

# El Paso Independent School District

## STUDENT HANDBOOK (QUICK REFERENCE EDITION)

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### SPECIAL NOTICE

The El Paso Independent School District and each campus, as part of its compliance with laws and procedures as enforced by the office of Civil Rights and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) requirements, has provided for employees, students, applicants or parents procedures which preserve the rights and responsibilities of those individuals regarding nondiscrimination, harassment, and grievances. These policies and procedures are available to you on the EPISD website, or by visiting the campus' administrative office. For your convenience, the following summarizes the basic information:

#### Harassment:

Procedures are outlined in district policies FB, DH, DIA, and FFH are required to adhere to the requirements as outlined in the aforementioned policies in order to provide a timely, thorough, and complete resolution of incidents involving harassment as identified by policy.

#### Grievance:

Procedures are outlined in district policies DGBA, FNG, and GF and have been codified for the convenience of employees, students, applicants and parents. All affected persons are required to adhere to the requirements as outlined in the aforementioned policies in order to provide a timely, thorough, and complete resolution of concerns, complaints, and grievances as identified by policy.

#### Accessibility:

Your child's campus has a written accessibility plan and identified pathway of accessibility to ensure that students, parents and employees with disabilities have access to and an opportunity to participate in the general education curriculum, including the school's programs and services. Procedures are outlined in district bulletins. Please contact your school if you have any questions or need a copy of the plan and/or pathway.

#### Nondiscrimination:

The El Paso Independent School District does not discriminate in its educational programs or employment practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, military status, or on any other basis prohibited by law. Inquiries concerning the application of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and IX of the educational amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be referred to the district compliance officer, Vince Sheffield, at (915) 881-2619; 504 inquiries regarding students may be referred to Cecilia Whiteman at (915) 881-2527. The office of the district compliance officer and the 504 coordinator may be contacted in person or by mail at the following address:

El Paso Independent School District  
6531 Boeing Drive,  
El Paso, Texas 79925

## **PREFACE**

The El Paso Independent School District Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year.

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

Both students and parents must be familiar with the El Paso Independent School District Student Code of Conduct, required by state law and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document has been posted online at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org) and is also available at each campus in the principal’s office.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year.

In case of conflict between board policy or the Student Code of Conduct and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the provisions of board policy or the Student Code of Conduct that were most recently adopted by the board are to be followed.

Please note that references to alphabetical policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district’s policy manual is available for review online at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org).

## **SECTION 1 - PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT, RIGHTS, SERVICES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

### **WORKING TOGETHER**

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides. Ensure that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects. Be sure your child comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.
- Becoming familiar with all of your child’s school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district. Discuss with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child. If your child is entering ninth grade, review the requirements of the graduation programs with your child. Monitor your child’s academic progress and contact teachers as needed
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call and/or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and contact the Director for VIPS and Partners in Education at 887-5888.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Offering to serve as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact the school principal.
- Offering to serve on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. [See policies BDF, EHAA, and FFA ]
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies BE and BED for more information.]

### **OBTAINING INFORMATION AND PROTECTING STUDENT RIGHTS**

The El Paso Independent School District complies with policies and practices consistent with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act. Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.

- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.
- You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF.]

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

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

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

### **Displaying Student’s Artwork, Projects, And Other Special Work Products:**

As a parent, you have a right to provide consent before the district can display your child’s artwork, special projects, photographs taken by your child, and the like on the district’s Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

### **AS A PARENT, YOU ALSO HAVE A RIGHT:**

- To request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child’s teachers, including whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.
- To review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.
- To inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.
- To review your child’s student records when needed. These records include: attendance records, test scores, grades, disciplinary records, counseling records, psychological records, applications for admission, health and immunization information, other medical records, teacher and counselor evaluations, reports of behavioral patterns, and state assessment instruments that have been administered to your child. [See **Student Records** on page 16.]
- To grant or deny any written request from the district to make a videotape or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a videotape or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:
  - When it is to be used for school safety;
  - When it relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or
  - When it relates to media coverage of the school.
- To remove your child temporarily from the classroom, if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.
- To request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See Board Policy EC.]
- To request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK]
- A noncustodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided for the remainder of the school year a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to your child’s misconduct that may involve placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO(LEGAL), and the Student Code of Conduct].

