School-sponsored or School-related activity if it interferes with a student's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, the School, or School-sponsored or School-related activity.

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced bullying or cyberbullying or believes that another student has experienced bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Campus Principal, a teacher, counselor, or other School employee. A report may be made orally or in writing. Any School employee who receives a report of potential bullying or cyberbullying must immediately relay the report to the Campus Principal.

Investigation of Report

The Principal or Principal designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment, and if so, proceed to conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent

bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the School shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The School may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the School concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying as defined above.

Confidentiality

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

Determining Appropriate Discipline

Depending on the nature and severity of the offense, disciplinary measures may be issued by the student's classroom teacher, campus administrator, or administrator's designee, in accordance with this Code. In order to make a determination of misconduct and/or issue disciplinary consequences under this Code, the authorized School employee must have a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the suspected conduct. The employee's conclusion may be based on any relevant evidence including, but not limited to, observation, other personal knowledge, verbal or written witness statements, other forms of documentation, or information received from law enforcement.

In response to certain behaviors and incidents, the school may choose to address student behavior through Restorative Practices / Restorative Discipline.

In reaching a decision regarding a student discipline matter, the School may consider the specific facts and circumstances of the situation, including but not limited to:

- the student's intent;
- the student's age and grade level;
- the student's past disciplinary history;
- whether the student's conduct may have been the manifestation of a disability;
- the extent of the student's cooperation during the investigation of the matter;
- the nature and severity of the alleged conduct;
- whether the student has previously engaged in similar conduct;
- whether self-defense was involved;
- the student's remorsefulness for the conduct;
- the severity of the effect or harm of the conduct on other persons or property; and/or
- the frequency of the conduct.

The School may issue disciplinary measures based on a determination that a student has engaged in conduct which meets the elements of a criminal offense. The School has the authority to make such a determination without regard for whether the student is arrested, charged, or otherwise processed by the criminal justice system for the criminal offense. The School may consider information received from law enforcement or other entities within the criminal justice system in issuing discipline under this Code.

Actions will not be based on a student's race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sex, religion, disability, or any other unlawful consideration.

Investigation of Discipline Issues

In order to determine whether a violation of the Code has occurred, campus administrators or other authorized individuals may conduct an investigation. An investigation of student misconduct may involve, but is not limited to, interviews of other students, employees, and adults; review of school surveillance footage; review of relevant documents; review of information on School-owned computers; verification of tips received from other individuals; the gathering of physical evidence; or contact of or cooperation with law enforcement agencies and officials. Law enforcement may be contacted and informed of student conduct which may constitute a criminal offense.

Students should have no expectation of privacy with respect to School-owned property. Lockers, desks, and other items provided for student use remain School property, and students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy in School property or in personal items placed inside School property. School administrators or other authorized personnel may monitor and search student desks and lockers for any reason. School officials may search any School property, including School property that is within a student's possession or otherwise being used by a student, at any time, with or without notice to the student and without consent. School officials may confiscate any items found during a search, including prohibited items, dangerous items, or other items that violate School policy.

A student's person or property may be searched by authorized school officials if the official has a reasonable belief that the search will result in the discovery of evidence of a violation of the Code or of the law. Any personal property which is brought onto school property or to a school-sponsored or school-related activity or event, on or off school property, may be subject to search (*e.g.*, student cell phone, backpack, personal computer, purse, car, etc.).

Discipline of Students with Special Needs

Students eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) or Section

504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) are subject to discipline under those laws and in accordance with the provisions of this Code.

The School may take disciplinary action pertaining to the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol against any student with a disability under Section 504 who is currently engaging in the illegal use of drugs or in the use of alcohol to the same extent that the School would take disciplinary action against nondisabled students. The due process procedures afforded under Section 504 do not apply to disciplinary action for the use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol. However, a student who is eligible for special education under the IDEA shall have a manifestation determination review conducted to address any use or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol if such conduct could result in a change of placement.

Any disciplinary action that would constitute a “change in the placement” of a student receiving special education services may be taken only after the student’s Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee conducts a manifestation determination review in order to determine whether the student’s conduct was a manifestation of his or her disability.

A change in placement occurs if a student is:

- Removed from the student’s current educational placement for more than ten (10) consecutive school days; or
- Subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:
 - The series of removals total more than ten school days in a school year;
 - The student’s behavior is substantially similar to the student’s behavior in the previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and
 - Additional factors exist, such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

The School will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change in placement.

A student who has not been determined eligible for special education services and who has engaged in behavior that violates the Code is entitled to the protections under the IDEA regarding discipline of a student with special needs described above if the school has knowledge that the student was a student with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. If the school does not have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability prior to taking disciplinary action, the student may be subject to the disciplinary actions applied to students without disabilities. If a request is made for an evaluation of a student during the time period in which the student is subjected to disciplinary action, the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner.

Types of Disciplinary Measures

Administrators and staff employ a variety of strategies focusing on teaching and encouraging appropriate behavior. These strategies may include:

- Verbal correction/warning;
- Loss or restriction of privileges;
- Confiscation of items;
- School-related assigned tasks or duties;
- Counseling referral;
- Conference with teacher;
- Parent/Teacher conference;
- Removal from class to campus office;
- Conference with administrator;
- Parent/Administrator conference;
- In-School Suspension;
- Out-of-School Suspension;
- Expulsion.

One or more of these disciplinary consequences may be issued to a student found to have violated the Code. If the Code does not specify the appropriate disciplinary consequence for a particular type of student conduct, the School may issue whatever disciplinary consequence is deemed reasonable and appropriate, with the exception of expulsion. A teacher may have additional rules and consequences for student conduct in the classroom which may result in discipline under this Code or may be enforced in addition to any discipline issued under this Code.

Withdrawal from school after a student has been accused of a violation of the Code does not prevent Texas School of the Arts from investigating the alleged violation and, if it is determined that a violation did occur, assessing the appropriate disciplinary consequence and enforcing that consequence should the student re-enroll in the district.

If a student withdraws from the School before completing assigned In-School Suspension, Out-of-School Suspension, or Expulsion, the School shall send documentation of the discipline to the next school that enrolls the student. If a student withdraws from the School before the expulsion process is completed, the School may choose to complete the expulsion process and send documentation of the expulsion decision to the next school that enrolls the student. If the student returns to enroll in the School at a later date and has not been required to complete the disciplinary consequences previously required, the School may require the student to complete the discipline upon return.

The Code shall be applied and enforced consistently and equitably among students, with the understanding that every disciplinary situation will differ and decisions will be made based on the individual facts and circumstances of a given situation.

Detention

A student may be assigned to one or more sessions of Detention for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the student's conduct and assignment to Detention. Detention will be held outside of the instructional day, either before or after school, during lunch, or during recess.

In-School Suspension (ISS)

A student may be assigned to one or more sessions of In-School Suspension for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the student's conduct and assignment of ISS. In-School Suspension will require the student to report to a designated alternative space on campus for all or part of one or more school days. While in In-School Suspension, the student will be provided the appropriate class assignments and will be expected to complete those assignments as if the student were in the regular classroom. There is no limit on the duration of an assignment to In-School Suspension, though a review must occur every ten (10) days.

Out-Of-School Suspension (OSS)

A student may be suspended for one or more school days for engaging in prohibited conduct under this Code. The student's parent or guardian will be notified of the student's conduct and the length of the period of Suspension. A student may not be suspended for more than three (3) consecutive school days. During a period of suspension, the suspended student may not enter onto school property or participate in or attend school-sponsored or school-related events or activities. The student's teachers will provide assignments that the student will be expected to complete during the period of suspension. Student assignments or other class work completed during a period of suspension will be accepted for grading.

Removal from the Classroom by Teacher**Ordinary Teacher Removal**

A teacher may send a student to the campus behavior coordinator's office to maintain discipline in the classroom or when the student engages in behavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct. These informal removals do not require documentation of repeated interference.

In cases of ordinary removal, the campus behavior coordinator will implement one or more discipline management techniques to address and improve the student's behavior before returning the student to the classroom. If the student's behavior does not improve, additional progressive interventions may be employed in accordance with campus policy.

Formal Teacher Removal (TEC §37.002)

A teacher may initiate a formal removal from class when:

- A student's behavior repeatedly interferes with the teacher's ability to teach or the learning of others;
- The student's behavior is ~~so~~ unruly, disruptive, or abusive toward the teacher, another adult, or another student; or
- The student's behavior constitutes bullying as defined by Section 37.0832.

A teacher may document and submit any student behavior that violates the Student Code of Conduct. A teacher must remove a student if the student engages in conduct that requires mandatory removal under Chapter 37 of the Texas Education Code. Certain behaviors require mandatory Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) placement under TEC Chapter 37. Since Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts does not operate a DAEP, such cases will result in an expulsion, and the student's home campus or enrolling district will be contacted to coordinate further placement.

Placement Review Committee (TEC §37.003)

The Placement Review Committee (PRC) determines whether a student who has been formally removed may return to the teacher's classroom.

The committee consists of:

- Two teachers selected by the campus faculty
- One staff member selected by the campus behavior coordinator
- One alternate teacher designated by the faculty

The teacher who removed the student may not serve on the committee reviewing that case.

In cases involving assault or sexual misconduct directed toward a teacher, the student may not be returned to that teacher's class without the teacher's consent. The teacher may not be coerced to give consent.

For students receiving special education services, any change in placement must be determined by the student's ARD committee.

Placement Options During Removal

When a student is formally removed, the administrator may assign the student to:

- Another appropriate classroom
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS)
- Another appropriate disciplinary setting, as determined by the severity of the behavior and in alignment with school policy and Texas Education Code.

Procedures for Formal Teacher Removal

No later than three school days after the formal removal, an administrator will schedule a review conference with the PRC. Before the conference the student will be informed of the reason for removal and provided an opportunity to respond. After the conference, the PRC will make a final decision regarding the student's placement. A student sent to the administrator's office is not considered formally removed unless the placement results in in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

Return to the Classroom

If the behavior involved serious misconduct (e.g., assault against a teacher), the student may not return to the teacher's class without the teacher's written consent. For all other formal removals, the Placement Review Committee will determine whether the student may return to the classroom or be placed elsewhere.

Expulsion

A student may be expelled from the School if he or she is found to have committed any of the acts listed below.

- **Weapons.** The student used, exhibited, or possessed any of the following while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property:
 - A firearm;
 - A location-restricted knife;
 - A club; or
 - A prohibited weapon.
- **Violent Conduct.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code, regardless of location:
 - Aggravated assault, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, arson, murder, capital murder, criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder, indecency with a child, aggravated kidnapping, aggravated robbery, manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide, or continuous sexual abuse of a child or children;
 - Assault against another student, an employee, or a volunteer of the School;
 - Deadly conduct; or
 - A Title 5 felony under the Texas Penal Code.
- **Disruptions.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code, regardless of location:
 - False alarm or report or terroristic threat involving a public school;
 - An offense related to an abusable volatile chemical;
 - Breach of computer security if the conduct involves accessing a computer network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a public school and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes school property or information or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system;
 - Criminal mischief if the conduct is punishable as a felony; or

- Public lewdness or indecent exposure.
- **Drugs and Alcohol.** The student engaged in conduct that contains the elements of the following offenses within the Texas Penal Code:
 - On school property, at school-sponsored or school-related event, or within 300 feet of school property:
 - i. Sells, gives, or delivers to another person or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of any amount of marijuana, dangerous drug, or alcoholic beverage.
 - Regardless of location:
 - i. Sells, gives, delivers to another person or possesses or uses or is under the influence of marijuana or a dangerous drug, as defined by the Health and Safety Code, if the conduct is punishable as a felony.
 - ii. Sells, gives, or delivers to another person an alcoholic beverage, as defined by the Alcoholic Beverage Code, commits a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol, or possesses, uses, or is under the influence of an alcoholic beverage, and the conduct is punishable as a felony.
- **Bullying and Cyber-bullying** the student, while on or off-campus:
 - Engages in bullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide;
 - Incites violence against a student through group bullying; or
 - Releases or threatens to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent.
- **Other.** The student, while on campus or at a school-sponsored or school-related event, on or off campus:
 - Engages in conduct that constitutes a felony;
 - Commits an assault;
 - Commits frequent violations of this Code that cause significant disruption to the School environment or substantial interference with the instructional process.

Mandatory DAEP Violations:

Certain student offenses fall under *mandatory Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) placement* as outlined in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 37. As Texas School of the Arts does not operate a DAEP, students who commit violations that legally require DAEP placement will instead be subject to an expulsion, consistent with TEC guidelines and district policy.

Expulsion Process

If the school administrator or administrator's designee determines that the student's conduct warrants expulsion, the administrator shall provide written notice to the parent/guardian of the proposed Expulsion of the student. The written notice shall also include the reason(s) for the proposed expulsion and the date, time, location, and procedure for the expulsion hearing. The student is entitled to a hearing with the campus administrator or the administrator's designee during which the student and/or the student's representative (*e.g.*, parent, guardian, attorney, other) will have the opportunity to review and present evidence and information. The campus administrator may place reasonable restrictions on the conduct of the hearing, including the length of the presentations. At the end of the hearing, the campus administrator may issue a decision immediately

or may wait until a later date to communicate a decision. The administrator shall send written communication of the decision to the parent/guardian. If the administrator determines that expulsion is appropriate, the written decision ("Expulsion Order") shall include the length of the term of expulsion.

The parent, guardian, or adult student may choose to voluntarily waive the right to an expulsion hearing by signing a hearing waiver form provided with the notice of proposed expulsion. If the hearing is waived, the administrator will review the relevant evidence and issue a written decision to the parent as described above.

The School will notify the independent school district in which the student resides of the student's expulsion within three (3) business days of the Expulsion Order.

Terms of Expulsion

The period of expulsion may be determined by many factors, including the severity of the conduct and the existence of a continuing risk of harm to other students and employees if the student were allowed to return. An expulsion may be temporary or permanent. A temporary expulsion may range from one (1) calendar year. In considering the length of the student's expulsion, the school will consider, among other factors, the nature of the violation that leads to the expulsion and the circumstances justifying the expulsion. A permanent expulsion allows the School to deny future admission to the student based on consideration of the student's past disciplinary history. In each instance, the Expulsion Order must explain the circumstances which justify the length of the expulsion.

Permanent Expulsion

A student expelled permanently from the School is not eligible for readmission to the school at any time.

Temporary Expulsion

A student expelled from the School is eligible to apply for readmission to the School upon expiration of the expulsion period. However, the student will need to reapply to the School in accordance with the School's admission policies and timelines. A formerly expelled student who applies for readmission to the School during the school year will be added at the end of the waiting list for the grade level sought based on the date the application was received.

During a period of expulsion, the student is prohibited from entering onto any School property and attending any School-sponsored or School-related events. Failure to comply with this prohibition will result in the filing of criminal trespass charges against the student. Except as otherwise required by law, students will not receive educational services or receive course credits during a period of expulsion.

Virtual Expulsion Process

A principal or other appropriate administrator may place a student who has been expelled under Texas Education Code §37.007 or §37.0081 in a virtual expulsion program established by the School and provide virtual instructional materials for remote learning to the student if the school is located in a county that operates a juvenile justice alternative education program or the school and the juvenile justice alternative education program rejects admission of the student or returns the student before the expiration of the discipline assignment.

Discipline Appeal Process

With the exception of expulsions, student discipline decisions at the campus level are final and not appealable. A parent, legal guardian, or adult student may appeal an expulsion decision by filing a written appeal with the Executive Director of Admissions within five (5) business days of the date of the Expulsion Order. The Executive Director of Admissions or their designee will review the record of the expulsion proceedings at the campus level, along with any other relevant information, and will issue a written decision to the appealing party within ten (10) business days of receiving the request for review.

If the appealing party is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director of Admissions or their designee, he or she may appeal that decision to the Superintendent by filing a request for review with the Superintendent's office within five (5) business days of the date of the decision. If the appealing party is not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent, he or she may appeal that decision to the Board of Directors by filing a request for review with the Superintendent's office within five (5) business days of the date of the decision. The Superintendent shall notify the Chairman of the Board and arrange for the Board of Directors to hear the complaints of the appealing party at the next available board meeting. The Superintendent shall notify the appealing party of the location, date, and time of the hearing in front of the Board of Directors. The decision of the governing body is final and may not be appealed. An expulsion action will not be delayed during the appeal process.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided to further detail and define the terms of this Code. The Board of Directors shall have final authority to interpret or amend any terms or provisions within this Code.

Abusable volatile chemicals: Those substances as defined in Texas Health and Safety Code §485.001.

Alcoholic Beverage: Those substances as defined in Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code §1.04.

Assault: Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

Club: An instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with the instrument, including, but not limited to, a blackjack, nightstick, mace, or tomahawk.

Controlled substance: Substances as defined in Chapter 481 of the Texas Health & Safety Code or 21 U.S.C. §801 et seq.

Cyberbullying: Bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

Deadly conduct: Recklessly engaging in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury or knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

Electronic media: Refers to all forms, kinds and types of electronic devices, communication systems, networks, software, websites, and any other technology resources including, but not limited to, social media applications, text messaging, instant messaging, electronic mail (e-mail), web logs (blogs), electronic forums (chat rooms), video-sharing or file sharing websites, cellular telephones, portable electronic devices, or computers.

False alarm or report: Knowingly initiating, communicating, or circulating a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that is known to be false or baseless and that would ordinarily: (1) cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies; (2) place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or (3) prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

Firearm (federal): (1) any weapon, including a starter gun that will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (2) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (3) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (4) any destructive device, such as an explosive, incendiary, poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four (4) ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter (1/4) ounce, mine, or device similar to any of the above described devices.

Firearm (state): Any device designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance or any device readily convertible to that use.