- To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the Director of the Office for Pupil Services for information. [See policy FDB]
- To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD(LOCAL)]
- To request the transfer of your child to another campus if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student on the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policy FDD]
- If your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g. twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, to request that they be placed within the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the enrollment of your children (See FDB (LEGAL)).
- To receive information regarding student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports, plans, policy, compact, parent meetings and other required correspondence in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand. (Title I-A, I-C, III-A, II-A, II-D, IV-A, V-A, IX, and X)
- Parents of students participating in Title I Part A may request certain information on the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers and paraprofessionals providing services to the child and will receive timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned or will be taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. (Title I-A)
- Parents of students participating in Title I Part A will receive the opportunity for dissemination of the results of the NCLB yearly progress review of each school, school report card, and the level of achievement of the parent's child in each of the State academic assessments. (Title I-Part A)
- Parents of students participating in Title I Part A will receive the written school parent compact, and frequent reports to parents on their children's progress, and will receive access to the school wide Title I Campus Plan, and the district-level parental involvement policy. (Title I-Part A)
- To receive, if appropriate, information concerning opportunities for homeless students including educational opportunities, opportunities to meaningfully participate in your child's education, and to be informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin. (Title I-A)
- To receive access, through the EPISD website at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org), information concerning ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers to enable all students to meet the state's student academic achievement standards. (Title I-A)
- To request in writing, the withdrawal of your student from any Title IV, Part A program.

**IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING TRANSFERS:** Student transfers may affect student athletic and extra-curricular eligibility. (Please refer questions regarding Athletic Eligibility to the Athletic Department at 887-6717.)

## CAFETERIA SERVICES

The district participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and offers students nutritionally balanced meals daily. Free and reduced-price meals are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. Applications are available during registration and throughout the year from the School Office, Food and Nutrition Services and the Cafeteria Manager. The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO (LEGAL)]

The school cafeteria uses an on-line service for parents to prepay for school meals and to monitor their student's account balance and meal history. Go to [www.mylunchmoney.com](http://www.mylunchmoney.com) and click ENROLL NOW or call 1-800-479-3531 to enroll by phone. There is a small fee of \$1.95 per transaction that allows you to make prepayments for all of your children's meals at once. There is no charge to monitor your child's account balance..The district uses School Messenger to call you at home when your child's cafeteria account has a low or negative balance.

Checks are welcome and must include the following information on the check:

1. Complete Address
2. Telephone Number
3. Driver's License Number
4. Name of student and student EPISD ID#

The school cafeteria uses an electronic check recovery service, eCAP, for returned checks. Returned checks not recovered by eCAP will be turned over to the District Attorney's office.

Questions regarding cafeteria policies can be directed to the school cafeteria manager or the Food and Nutrition Services Department at (915) 887-6500.

## **FEES**

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

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

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

## **FUND-RAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. Permission must be granted prior to the fund-raising beginning date by the campus principal. [For further information, see policies FJ and GE.] Fund raisers involving food must comply with the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy ([www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org))

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

Each school day, students will recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

A minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC for more information.]

## **PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

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

## **SECTION 2 - STUDENT OR PARENT COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the District's website at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org). In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the appropriate division Associate Superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees. Some complaints require different procedures. Any campus office, associate superintendent's office, or the superintendent's office can provide information regarding specific processes for the following complaints:

- Discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, or national origin (Board Policy FB).
- Sexual abuse or sexual harassment of a student (Board Policy FFH).
- Loss of credit on the basis of student attendance (Board Policy FEC).
- Removal of a student by a teacher for disciplinary reasons (*Student Code of Conduct*).
- Removal of a student to a disciplinary alternative education program (Board Policy FOC, *Student Code of Conduct*).
- Expulsion of a student to JJAEP (Board Policy FOD, *Student Code of Conduct*).
- Identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability (Board Policy EHBA and FB).
- Instructional materials (Board Policy EFA).
- On-campus distribution of non-school materials by students (Board Policy FNAA).
- Complaints against District peace officers (Board Policy CKE).

## DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

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

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, age, disability, or other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH] (Board policies are available online at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org))

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

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

**Harassment**, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office and/or the district's website. Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

**Sexual Harassment** of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

**Retaliation** of a student occurs when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic or behavioral performance in the classroom. Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refused to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited.

### **Reporting Procedures**

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

### **Investigation**

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct by an adult associated with the district; or by another student when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy. If the district's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The district may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful. Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of prohibited harassment is prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a district investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with an outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG.

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, the district makes the following statements:

The El Paso Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

- Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex: Vince Sheffield, Director, Employee Relations at 915-881-2619
- Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Cecilia Whiteman, 915-881-2527
- All other concerns: See the superintendent at 915-887-5488.

## **SECTION 3 - STUDENT RECORDS AND PRIVACY INFORMATION**

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

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

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of the court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records. Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes.
- Personnel who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. "Legitimate educational interest" in a student's records include working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; or investigating or evaluating programs. Such persons would include school officials (such as Trustees of the District, the superintendent, and administrators); school staff members (such as teachers, counselors, and diagnosticians), a person or company with whom the district has contracted to provide a particular service (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on a school committee; a parent or student assisting a school official or staff in the performance of his or her duties; cooperatives of which the District is a member; or facilities with which the District contracts for the placement of students with disabilities, as well as their attorneys and consultants who are engaged in the following:
  - working with the student.
  - considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for a student with disabilities under IDEA, or an individually designed program for a student with disabilities under Section 504.
  - compiling statistical data.

- investigating or evaluating programs.
- various governmental agencies, individuals granted access or in response to a subpoena or court order.
- A school or institution of post-secondary education to which a student transfers or in which he or she seeks to enroll or in which he or she subsequently enrolls.

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

The parent’s or student’s right to access to and copies of student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records such as teachers’ or nurses’ personal notes on a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher, records pertaining to former students after they are no longer students in the District, and records maintained by school law enforcement officials for purposes other than school discipline do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

The principal/designee is custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school. The Director of the Office for Pupil Services is the custodian of all records containing information about students who have withdrawn or graduated. Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. If circumstances prevent inspection during these hours, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. The address of the Office for Pupil Services is 6531 Boeing Drive, El Paso, Texas 79925.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student’s records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. A written request to correct a student’s record should be submitted to the superintendent or designee. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student’s record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student’s grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG.

Copies of student records are available at a cost of ten cents per page, payable in advance. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge upon written request of the parent.

The district’s policy regarding student records found at FL(LOCAL) is available from the principal’s or the superintendent’s office or on the district website at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org).

Please note:

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U. S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to: Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5901

### **Directory Information**

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as “directory information.” “Directory information” means information not generally considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. It includes the student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, honors and awards received, grade level, enrollment status, and the most recent previous school attended. This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. However, release of a student’s directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the child’s first day of instruction of this school year.

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

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

## **SECTION 4 - ENROLLMENT, WITHDRAWAL AND ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

All students new to EPISD schools must register. This includes all new Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and Grade 1 students, students transferring from other schools in the city, and all students who have recently moved into the District. High school students register each year.

### **FALSIFICATION OF DATA NOTICE**

A person who knowingly falsifies information on a form required for a student's enrollment in the District shall be liable to the District if the student is not eligible for enrollment, but is enrolled on the basis of false information. For the period during which the ineligible student is enrolled, the person is liable for the maximum tuition fee the District may charge [FDA (LEGAL)] or the amount the District has budgeted per student as maintenance and operating expense, whichever is greater [TEC § 25.001(h)]. Also, this is a criminal offense under *Penal Code* § 37.10.

### **DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION**

The following records ARE required for registration:

1. certified copy of the birth certificate or other reliable proof of the child's identity and age.
2. health and immunization records. (Mandated current immunization requirements can be reviewed at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org) by selecting Health Services under the SCHOOLS tab.)
3. report card from the last school attended (or unofficial transcripts for juniors and seniors).
4. social security card (if none, a state number will be issued).
5. proof of residency (a current utility bill or rent receipt).
6. approved Pupil Transfer Request if parent(s)/guardian(s) do not reside in the District/school attendance zone.
7. valid identification of the person enrolling the student (driver's license, social security card, military identification).

A minor student (under age 18) not residing with his/her parent/guardian, or other person(s) having lawful control under a court order must complete a form titled Person Responsible Affidavit and be granted prior approval by Pupil Services before he/she is allowed to enroll in any EPISD school. The Person Responsible Affidavit gives responsibility in all school-related matters to the adult that resides full time in the EPISD. It does not substitute for or act as a Legal Guardianship. Regardless of whether or not a child's parent, guardian or other person with legal control of the child under a court order is enrolling a child under Texas Education Code Sec. 25.002 (f), a district is required to record the name, address, and date of birth of the person enrolling the child. To verify proof of residency, the school will ask for the most recent rent receipt or most recent utility bill in the parent's/guardian's name. If one family is living with another, the host family will be asked to produce a notarized statement describing the arrangement. The most recent utility bill or most recent rent receipt in the name of the person who signs the notarized statement must be attached to the paperwork.

A student and either the parent or guardian must reside in the EPISD. Residency requirements may also be met when the student does not reside in the District, but the parent designated as the joint managing conservator of the student does live in the EPISD area. A student may be legally transferred to the District and must have a Tuition Exemption form on file. Failure to obtain a Tuition Exemption form will result in a tuition charge and an assignment by Pupil Services to schools where room is available without overcrowding. The school is required to utilize the student's entire name as it appears on the student's birth certificate, authorized birth document or court order changing the student's name. Requests to unofficially change a student's name or to use a name other than what is in the official documents will be denied.

### **ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR ELEMENTARY GRADES**

A child is eligible for enrollment in Grade 1 in the current school year if he/she meets these criteria:

- is six years of age at the beginning of the scholastic year (defined as September 1) and meets the residence requirement.
- was enrolled in Grade 1 prior to transferring into the District. Proof of attendance in Grade 1 must be presented to and accepted by the principal/designee. Residence requirements must be met.
- To be eligible for Kindergarten in the current school year, a child must be five years of age on or before September 1 of the scholastic year.
- To be eligible for Pre-Kindergarten (a non-tuition program), a child must be four years of age on or before September 1 of the scholastic year and must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible for enrollment in a pre-kindergarten class:
  1. Does not speak or comprehend the English Language; or
  2. Educationally disadvantaged (eligible to participate in the National Free or Reduced – Price Lunch Program, or

3. Homeless as defined by 42 U. S. C. Section 11302; or
4. The child of an active duty armed forces member or state military forces; or
5. The child of an armed forces reserve member who is ordered to active duty ; or
6. The child of a member of the armed forces, state military forces or reserve component who is injured or killed while serving on active duty.

## PLACEMENT OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students entering a District school from accredited public, private, or parochial schools after Grade 1 shall provide evidence of prior schooling outside the District. They shall be placed initially at the Grade level reached elsewhere, pending observation by the classroom teacher, guidance personnel, and the principal. On the basis of these observations and results of tests that may be administered by appropriate District personnel, the principal shall determine the final Grade placement.

For the purpose of this policy [FD (LOCAL)], “accredited” shall be defined as accreditation by TEA, an equivalent agency from another state, or an accrediting association recognized by the Commissioner of Education.

Students entering a District school from nonaccredited public, private, or parochial schools, including home schools, shall be placed initially at the discretion of the principal, pending observation by classroom teachers, guidance personnel, and the principal. Criteria for placement may include:

1. scores on achievement tests, which may be administered by appropriate District personnel.
2. recommendation of the sending school.
3. prior academic record.
4. chronological age and social and emotional development of the student.
5. other criteria deemed appropriate by the principal.

The District shall validate high school credit for courses of transfer students from non accredited public, private, or parochial schools by testing or by other evidence that the courses meet state Board requirements and standards.

## WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

Students who are under 18 will not be permitted to withdraw from school unless a parent, legal guardian, or other adult with responsibility for the child comes to the school to complete the necessary forms. Students who are age 18 or older, are married, or have been declared by the court to be an emancipated minor, may withdraw themselves from school.

These procedures must be followed to withdraw a student from school:

- b. notify the school within three (3) days of the withdrawal date.
- c. specify the last day of attendance.
- d. give a relocation address, city, state, and school name (if known).
- e. sign the withdrawal form (parent/guardian or self). Review all the information on the form for accuracy.
- f. return all school property (books, equipment, instruments, etc.).
- g. clear any library fines and other outstanding fees.