Gang: An organization, combination, or association of persons composed wholly or in part of

students that: (1) seeks to perpetuate itself by taking in additional members on the basis of the decision of the membership rather than on the free choice of the individual, or (2) that engages in illegal and/or violent activities. In identifying gangs and associated gang attire, signs, or symbols, the School will consult with law enforcement authorities.

Harassment: Threatening to cause harm or bodily injury to another, engaging in sexually intimidating conduct, causing physical damage to the property of another, subjecting another to physical confinement or restraint, maliciously taking any action that substantially harms another's physical or emotional health or safety, alone or in combination with other conduct prohibited by School policy, rules or the Code.

Hazing: Any act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization or group. Consent to or acquiescence in the hazing activity does not excuse the student of responsibility for the misconduct.

Intimate visual material: Visual material that depicts a person: (1) with the person's intimate parts exposed; or (2) engaged in sexual conduct.

Location-restricted knife: A knife with a blade over 5 ½ inches; hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown; dagger, including but not limited to a dirk, stiletto, and poniard; bowie knife; sword; or spear.

Paraphernalia: Any article or device used or intended for use to inject, ingest, inhale, or otherwise introduce marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug into the human body, including but not limited to roach clips, rolling papers, needles, baggies with residue, razor blades, bongs and pipes.

Possession: Regardless of the student's knowledge or intent to possess the item, to have in or on: (1) a student's person or in the student's personal property, such as the student's clothing, purse, or backpack; (2) in any vehicle used by the student for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, such as an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or (3) any other school property used by the student, such as a locker or desk.

Prohibited item: Includes, but is not limited to: (1) alcoholic beverages, marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs; (2) paraphernalia; (3) prohibited weapons, or live ammunition; (4) any other item prohibited by this Code.

Prohibited weapons: Includes the following items: armor-piercing ammunition, chemical dispensing device, explosive weapon, firearm silencer, knuckles, machine gun, short-barrel firearm, switchblade

knife, zip gun, or taser gun.

Retaliation: Harming or threatening to harm another: (1) because of their service as a School employee or volunteer; (2) to prevent or delay another's service to the School; or (3) because the person intends to report or has reported a crime or violation of this Code, whether formally or informally; (4) because the person will participate or has participated, whether formally or informally, in an investigation in any manner.

Self-defense: When the person who is not the aggressor in an encounter uses the minimum force required to remove himself or herself from immediate danger of harm. Actions that escalate or continue the encounter will not be considered self-defense.

Sexual harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that when it is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it can be said to (1) affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the educational program or activity, or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment; (2) has the purpose or effect of substantially or unreasonably interfering with the student's academic performance ; or (3) otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Soliciting: Requesting, commanding, or attempting to induce another student to engage in specific conduct that would constitute a violation of the Code, and with the intent that a violation of the Code be committed.

Short-barrel firearm: A rifle with a barrel length of less than 16 inches or a shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches, or any weapon made from a rifle or shotgun if, as altered, it has an overall length of less than 26 inches.

Switchblade knife: Any knife with a blade that folds, slides, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or other device located on the handle or opens or releases a blade from the handle or sheath by the force of gravity or centrifugal force.

Terroristic threat: A person commits an offense if he/she threatens to commit an offense involving violence to any person or property with intent to: (1) cause a reaction by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies; (2) place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; (3) prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building, room, place of assembly, place to which the public has access, place of employment or occupation, aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance, or other public place; (4) cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service; (5) place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or (6) influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the

state (including the School).

Title 5 felony offenses: Offenses against the person that, depending on the circumstances, may include the following offenses under the Penal Code: murder; capital murder, murder, or manslaughter; assault or aggravated assault; kidnapping or aggravated kidnapping; trafficking of persons; sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault; indecency with a child; continuous sexual abuse of a young child or children; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; invasive visual recording; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; harassment of a public servant; and tampering with a consumer product.

Under the influence: When in an employee's professional judgment, the student does not have the normal use of mental or physical faculties likely attributable to the student's use of marijuana, a controlled substance, dangerous drug or alcoholic beverage. Such impairment may be evidenced by the symptoms typically associated with drug or alcohol use or other abnormal or erratic behavior. The student need not be legally intoxicated.

Use: With respect to substances, voluntarily injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing a prohibited substance into the body. With respect to objects or devices, putting into action or service or carrying out an action or purpose with the object or device.

Zip gun: A device or combination of devices that was not originally a firearm and is adapted to expel a projectile through a smooth-bore or rifled-bore barrel by using the energy generated by an explosion or burning substance.

Levels I, II, and III Examples

Disclaimer

Examples are given in an effort to demonstrate the severity of various prohibited conduct under this Code. They are not intended to be prescriptive, exhaustive, or to constrain the School's ability to create an environment safe, secure and free from disruption. The School reserves the right to address each incident as described in this Code. Consistent similar infractions may provide cause for escalated discipline measures. While behaviors are categorized into Level I, II, and III offenses based on general severity, any offense may be escalated to a higher level depending on the frequency, context, intent, or impact of the behavior. Final decisions regarding classification and consequences will be made at the discretion of school administration. The following Level I, II, and III behaviors are prohibited at all school and school related activities.

Level I

Level I infractions should be primarily handled by the teacher or staff with minimal administrative intervention. These are low-level misbehaviors that are disruptive but not dangerous or malicious. Repeated or chronic violations, or circumstances in which the behavior escalates in severity or impact,

may result in the behavior being reclassified as a Level II or Level III offense and subject to more serious disciplinary consequences.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate language
- Being in an unauthorized area
- Cheating (first offense)
- Disobeying classroom rules established by the classroom teacher
- Violating dress and grooming standards
- Engaging in any conduct that disrupts the teacher's ability to continue classroom instruction
- Engaging in minor offenses of the school's policy on Computer and Internet Use
- Violating safety rules of the school
- Public displays of affection (hugging, kissing, etc.)

Level II

Level II infractions are moderate behaviors that may be persistent, harmful to the learning environment, or involve safety risks. Level II offenses require administrative intervention and may result in a range of disciplinary actions, including but not limited to: loss of privileges, behavior contracts, parent conferences, detention, or in-school suspension. If the behavior is persistent, significantly disruptive, harmful, or involves intentional defiance, it may be escalated to a Level III offense.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Consistent similar infractions from Level I
- Leaving the classroom during instructional time without the teacher's permission
- Plagiarism, copying the work of another student, cheating, (second or severe offense)
- Use or visible possession of a cell phone/mobile device during school hours
- Engaging in profane or offensive language or gestures
- Possession or use of tobacco or tobacco-related products
- Possession or use of a laser pointer
- Scuffling or fighting that does not result in physical injury
- Possession of a toy gun, cap gun or any other instrument which may be perceived by a third party as a firearm
- Stealing from students, faculty or the school (first offense)
- Damaging or vandalizing property owned by others (not considered criminal mischief)
- Failing to comply with requests given by a faculty member
- Engaging in major offenses of the School's policy on Computer and Internet Use

Level III

Level III infraction are severe, illegal, violent, or dangerous behaviors that threaten safety or well-being. Level III offenses are considered severe violations of the Student Code of Conduct and often pose a risk to the safety and well-being of others. These behaviors may result in out-of-school suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement. The school administration will determine consequences in accordance with district policy and applicable laws.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Fighting or engaging in violent conduct
- Behavior causing bodily injury to others
- Inappropriate physical or sexual contact (even if consensual)
- Harassment or abuse of staff or students
- Possession/distribution/use of drugs, alcohol, or controlled substances
- Possession of drug paraphernalia
- Setting or attempting to set a fire
- Propping open or opening secure exterior doors
- Theft (significant or repeated)
- Hacking or altering school records or networks
- Possession/distribution of obscene or sexual content
- Indecent exposure or sexual self-touching
- Threats of violence (in person or via technology)
- Endangering others' health or safety
- Retaliation against staff or students
- Any conduct that meets the elements of a criminal offense

Texas School of the Arts Special Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Purpose | 71 |
| Mission | 71 |
| FERPA | 71 |
| Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) | 71 |
| Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) | 72 |
| Social Emotional Learning (SEL) | 72 |
| Counseling Services | 73 |
| Response to Intervention (RtI) | 73 |
| Gifted and Talented | 74 |
| English Learners | 77 |
| TeSA ESL Program | 77 |
| Section 504 | 79 |
| Special Education | 83 |
| Dyslexia | 89 |
| Appendix | 95 |

Handbook Purpose

The purpose of the Special Populations handbook is to provide an overview of all Special Populations programs at Texas School of the Arts. Each program follows all policies required by the Texas Education Agency, and therefore, some sections of this handbook are directly quoted from the TEA website. Some of the information presented in this handbook may also be found in the Texas School of the Arts Student Handbook.

TeSA Mission

Our mission is to inspire a lifelong passion for learning and empower students to achieve academic excellence through an arts-based education.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law that provides parents with the right to access their children's education records, the right to request that the records be amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information. This means that teachers are to protect the privacy of a student's educational records, and ONLY share them with those who have an educational interest in the student (such as their other teachers, the principal, the curriculum instructional, etc). They are not to be shared simply because the teacher is asked.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS)

MTSS is a framework that helps educators provide academic and behavioral strategies for students with various needs. Within this framework, several programs work together to best serve every student. Data-based problem solving is used to take a comprehensive approach to educating the whole child by making systematic improvements across the campus.