The school will issue a withdrawal form which contains this information:

- a. current grades
- b. attendance profile
- c. immunization record
- d. any outstanding debts (lost books, library fines, etc.)

## ATTENDANCE ZONES

The Board of Trustees has established geographic boundaries for each school, and students generally must attend the schools in the zone for their street address. A Pupil Transfer Request to attend a particular school should be sent to the Director for Pupil Services (6531 Boeving Drive, El Paso, Texas 79925; telephone (881-2460). Due to overcrowding, some schools are considered closed campuses and unable to accept transfer students.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed in the following sections:

### Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction programs, extended year programs, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise legally exempt or excused. Once a parent enrolls a child in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten, the child is required to attend school. Unless specifically exempted by *TEC* § 25.086, a child who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached the child’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, shall attend school.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her eighteenth birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student’s enrollment. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespass. (See FEA)

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnosis test.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction (termed “accelerated instruction” by the state) assigned by the grade placement committee and basic skills for ninth graders; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

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

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

If the student is over age 18, the student’s parents shall not be subject to penalties as a result of their child’s violation of state compulsory attendance law (See FEA (LEGAL)).

If there is an issue identified concerning Compulsory Attendance, the District will send the parent/guardian a written warning to comply with compulsory attendance laws. Every day a student is out of school in violation of compulsory attendance laws is considered a separate offense. A fine may be assessed for each offense, and the parent/guardian may also be ordered to participate in a class designed to ensure that attendance requirements are met. Truancy may also result in assessment of penalties by a court of law against both the student and his/her parents.

### Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit for the class. If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed the plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit. Petitions for credit may be filed at any time the student receives notice, but in any event no later than 30 days after the last day of the semester for Grades 9-12 or the last day of the school year for Grades 1-8 for which credit is lost because of attendance [FEC (LOCAL)].

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policy FEB.]
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

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

### **Absence Note Requirement**

When a student must be absent from school, the student—upon returning to school—must bring a note, signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older. EPISD Board Policy requires a doctor's note after five consecutive absences.

### **Driver License Attendance Verification**

To obtain a driver license, a student between the ages of 16 and 18 must annually provide to the Texas Department of Public Safety a form obtained from the school verifying that the student has met the 90 percent attendance requirement for the semester preceding the date of application. The student can obtain this form at the campus principal's office.

### **Absences**

There are times when students are ill and have other legitimate reasons for being absent from school. Parents are required to call the school attendance office or provide written notice of the reason for the absence. The principal or designee will decide whether an absence is classified as excused or unexcused.

A student whose absence is excused for the following purposes and has met the criteria shall not be penalized for the absence and will be counted as having attended for the purposes of calculating the average daily attendance in the District:

- **Doctor and Dental Appointments:** Absences for appointments with doctors, dentists, orthodontists, physical therapists, or other health care professionals will be classified as excused if the student returns to school on the same day as the appointment and presents a note from the health care provider stating the time of the appointment and the time the student left the doctor's office. If the appointment is at the end of the school day and the student has been at school all day up to that time, the absence will be excused if the student brings a note from the health care provider the following day.
- **Religious Holidays:** Absences for religious holy days, including up to two days of travel time if necessary, will be classified as excused absences.

The following may also be classified as excused absences:

- moving.
- legal business.
- court appearances.
- civic activities which, in the opinion of the principal/designee, are of educational value to the student.
- an extracurricular activity or public performance, subject to approval of the Board of Trustees.
- a District-approved mentorship designed to meet requirements of an advanced measure for a Distinguished Achievement graduation program.

- a temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent or designee, including personal illness, or illness or death in the immediate family.
- required screening, diagnosis, and treatment for Medicaid-eligible students.
- a juvenile court proceeding documented by a probation officer.
- an absence required by state or local welfare authorities.
- a family emergency of unforeseen or unavoidable instances requiring immediate attention.
- an approved college visitation.