To best serve students through consistency of scheduling, services, providers, and resources, all General Education and Special Programs work closely with the MTSS framework at Texas School of the Arts:

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Gifted and Talented Education (GT)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Special Education (SPED)
- Section 504 (504)

MTSS is a proactive approach including the following elements:

- Beginning, middle, and end of year progress monitoring for all students
- Ongoing informal monitoring of students' progress
- Increasing levels of targeted support for struggling students

- Classroom extension opportunities for gifted students
- Integrated plans that address students' academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs
- A schoolwide approach to student support, with teachers, counselors, administrators, and other specialists working as a team to assess students and plan interventions
- Professional development so staff can provide effective interventions
- The use of evidence-based strategies at every tier of support



Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

PBIS is an evidence-based, positive approach used to improve school safety and promote positive behavior. Within its three-tiered framework, PBIS integrates all of the campus systems, data, and procedures for academic, social, and emotional growth. Tier 1 establishes a foundation of continuous, proactive support, with a focus of preventing unwanted behaviors. Tier 2 focuses more on students who are at risk for developing more serious issues. Lastly, Tier 3 provides students with more intense, individualized support to improve their behavior and/or academic performance.

As part of PBIS, TeSA uses the acronym STAR to define both student characteristics and behaviors.

TeSA Students Characteristics:

Self-Aware
Teachable
Artistic
Respectful

TeSA Behavior Categories:

Safety for All
TeSA Rules & Policies
Aggression toward Self or Others
Responsible for Learning Tools & Materials

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.906 requires schools to provide instruction in the following positive character traits and personal skills at least once during each of the following grade bands: kindergarten-grade 2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12:

- Courage
- Trustworthiness, including honesty, reliability, punctuality, and loyalty
- Integrity
- Respect and courtesy
- Responsibility, including accountability, diligence, perseverance, self-management skills, and self-control

- Fairness, including justice and freedom from prejudice
- Caring, including kindness, empathy, compassion, consideration, patience, generosity, charity, and interpersonal skills
- Good citizenship, including patriotism, concern for the common good and the community, responsible decision-making skills, and respect for authority and the law
- School pride
- Gratitude

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which students learn and apply the social and emotional skills needed to develop a positive self-image, manage their emotions, show empathy and compassion for others, create and maintain healthy relationships with others, and make sound decisions. SEL lessons, including lessons focused on character traits, will be either led by the School Counselor or incorporated by teachers into classroom meetings and academic activities.

Per Texas Education Agency requirements, all Texas School of the Arts teachers and administrators will participate in the following trainings related to students' Social Emotional Learning:

- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Building Skills Related to Managing Emotions
- Conflict Resolution
- Establishing and Maintaining Positive Relationships
- Grief Informed and Trauma Informed Training
- HB 3 Mental Health Training
- Positive Youth Development
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Strategies for Establishing and Maintaining Positive Relationships Among Students

Counseling Services

Texas School of the Arts provides a comprehensive counseling program in accordance with the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The services provided by the School Counselor assist all students to grow to their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally. The counselor's mission is to foster emotional awareness and growth in artistically talented students to nurture the "whole" child.

The School Counselor may work with the grade-level teacher(s) to develop a plan of success for students struggling to meet academic or behavioral expectations. The School Counselor will also meet with students and parents as they prepare for the transition from elementary to middle school.

The School Counselor may provide guidance lessons, teaching skills that develop self-confidence, responsible behavior, problem solving, decision making, interpersonal communication, goal setting, and motivation. A student wishing to speak to the School Counselor individually during the school day should notify their teacher. Guardians may also request an individual counseling service for their child by emailing the School Counselor or calling the front office.

Response to Intervention (RtI)

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

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a proactive approach to help all students. It is most often used for struggling learners, and may also be used to improve student behavior. Students are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to meet their needs and progress is closely monitored by their classroom teacher(s) and the Student Support Team. The amount of time each student spends in RTI varies as each approach is personalized. The ultimate goal is student success and the Student Support Team will work with other educational professionals as needed to provide additional testing and/or support.



Gifted and Talented Education

Our Philosophy and Program

TeSA serves gifted and talented students in artistic, academic, and leadership areas.

Talented Students

Students who enter TeSA through the audition process are identified and served as artistically talented students. TeSA's slightly longer school day allows time for all four fine arts; Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. Through the arts, students are able to explore creativity and performance, as well as have an opportunity to respond and connect to professional and student works.

Gifted Students

Academically gifted students are served in the general education classroom through the Gifted Academic Program (GAP). TeSA believes that students who show attributes of academic giftedness should receive a differentiated learning environment. All students in the GAP will have a GAP Agreement in order to address the unique individual learning needs of each gifted student in the classroom.

A GAP Agreement will be completed for each student at the beginning of the school year in order to outline what is expected of both teachers and students, and how parents can support their child in this

program. Classroom teachers will use this document as a guideline in the classroom to differentiate the curriculum in order to meet the unique, individual learning needs of each gifted student in the classroom.

GAP students will be given opportunities throughout the year to work within the classroom both independently, as well as in small groups with other GAP students. GAP students will meet periodically as a group to discuss progress and complete extension activities. Each GAP student will also complete two required projects, for which the culmination of their learning will be displayed. As opportunities arise throughout the year, students may attend field trips with other GAP students, listen to presentations from special guest speakers, and/or complete group labs and activities.

TeSA offers this program for students who are identified through the TeSA identification process, or who come to TeSA having been previously identified as an academically gifted student. The identification of GAP students is accomplished through a process consisting of nominations, assessments, and selection by committee.

Leadership- Student Ambassadors

5th grade students who have gone through the application and acceptance process during the first grading cycle have the opportunity to participate in the Student Ambassador program. Student Ambassadors complete service projects on campus throughout the year. Leadership characteristics are cultivated through activities such as leading morning announcements, mentoring kindergarten buddies, assisting with dismissal, and other duties as assigned by the 5th grade teachers and administration. Students selected to be Ambassadors are held accountable for meeting deadlines, maintaining academic integrity, and consistently displaying school-wide student characteristics.

Nominations, Assessments, and Selection by Committee

- All Kindergarten students who perform at a noticeably higher level of accomplishment relative to age peers are nominated for the GAP in the spring. Students are assessed in the area of overall intellectual ability.
- Parents whose children are enrolled at TeSA in Kindergarten-4th grade may nominate their child during the nomination period in April. To nominate a child, a parent nomination form and permission to test form must be completed by the posted deadline. Failure to submit nomination forms by the posted deadline will result in the child not being nominated for the program.
- Staff members at TeSA may nominate a student in April each year.
- Any student who enrolls at TeSA during the middle of the school year can be nominated by a parent within two weeks of enrollment.
- New students to TeSA will be screened within the first six weeks of enrollment during our fall universal screener. If official documentation is provided of being identified as academically gifted at a previous school, they will automatically be served through the GAP.
- Final determination of a student's need for gifted services is made by a placement committee, which consists of at least three local district or campus educators who have completed 30 hours of training and are current with their 6-hour required training update". All committee decisions will be approved by the Campus Principal.

The placement committee reviews all information gathered, as well as additional data as needed, on each nominated student to determine if criteria is met for entry into the program.

Entry Process

Step 1: Nominations

Teacher referral, documentation of previous services, parent nomination, or cognitive ability test scores may be used as a nominator.

Step 2: Information Gathering

After the committee has the completed forms by the posted deadlines, data from the following measures will be compiled.

1. Nomination/referral information
2. Cognitive ability test scores
3. Qualitative inventory or checklist completed by teacher(s)
4. State achievement and/or available school assessments
5. Review of Products/Portfolios and additional data as needed

Step 3: Testing

This step consists of cognitive ability testing administered for the sole purpose of entrance into the GAP.

Step 4: Selection

The Placement Committee will review the information gathered on each student who has been nominated for the GAP. Parents and staff will be informed of the committee's decision and given an opportunity to discuss this information, if requested.

Appeals

Parents can submit any appeals of GAP decisions to the following, in order, within 30 days of notification of assessment results.

1. Placement Committee
2. Principal
3. Superintendent/CEO - The parent presents the reasons for reconsideration. The decision of the Superintendent/CEO is final.

Transfers, Furloughs, Reassessment, & Exiting

When a student in the GAP transfers to another district, either in or out of Texas, that district is provided with the student's assessment data once request records have been received.

Students may have a furlough (a leave of absence from gifted program services) for specified reasons, with approval from the GAP committee, without being exited from the program.

Students may not be assessed for entry into the GAP more than one time per school year. A student who is admitted to the GAP through our nomination and placement process will remain in the GAP for the duration of their enrollment at TeSA, without the need for re-nomination or re-assessment each year.