Please note the following important information:

1. A student with an unexcused absence will not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening.
2. In those rare circumstances when a student must be absent from school, the parent is required to notify the school on the day of the absence, and/or the student upon returning to school, must bring a note signed by the parent that describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 years of age or older.
3. A student with an excused absence shall have at least one school day to make up work for each day the student is absent, and may have more time at the discretion of the teacher. A student with an excused absence who does not make up assigned work within the specified time will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.
4. A student who is tardy to class by more than 15 minutes will be counted absent from class. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action.
5. A student who is tardy to class may be assigned to detention. Repeated instances of tardiness will result in more severe disciplinary action.
6. A student who has unexcused absences for ten or more days or partial days in six months must be referred to the juvenile court for violations of compulsory attendance laws. A student who has unexcused absences for three or more days or partial days in four weeks may be referred to the juvenile court for violations of compulsory attendance laws.
7. A parent wishing to withdraw a student from school must present a signed request to the principal/designee stating the reason for the withdrawal and the effective date.

## **RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL**

A student who is going to leave campus during any part of the school day shall provide a note that describes the reason for the absence. The note shall be signed by the student's parent or guardian. If the student is 18 or older, or is an emancipated minor, the student may sign the note in place of a parent or guardian.

Students will be allowed to leave school during the school day only with the permission of the principal or designee. Parents may not go directly to their child's classroom and take him/her away from school during the day. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent. If the student leaves school for a medical appointment or a family emergency, he/she should be signed out by the parent in the attendance office.

A student will be released only to the parent or other adult listed on the enrollment form or emergency card. Unless the principal/designee has a current court order signed by a judge showing an official file stamp with the court indicating that a parent's right of access to and possession of his or her children has been limited in some way, the principal/designee will release the children to either parent.

Students will not ordinarily be released during the school day to participate in private lessons or other instruction. If a special situation warrants an exception to this rule, please contact the campus principal/designee to schedule a conference.

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### **Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments**

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements. A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB.] A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment. A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any

class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

### **DAEP or In-school Suspension Makeup Work**

A student removed to a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) during the school year will have an opportunity to complete, before the beginning of the next school year, coursework needed to fulfill the student's high school graduation requirements. The district may provide the opportunity to complete the coursework through an alternative method, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. The district will not charge the student for any method of completion provided by the district. [See policy FOCA.]

A student removed from the regular classroom to in-school suspension or another setting, other than a DAEP, will have an opportunity to complete before the beginning of the next school year each course the student was enrolled in at the time of removal from the regular classroom. The district may provide the opportunity by any method available, including a correspondence course, distance learning, or summer school. [See policy FEA.]

Students and their parents are encouraged to discuss options with the teacher or counselor to ensure the student completes all work required for the course or grade level.

## **SECTION 5 - STUDENT MEDICAL, IMMUNIZATION, AND HEALTH INFORMATION**

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity when the parent cannot be reached, the school would need to have written parental consent to obtain emergency medical treatment, and information about allergies to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.). Please contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.

### **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a physician-signed affidavit or statement that, for medical reasons, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, including religious belief, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Division, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella, mumps, tetanus, Haemophilus influenzae type B, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A (grades K-3), hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB and the Texas Department of State Health Services Web site: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school> ]

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

#### **Athletics**

All students participating in inter-school athletics including major sports, and all team managers must have an annual physical examination dated after the last Friday in May. Marching band, drill team, and cheerleaders are included.

#### **Tuberculosis Testing**

To promote early identification, referral, and treatment of students who may have been exposed to tuberculosis, the District may request evidence of tuberculosis screening from students entering District schools from out of the country; out-of-state tuition students, annually upon enrollment; and students enrolled in the child development laboratory class, prior to working with children in the pre-employment laboratory.

The evidence requested shall be dated within thirty (30) days of enrollment and may be a tuberculosis skin test, an x-ray report, or a written evaluation from a physician licensed in the United States. The tuberculosis screening shall not be used to bar students from admission in District schools but to refer them, when needed, to a licensed healthcare professional.

## MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:
  - Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request and a doctor's order.
  - Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container with a doctor's order.
  - Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request and a doctor's order.
  - Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent. This happens only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
  - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form and a written healthcare provider's order on file.

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

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

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

## PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS

A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication. It is intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior and is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance. Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [For further information, see policies at FFAC.]