A GAP student who does not complete one of the two required GAP projects during the year, or is not making adequate progress in response to services, may be placed on probation for the following semester. A student on probation will be monitored closely for adequate progress in response to services. If progress is satisfactory, the probation will be removed the following semester. If progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the student may be removed from the program by decision of the placement committee. Parents will be informed of probation status and any decisions made as a result of probation.

Students may be exited from gifted services at any time based on multiple criteria, including student performance in response to services, lack of progress after being placed on probation, or at the request of a parent. The exiting of a student is finalized by a placement committee decision after consultation with parent(s) and student regarding the student's educational needs.

English Learners

A student identified as an English Learner (EL), or Emergent Bilingual (EB), may have services provided through the school. Students will enter the program and continue to demonstrate eligibility through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will meet multiple times each year to review and consider the classroom and testing needs of all English Learners.

Texas School of the Arts strives to foster the linguistic and academic development, along with personal and social growth of the English learners in our learning community by focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

Required Home Language Survey

The home language survey will be collected for each student new to TeSA, and students previously enrolled who were not surveyed in the past. If a response on the home language survey indicates that a language other than English is used, the student shall be tested to establish language proficiency.

State Identification Requirements

It is Texas policy that every student in the state who has a primary language other than English and who is identified as an English learner shall be provided a full opportunity to participate in a bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL) program, as required in the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 29, Subchapter B.

Texas School of the Arts ESL Program

Statutory requirements

Texas Administrative Code §89.1205 and 89.1210 requires that any school district that is not required to offer a bilingual education program to be provided an ESL program, regardless of the students' grade levels and home language, and regardless of the number of students. This program must:

- Use second language methods throughout the curriculum.
- Provide instruction that includes TEKS based academic content, as well as language development.
- Differentiate instruction of content according to language proficiency levels.
- Provides academic instruction that is on grade level.

The goal of ESL programs shall be to enable English learners to become proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the English language through the integrated use of second language acquisition methods. The ESL program shall emphasize the mastery of English language skills, as well as mathematics, science, and social studies, as integral parts of the academic goals for all students to enable English learners to participate equitably in school.

The English as a Second Language program shall be implemented with consideration for each English Learners' unique readiness level through one of the following program models:

Content-Based Program Model

TeSA primarily utilizes an English program that serves students identified as students of limited English proficiency in English only by providing a full-time teacher certified under TEC §29.061(c) to provide supplementary instruction for all content area instruction. The program integrates English-as-a-second-language instruction with subject matter instruction which focuses not only on learning a second language, but using that language as a medium to learn mathematics, science, social studies, or other academic subjects.

Pull-Out Program Model

When needed, TeSA utilizes an English program that serves students identified as students of limited English proficiency in English only by providing a certified teacher under TEC §29.061(c) to provide English language arts instruction exclusively, while the student remains in a mainstream instructional arrangement in the remaining content areas. Instruction may be provided by the ESL teacher in a pull-out or inclusionary delivery model.

Goals of the ESL program

- Enable ELs to become proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing of English.
- Emphasize mastery of English language skills, as well as Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- Use instructional approaches designed to meet the needs of ELs.
- Be an integral part of the total school program.
- Utilize the essential knowledge and skills required by the state as the curriculum.

The school district shall seek certified teachers to ensure ELs are afforded full opportunity to master essential knowledge and skills and provide professional development.

TELPAS

TELPAS is an assessment program for students in Texas public schools who are learning the English language. TeSA must annually assess the English language proficiency of students who have been identified as English learners (ELs) in four language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. TELPAS evaluates the progress that each EL makes in becoming proficient in the use of academic English.

Students in grades K-12 that have been identified as an EL are required to take TELPAS. This includes ELs whose parents have declined English as a Second Language (ESL) program services. They will stop participating in TELPAS when their language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) determines that they are proficient in the English language and have met exit criteria. This applies to all ELs, even those who are not in an ESL program. Once a student has met the state's exit criteria, they will no longer be identified as an EL and will not have to participate in TELPAS.

Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC)

The Language Proficiency Assessment Committees (LPAC) meets multiple times throughout the year to officially enter or exit students into the campus ESL program and to create classroom and assessment accommodations on an individual student basis. The LPAC committee must

- Designate the language proficiency level of each limited English proficient student in accordance with the state and federal guidelines
- Designate the level of academic achievement of each limited English proficient student

- Designate the initial instructional placement of each limited English proficient student in the campus program or note the parent/guardian denial of recommended services
- Facilitate the participation of limited English proficient students in other special programs for which they are eligible, such as Special Education, 504, GT, or RtI
- Classify students as English proficient in accordance with the state and federal criteria, and recommend their exit

Criteria to Exit

To exit from the TeSA ESL program, a student may be classified as English proficient at the end of the school year in which a student would be able to participate equally in a regular, all-English, instructional program. The determination shall be based upon all of the following:

- TEA-approved tests that measure the extent to which the student has developed oral and written language proficiency and specific language skills in English
- Satisfactory performance on the approved reading assessment, or a TEA-approved English Language Arts assessment instrument administered in English, or a score at or above the 40th percentile on both the English Reading and the English Language Arts section of a TEA-approved norm-referenced assessment instrument for a student who is enrolled in Grade 1 or 2
- TEA-approved criterion-referenced written tests when available and the results of a subjective teacher evaluation

The LPAC will reevaluate a student who is transferred out of the ESL program during the first two years after the student is exited. If the student earns a failing grade in a subject during any grading period, the LPAC may meet to determine whether the student should be entered back in the ESL program.

Section 504

Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to:

- have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
- have a record of such an impairment; or
- be regarded as having such an impairment.

Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Consent for Evaluation

In order to evaluate a child for eligibility under Section 504, a parent/guardian/adult student must provide consent. This consent only allows for examination of data to determine initial eligibility. Additional consent for re-evaluation is not necessary. Sometimes the parent is not present when Section 504 consideration is discussed and consent must be sent home for signatures.

Consent for Services

Following an initial eligibility determination, the campus coordinator will need to collect a Consent for Services form from the parent/guardian/adult student. This form will only be collected once.

Revoking Consent

There may be situations in which a parent wants to revoke consent for certain services while maintaining eligibility under Section 504 for accommodations. If this occurs, a Section 504 meeting should be held to discuss the parent request.

Initial Referrals

Referrals for Section 504 can be made by parents or staff. Examples of situations in which a student may meet eligibility as a student protected under Section 504:

- The student has a chronic health condition such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.
- The student has a disability identified under IDEA, but does not qualify for special education
- The student has low vision, poor hearing, heart disease, or some other “hidden disability.”
- The student has been evaluated by an agency outside of school and the parents provide the report and recommendations.

The 504 Evaluation

The district must conduct an Evaluation before Section 504 services can be provided to the child with a disability. Consent from a parent/guardian must be obtained prior to an evaluation. Evaluation under Section 504 does not necessarily mean a test or assessment. Rather, the evaluation consists of reviewing data from multiple sources and asking questions to determine eligibility. This process occurs within the context of a Section 504 meeting.

Timelines

The Office of Civil Rights encourages school districts to follow the evaluation timelines similar to those of special education. Evaluations (the Initial Section 504 meeting) must be completed within 45 school days of the receipt of Consent for Evaluation. If a student has excessive absences, this timeline can be extended. Re-evaluations should be conducted every 3 years. Extensive data collection should occur at this time to determine continued eligibility. Section 504 review meetings should occur annually.

Data to Collect and Consider in a Section 504 Evaluation

The following is a list of data examples to be reviewed in a Section 504 evaluation. This is not an exhaustive list as each evaluation is specific to the needs of the student. The Section 504 committee should consider:

- Parent and Teacher input
- Medical information from campus nurse and/or outside providers
- Academic information, including grades, progress monitoring data, universal screening data, state assessment data, etc.
- Behavioral information, including discipline reports, behavioral observations
- Outside evaluations

When collecting information from outside providers, the campus coordinator will need to obtain additional consent for release of confidential information. If the information obtained is vague in nature, the coordinator is expected to call the provider and ask clarifying questions.

Eligibility

In order to be considered eligible for Section 504 protections and supports, these questions must be answered:

- Does the student have a physical or mental impairment?
- Does the physical or mental impairment substantially limit one or more major life activities?