## STEROIDS

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use. Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense. Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. **UIL testing information may be found online at [www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid\\_information.html](http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid_information.html).**

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school without authorization. Return to school must be accompanied by a written release from a Texas licensed healthcare provider. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a communicable or contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Texas Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

### Bacterial Meningitis

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

- What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

- What are the symptoms?

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

Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body.

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

- How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

- How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely 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 to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

- Where can you get more information?

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

### **Food Allergies**

Food allergies can be life-threatening. The risk of accidental exposure to foods can be reduced in the school setting if schools work with students, parents and physicians to minimize risks and provide a safe educational environment for food-allergic students.

### **Family's Responsibility**

1. Notify the school of the child's allergies.
2. Work with the school team to develop a plan that accommodates the child's needs throughout the school, including in the classroom, in the cafeteria, in after-care programs, during school –sponsored activities, and on the school bus.
3. Provide written medical documentation, instructions, and medication as directed by a physician.
4. Replace medications after use or upon expiration.
5. Educate the child in self-management of their food allergy including:
  - a. Safe and unsafe foods.
  - b. Strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods.
  - c. Symptoms of allergic reactions
  - d. How and when to tell an adult they may be having an allergy-related problem.
  - e. How to read food labels (age appropriate)

### **Student's Responsibilities**

1. Should not trade food with others.
2. Should not eat anything with unknown ingredients or known to contain any allergen.
3. Should be proactive in the care and management of their food allergies and reactions based on their development level.
4. Should notify an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic.

## **HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS**

### **Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School**

In accordance with EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week. Students in middle school engage in five semesters of Health/Physical Education. For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary and middle school student physical activity requirements, please see the principal.

### **Wellness**

El Paso Independent School District has created an effective School Wellness Policy in compliance with the requirements of the 2004 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. For more information, contact the Director of Health Services or the Facilitator of Health and Physical Education at (915) 887-6716

### **School Health Advisory Council**

During the school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held six meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the Facilitator of Health and Physical Education at (915) 887-2337 or from the EPISD website at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org). [See also policies BDF and EHAA.]

### **Physical Fitness Assessment**

Annually, the district will conduct a physical fitness assessment of students in grades 3-12. At the end of the school year, a parent may submit a written request to the campus principal or designee to obtain the results of his or her child's physical fitness assessment conducted during the school year.

### **Vending Machines**

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

## **Other Health-Related Matters**

### **Tobacco Prohibited**

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

### **Asbestos Management Plan**

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, is available in the campus principal's office. If you have any questions, please contact the campus principal.

### **Pest Management Plan**

The district applies only pest control products that comply with state and federal guidelines. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before application. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application inside their child's school assignment area may contact the campus principal.

## **SECTION 6 - REPORT CARD, GRADING AND TESTING INFORMATION**

### **Grading Guidelines**

Students are to receive a minimum of two grades per week in each subject-matter area regardless of the number of days in the school week. For any average numerical grade lower than a 50 for the first grading period of each semester, the teacher shall record a 50 on the

student's report card, except in cases of nonattendance (absent more than 30 percent of days as calculated under policy FEB) and/or lack of effort (failed to complete more than 30 percent of assignments), in which cases the teacher shall record the actual average numerical grade. Grades are to reflect student achievement. Grades are not to be reduced for disciplinary reasons except in the case of late assignments or academic dishonesty.

Teachers grades are final. Students are to be informed of all numerical scores recorded by the teacher. Papers for which numerical scores have been recorded must be returned to the student for review.

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

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents once every 6 weeks for middle and high schools and once every 9 weeks for elementary schools.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period for middle and high schools or during the fourth week of a nine-week grading period for elementary schools or whenever the grade drops below 70, parents will be given a written unsatisfactory progress report if their child's performance in any course (in English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies) is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

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

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

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

Report cards and unsatisfactory progress reports at the elementary school must be signed by the parent and should be returned to the school within 3 school days.

## **CREDIT BY EXAM**

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

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher. The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject. The attendance review committee may also offer a student with excessive absences an opportunity to earn credit for a course by passing an exam. A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities. In all instances, the district will determine whether any opportunity for credit by exam will be offered. [For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.]