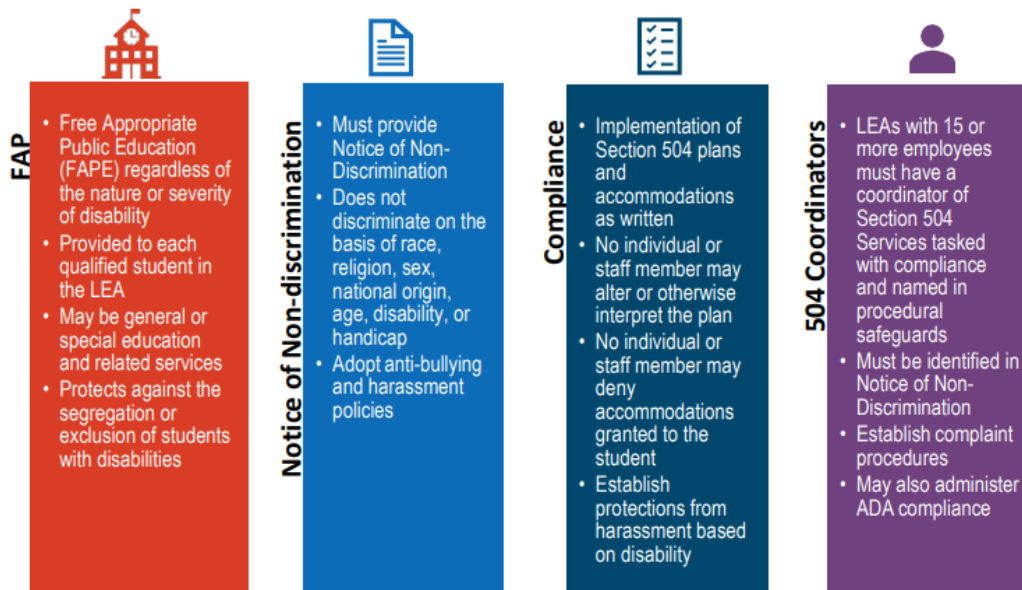
- Does the physical or mental impairment substantially limit a major life activity?

The Section 504 committee must answer “yes” to all of these questions and be able to explain the support necessary for the student to access all academic and extracurricular activities to the same extent as their peers. Federal law explains that a person eligible under Section 504 must have a disability, have a history of a disability, or be regarded as having a disability.

Also, the regulations stipulate that the disability must “substantially limit” one or more major life activities such as breathing, walking, seeing, reading, hearing, eating, running, concentrating, and/or learning. For a disability to be considered “substantially” limiting, it must create such a limitation without the application of mitigating measures that requires intervention so that the student has equal opportunity to access school-related activities without discrimination. “Substantially limits” should be considered without regard to the helpful effects of mitigating measures (ADHD medications, hearing aids, behavioral therapy, etc.), with the exceptions of ordinary glasses or contact lenses. If a medical or mental health provider indicates that the disability is “mild” in nature, then the child would not require any intentional interventions to prohibit discrimination. The impact must be classified as “moderate” to “severe” to be considered “substantial.”

There is not an exhaustive list of impairments nor a list of every possible life activity. The decision of eligibility is up to the Section 504 committee. Diabetic or ADHD students are the only exceptions to the questions because they are always found eligible for Section 504. Some students, however, may be eligible for Section 504 protections, but not require a Student Service Plan due to mitigating measures (i.e., medication) and/or remission (i.e., cancer patients).

Local Education Agency (LEA) Responsibilities under Section 504



Section 504



What rights do parents or guardians have under Section 504?

- Request a hearing with respect to the school's actions regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of their child
- File a grievance complaint with the school's Section 504 Coordinator or with the Office for Civil Rights online or by calling the regional office
- Receive notice about the identification, evaluation and/or placement of their child
- Examine their child's educational records
- A 504 plan that is periodically reviewed



What does a 504 plan include?

It includes the accommodations and services that the individual student needs and provides equal access to the same educational programs and activities available to non-disabled peers.

Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

In Texas, if you have a question or would like to file a complaint about Section 504, contact the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

✉ OCR.Dallas@ed.gov

☎ 214.661.9600

Section 504 Parent and Educator Resource Guide

🌐 direc.to/dUKU

Fact Sheet for Families



What is Section 504?

Section 504 is part of a long-standing federal civil rights law that guarantees certain protections to people with disabilities.



Who does Section 504 protect?

Section 504 protects people with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, such as caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, performing manual tasks, and learning.



Section 504 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) both...

- Provide protections for students with disabilities. However, while all students in special education are protected under Section 504, not all students covered by Section 504 are eligible for special education.
- Require schools to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities. Section 504 and IDEA define FAPE differently.



TEA.Texas.gov/TexasSpEd



Special Education

When a child receives special education, it means that a public school provides custom services and instruction specific to the needs of that student. Special education is available because of a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides students with disabilities and their parents special legal rights to receive these individualized learning opportunities.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA ensures that all students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) which will meet their needs and prepare them for their education, employment, and independent living.

IDEA defines 13 disability categories:

- Autism
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Deaf-Blindness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Noncategorical Early Childhood
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment Including Blindness

Referrals for a Special Education Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIE)

A parent may request an evaluation for Special Education services at any time. If a parent makes a written request for an initial evaluation for special education services, the school must respond no later than 15 school days after receiving the request. At that time, the school must give the parent a prior written notice of whether it agrees to or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also obtain written consent for the evaluation.

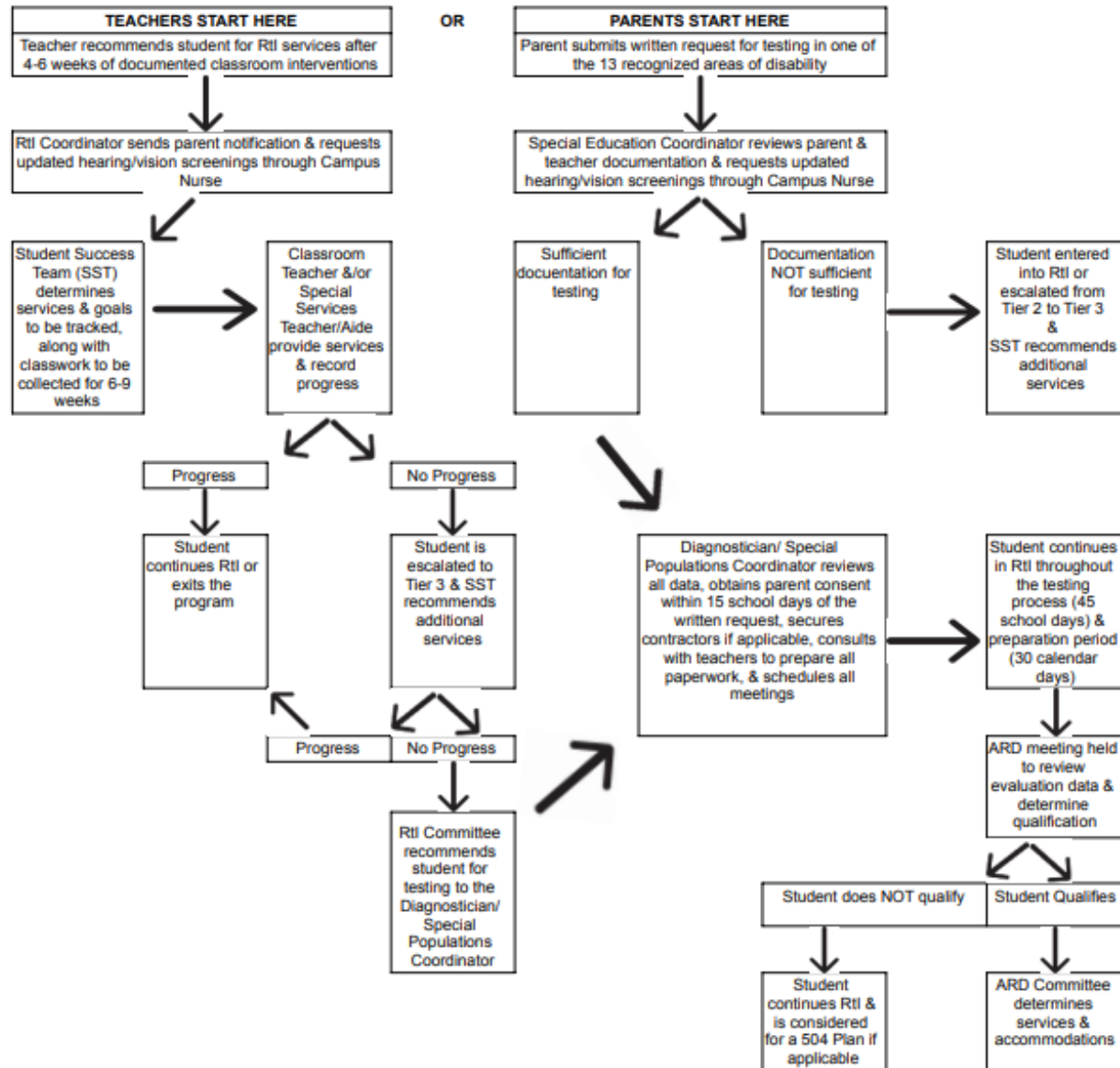
Initial Evaluation Timeline

A copy of the written evaluation report must be provided to the student's parents as soon as possible after completion of the report but no later than five school days prior to the initial admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting (see 19 TAC §89.1011(e)(1) for an exception to this timeline).

Initial ARD committee meeting must be held within 30 calendar days from the date of the completion of the evaluation report. If the 30th calendar day falls during the summer and school is not in session, the ARD committee must meet not later than the 15th school day of the following school year. If an evaluation report indicates that a student would need extended school year (ESY) services, however, the ARD committee must meet as expeditiously as possible. The flowchart below represents the specific process at Texas School of the Arts.

Texas School of the Arts

Referral for Special Education Evaluation



- Parent(s) Name
- Parent Contact Information
- Campus Name
- District Name
- Other Information as Appropriate

Eligibility

To determine whether a student qualifies for special education services, the ARD committee must answer the following two questions:

1. Does the child meet the criteria for a qualifying disability? **AND**

2. As a result of the disability, does the child have a need for special education services?



Reevaluation

Review of Existing Evaluation Data Requirements (REED) is the process of looking at a student's existing data to determine if additional data is needed as part of an FIEE, if appropriate, or as part of a reevaluation. A REED helps schools decide whether current information about a child can be used to determine a child's eligibility for special education.

A REED may be a part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate). Examples of situations where a REED is appropriate: The parent of a child brings in an outside evaluation from a professional and the members of admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee review this information to determine if additional evaluation by school or contracted personnel is needed.

The REED must be conducted by the members of the student's ARD committee, and others as appropriate. The members review the student's existing evaluation data to determine the scope of the evaluation. This review process does not have to take place in an ARD committee meeting. Prior to the REED, the school must issue to parents the Prior Written Notice (PWN) of its proposal to conduct an evaluation, a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards (NPS), and the opportunity to consent to the evaluation or when the school issues to parents the PWN of its refusal to conduct an evaluation and a copy of the NPS.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP)

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the written, legal document that is completed by an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee for every public-school child ages 3-21 receiving special education services in Texas. The IEP is the centerpiece of the federal legislation called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IDEA ensures "that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services

designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.”

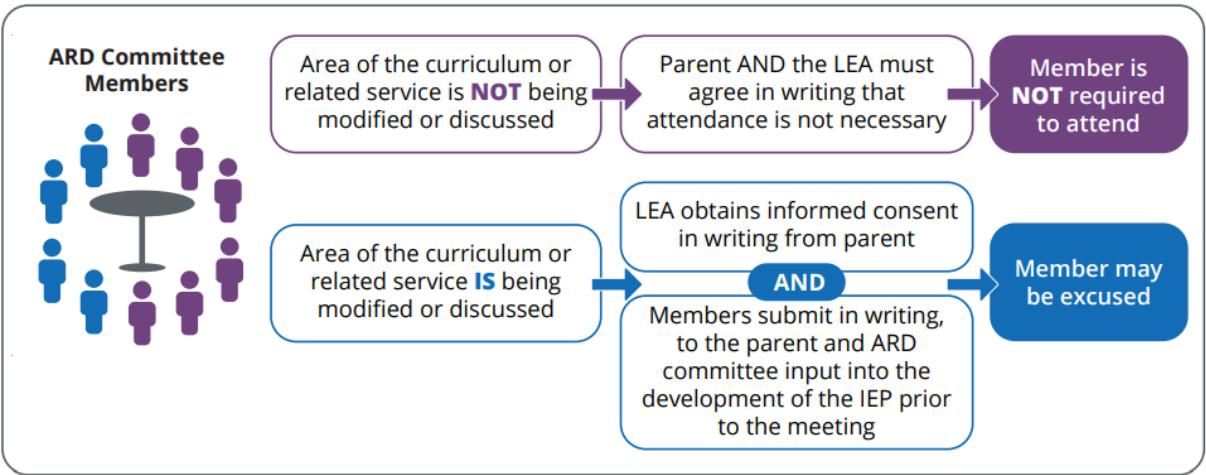
The ARD committee develops the IEP during an ARD committee meeting. The meeting must be held at a time and place that is mutually agreeable, and the school must take steps to ensure that one or both parents are present at every ARD committee meeting or are given the opportunity to participate. The school must keep a record of its attempts to arrange a meeting at a mutually agreed time and place. If a parent cannot attend an ARD committee meeting, the school must allow the parent to participate through other means, such as by telephone or video conference. Schools may draft components of the IEP before the ARD committee meeting but must make parents aware that these portions are a draft and can be modified by the ARD committee.

Admission, Review, Dismissal Meeting (ARD)

The Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee is the team that meets to determine eligibility based on a full and individual evaluation report, and to develop an individualized education program (IEP) for the child. The ARD committee must meet annually, but may meet more often as needed. The ARD Committee must include the following members:

- Parent/Guardian
- Child (when appropriate)
- Regular Education Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- School Administrator/Representative
- Someone who can interpret evaluation results (if applicable)

Excusal from ARD committee meetings



Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs)

The Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs) are a major component of a student’s Individualized Education Plan. They provide information on how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

Specially Designed Instruction

The core of special education is the specially designed instruction (SDI) a student receives. IDEA defines special education services as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.” In Texas, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee determines the specially designed instruction needed for each student as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Instruction that targets the unique needs of a child that result from a disability. The instruction must be designed in such a way that the student can access the general curriculum to the same extent as non-disabled peers and make progress toward grade level standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)).

Inclusion and Resource Services

During inclusion, a member of the special populations team will work with students in their general education classroom, using the work provided by the classroom teacher. During resource, the student goes to a different instructional area to work on the subject in which they need assistance. This work may be provided by the classroom teacher, special education teacher, dyslexia teacher, or combination.

Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of student's disability on academic tasks but do not change learning expectations. The objectives of the course or activity remain the same. Accommodations change how the student learns or demonstrates knowledge. ARD committees should consider whether changes in presentation, response, setting, or timing/scheduling are required for students to access the general curriculum.

Modifications change what the student is expected to master. ARD committees should keep in mind that using modifications may have adverse implications, as students accessing below grade-level content may not close achievement gaps. Modifications typically require a student to learn less material or learn material below grade level and/ or complete or be tested over easier or less complex problems. The decision to modify is a significant one, however some students will require modifications. Decisions to modify should be data driven and individualized for the student.

Least Restrictive Environment

IDEA requires students with disabilities, including students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Additionally, schools must ensure that a student with a disability is not removed from the general education environment (including removal to separate schools or special classes) unless the nature or severity of the student's disability is such that he or she cannot be educated in general education classes, even with the use of supplementary aids and services. A student's educational placement is determined at least annually.

Placement decisions must be based on the student's IEP. When making the placement decision, the first consideration should be whether the student can be educated in the general education classroom with or without supplementary aids and services. A student can only be placed in a more restrictive environment when the ARD committee concludes that education in a less restrictive setting, even with appropriate supports and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP)

A Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP) specifically addresses the behavioral plan for a student whose behavior interferes with their own learning or the learning of others. It is created along with the IEP and it must include positive behavioral intervention strategies. There must be a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) completed prior to developing a BIP. This process may take several weeks, as multiple sources of data are required.

Special Education Progress Reports

Each student in Special Education will receive a progress report of their IEP goals at the end of each grading cycle. Notes are added to the online progress monitoring program weekly, and are based on the work students complete during inclusion or resource. The progress report gives specific data about the student's goals, and is to be used in conjunction with their regular report card.

Special Education Personnel

Special Education and/or Dyslexia Teachers provide individual and small group opportunities to students in need of additional instruction in specific areas through Special Education, 504, or Response to Intervention (RtI). Special Education and/or Dyslexia Teachers will create individualized lesson plans based on each student's current levels and goals. They will also work collaboratively with all students' classroom teachers to ensure alignment to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and classroom activities.

Special Education and/or Intervention Aides provide individual and small group attention to students in need of extra assistance and support through Special Education and Response to Intervention (RtI). Aides also provides support for teachers by helping with classroom activities and monitoring students. Aides work under the general supervision of the Principal and immediate direction of the certified teacher of the student(s) needing services.

A Diagnostician is a Texas-approved licensed evaluator of students with special needs. The diagnostician is the leader in identifying needs of students and serves on the ARD committee to develop an IEP.

A Speech Pathologist is a Texas-approved licensed professional trained in diagnosing speech deficits and remediating those areas of concerns. The Speech Pathologist may work with students individually, in small groups, or in the classroom.

An Occupational Therapist is a Texas-approved licensed professional providing support for improving the physical, cognitive, psychosocial, and sensory components of performing tasks needed for independent functioning in the academic setting. Educational occupational therapy primarily focuses on academics, play and leisure, social participation, self-care skills, and transition/work skills.

The Special Services Coordinator, also known as the Special Populations Coordinator, works closely with the administrators, teachers, and service providers to review referrals and diagnostic reports to determine appropriate interventions, provide training and support for special education and general education teachers, and ensure that all legal requirements are met. The Special Services Coordinator will also work with the Principal and other designated staff to conduct ARD and 504 meetings, ensuring compliance with Federal, State, and local requirements. S/he will also work with the Principal to schedule and document all student services with employed or contracted staff and providers.

Dyslexia

In the state of Texas, students who continue to struggle with reading, despite appropriate or intensified instruction, are provided organized systems of reading support. Some students struggle during early reading acquisition while others do not struggle until the later grades, even at the postsecondary level. For many struggling readers, the difficulty may be due to Dyslexia. Dyslexia is found in all student populations and languages. Some students with dyslexia may be English Learners (ELs) who struggle with reading not only in English, but also in their native language. In Texas, special education referrals for evaluation for a Specific Learning Disorder in Dyslexia may be conducted from kindergarten through grade 12.

The purpose of the TEA Dyslexia Handbook is to provide procedures for school districts, charter schools, campuses, teachers, students, and parents/guardians in early identification of, instruction for, and accommodations for students with dyslexia. This handbook will be used by school districts and charter schools as they develop their written procedures regarding students with dyslexia. It will also serve as a resource for educator preparation programs and other entities seeking guidance in serving students with dyslexia.

Dyslexia



Risk factors and signs of dyslexia:

- Family history of dyslexia or reading difficulty
- Early language difficulties such as delayed speech or trouble pronouncing words
- Difficulty identifying and manipulating individual sounds within words
- Challenges learning letter names
- Difficulty recalling the names of letters, numbers, and familiar objects
- Avoidance of reading and writing tasks
- Inaccurate or slow reading
- Difficulty with note taking and producing written work
- Over use of pictures to guess at words

Early intervention is critical, and parents or guardians should talk to their child's teacher if they have concerns.

Additional resources and information for parents can be found on the SPEDTex website.



[SpEdTex.org](https://www.spedtex.org)



1.855.773.3839

Fact Sheet for Families



What is dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a brain-based learning disability that makes learning to read, write, and/or spell difficult despite adequate instruction and intelligence.

Students with dysgraphia, a related learning disorder, demonstrate academic challenges in handwriting, spelling, and written expression.



Characteristics of dyslexia:

Primary characteristics include difficulties:

- Learning the sounds letters make
- Reading words in isolation or reading unknown words
- Reading smoothly with enough speed and accuracy to comprehend
- Spelling

Secondary characteristics may include difficulty:

- Expressing ideas or concepts in writing
- Understanding what is read

Students with dyslexia may also present with additional difficulties and/or disorders, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speech and language disorders, and/or other academic needs.



Procedures for evaluation and identification:

Your children are legally entitled to receive individualized services and supports. State and federal law require schools to have specific procedures in place to identify, locate, and evaluate students with, or suspected of having, dyslexia. Dyslexia is a learning disability that may require special education services.

Parents may request a special education evaluation through their child's campus or district.



[TEA.Texas.gov/TexasSpEd](https://tea.texas.gov/TexasSpEd)



Overview of Special Education for Parents

WHAT IS SPECIAL EDUCATION?

When a child receives special education, it means that a public school provides custom services and instruction specific to the needs of that student. Special education is available because of a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which provides students with disabilities and their parents special legal rights to receive these individualized learning opportunities.

Special education is a service, not a place.



How can special education services help your child?

- ▶ If your child is eligible for special education services, your child will have access to services and supports that are specially designed to meet your child's unique needs.
- ▶ Special education services provide individualized programming at NO cost to you and may include special education teachers and service providers such as occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and providers of dyslexia instruction.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROCESS:

Parents have a right to request a special education evaluation at any time. Schools are required to refer a student for an evaluation when a disability is suspected that might require special education services. It's important to understand the steps of the **special education process**.

Steps to Begin Special Education:



Receiving Special Education Services:



Implement the IEP

More information about your rights as a parent can be found below:



spedtex.org
1-855-773-3839

SPEDTEX
Special Education Information Center

**Special Education
Help for Parents**



Parents Guide to the ARD Process
bit.ly/ParentsARD



Notice of Procedural Safeguards
bit.ly/ParentsNPS

While there are other federal laws that also offer certain protections for students with disabilities - such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - IDEA has specific rights only available under that law. This document summarizes those rights.

Overview of Special Education for Parents

1 REFERRAL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION IS MADE.



A referral is:

- ▶ Required by law when a public school feels that your child may have a disability that requires special education services to be successful.
- ▶ Called a *request* for a special education evaluation when a parent makes it. A request should be made in writing to the proper staff member. The school will respond with information on whether it will proceed with an evaluation.

The school must respond in writing within 15 school days.



2 YOU WILL BE ASKED WHETHER YOU **CONSENT** FOR THE SCHOOL TO EVALUATE YOUR CHILD.



Consent to evaluate is:

- ▶ Permission you choose to give for specially trained personnel to evaluate and assess your child in specific areas.
- ▶ Used by the school to start the timeline by which the school must complete your child's evaluation.

With some exceptions, an evaluation must be completed within 45 school days.



3 EVALUATION IS DONE BY A GROUP OF TRAINED PROFESSIONALS.



An evaluation is:

- ▶ Called a *Full Individual and Initial Evaluation* (FIIE), which includes a written report of education recommendations and information about your child's strengths, interests, and challenges. Professionals with training in the suspected disability must participate, e.g., someone like a licensed dyslexia therapist if dyslexia is suspected.
- ▶ Done at no cost to you. If you do not agree with the school's evaluation, you may ask for an *Independent Educational Evaluation* (IEE). This would be done by someone who is not employed by the school.



4 ADMISSION, REVIEW AND DISMISSAL (ARD) COMMITTEE MEETS TO DETERMINE IF YOUR CHILD IS ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES.

The ARD committee is:

- ▶ A team, including you, teachers, school administrators, those with special expertise about your child, and professionals with special training about the suspected disability.
- ▶ In this meeting, discussing your child's evaluation report, identifying your child's strengths and areas of need, and then determining whether your child has a disability and the need for special education services.



Once the evaluation report is done, an ARD committee typically has 30 calendar days to determine eligibility and develop the IEP.



Overview of Special Education for Parents

5

IF YOUR CHILD IS ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, THEN THE ARD COMMITTEE WILL ALSO DEVELOP AN **INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)**.



An IEP is:

- ▶ A collection of information that identifies your child's disability, shows your child's current strengths and areas of need, identifies goals to be worked on, and shows the special education and related services that are required for your child to be successful.
- ▶ A document that a school must follow once the process for developing it is complete, and you consent to your child receiving services. Services would begin as soon as possible.

You have the right to participate in the development of the IEP and agree or disagree to your child getting special education services.



MOVING FORWARD: RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Once an IEP has been developed, it is the school's responsibility to implement the IEP. Schools must offer the services, accommodations, and supports described in the IEP, and school staff will monitor your child's progress toward the goals in the IEP.

- ▶ You will receive progress reports on your child's IEP goals at least once each grading period.
- ▶ The ARD committee will meet and review your child's IEP at least annually.
- ▶ As a member of the ARD committee, you will discuss the need for an updated evaluation at least every three years.
- ▶ You can ask for an ARD committee meeting at any time.
- ▶ You can revoke your consent to special education services. In other words, you can tell the school in writing that you want your child's special education services to stop being provided.
- ▶ Special rules are in place for school discipline. If your child's disability is found to be the reason why the misbehavior occurred, then the ARD committee may, in certain situations, change the disciplinary consequence.



IF DISAGREEMENT OCCURS:

During each ARD committee meeting, you will be an active participant, discussing your child's specific needs with school staff as you work to come to a consensus on the best path forward. But from time to time, you may disagree with school decisions. Under the federal law IDEA, you have formal rights to disagree with special education decisions made by the school, both in the *steps to begin special education* and while *receiving special education services*. Dispute resolution options include filing state complaints, requesting mediation, and requesting a due process hearing. State facilitators are also available to help ARD committees reach consensus on IEPs.

Overview of Special Education for Parents

WHAT IS IN AN IEP?:

The IEP must address certain elements for your child, including:

PLAAFP

- » *Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)*: The ARD committee writes down your child's skills, abilities, and challenges based on the evaluation report and other data.

Goals

- » Measurable annual **goals**: Goals are developed to focus on your child's specific needs and to describe when your child is expected to make progress.
 - If your child has dyslexia, for example, a goal might focus on improvement in a specific area of reading development or fluency within a certain amount of time.

Instruction & Services

- » A description of the **specially designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and services** that will be provided. The instruction and services will vary based on the specific needs of your child. For example, if your child has been identified with dyslexia:
 - The specially designed instruction would likely include a regularly scheduled time for instruction by a highly trained provider using a program that has been shown to help students with dyslexia and in accordance with the [Dyslexia Handbook](#);
 - Related services might include support to improve your child's fine motor skills from an occupational therapist if he or she also struggles with handwriting; and
 - Supplementary aids and services might include documenting your child's need for speech to text options for writing assignments.

Assessments

- » Information on how your child will participate in state and districtwide **assessments**, including whether accommodations like extra time are necessary.

Transition

- » **Transition** services: When your child turns 14, the IEP must begin to document plans for your child after high school and how your child's special education services will be adjusted to work on those plans.

Placement

- » The IEP notes the educational **placement** of your child. Placement decisions are guided by a requirement to provide education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The goal of LRE is to have your child included in classrooms and settings with children without disabilities as much as appropriate based on your child's unique needs.



Appendix Table of Contents

Appendix A: Section 504 Notice of Rights

Appendix B: Section 504

Appendix C: Child Find and Evaluation

Appendix D: Special Education Notice of Procedural Safeguards

Appendix E: Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process

Appendix F: Texas State Board of Education Dyslexia Handbook