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

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has no prior instruction. A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam. The parent will be responsible for paying an appropriate fee to the district or for purchasing the test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see policy EEJB (LOCAL).] For more information, contact the Testing Center at 915-779-3781.

## **STATE-MANDATED TESTS**

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels will take state-mandated tests (such as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)) in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–7 without the aid of technology and, in grades 8–11, with the aid of technology on any test that includes algebra
- Reading, annually in grades 3–9
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7
- English language arts in grades 10 and 11

- Social studies in grades 8, 10, and 11
- Science in grades 5, 8, 10, and 11
- Any other subject and grade required by federal law

[See policy EKB.]

## **OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTING: COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS**

Many colleges require either the American College Test (ACT) or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the counselor early during their junior year to determine the appropriate exam to take; these exams are usually taken at the end of the junior year. (Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test, such as the Texas Higher Education Assessment [THEA]).

### **Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA)**

Students must take the THEA Test, or an alternative test, before beginning classes at a public community college, public technical college, or public university in Texas. A student cannot be denied admission to a public institution of higher education based on their THEA score. The THEA consists of a reading, mathematics, and writing test. To pass the THEA, students must pass all three sections. One, two, or three sections of the test may be taken at a given test administration. Once a section is passed, it does not have to be taken again. Students may register to take again only the section(s) they have not already passed.

Students must participate continuously in a remedial program for those skill areas of the test they have not passed. If they do not pass all sections of the THEA Test, they will not be allowed to enroll in any upper-division course where completion of such course would give them sixty or more college-level semester credit hours or the equivalent. Students may not graduate from a certificate program that has nine or more semester credit hours of general education courses, an associate degree program, or a baccalaureate degree program until they have passed all three sections of the test. There are certain conditions relating to THEA exemptions. Ask your high school counselor or college admissions counselor for more details.

## **SECTION 7 - ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND HONORS INFORMATION**

The school counselor provides students and their parents information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see policy EIF.]

### **AWARDS AND HONORS**

#### **Academic Awards**

Awarding a letter jacket or sweater to the top five students academically in the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior classes recognizes outstanding scholastic achievement. Colors of the sweaters and jackets will be the same as the school colors and are to be the same type as those used for other awards. The awarding of a letter with appropriate markings shall recognize students who earn more than one academic award in succeeding years.

A student may receive both an academic and an athletic award in the same year. Academic award winners are to be featured in the school yearbook and newspaper. Names are to be submitted to the associate superintendent or designee, who will forward them to the superintendent for release and submission to the news media.

To be eligible for academic awards, a student shall meet the following standards:

- be in attendance in a secondary school of the District during the first 15 days of the school year and remain in attendance for the remainder of the year.
- have no unsatisfactory citizenship grades.
- be enrolled in regular, Pre-Advanced Placement, Advanced Placement, Pre-International Baccalaureate or International Baccalaureate classes.
- earn a minimum of five credits, two of which must be in the areas of English, mathematics, science, and/or social studies.

Students' grade point averages, to be determined in accordance with provisions for class ranking, will be used for selecting academic award winners.

## CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

### Career and Technology Education

El Paso Independent School District's Career and Technology Education (CATE) is dedicated to preparing young people to manage the dual roles of family member and wage earner. We want to enable them to gain entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job and/or to continue their education. EPISD has outstanding CATE programs which offer students a variety of career pathways through which individual interests can be pursued or through which new skills can be developed. Students may elect to take courses in any of the following program areas:

- Agriculture
- Business Education
- Career Investigation
- Family and Consumer Sciences
- Health Science Technology
- Marketing Education
- Technology Applications
- Technology Education
- Trades and Industrial Education

The District will take steps to ensure that a lack of English skills will not be a barrier to admission or participation in any educational and career technology programs. For further information, contact the vocational counselor at your school, or the Director of Career and Technology Education at (915) 545-5900.

## COUNSELING

### Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn about course offerings, the graduation requirements of various programs, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades six through eleven will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities. To plan for the future, students should work closely with the counselor in order to take the high school courses that best prepare them for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and deadlines for application, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

### Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. Students are encouraged to see their school counselor for assistance in any personal, social, academic or career concerns/problems they might have.

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

[For more information, refer to policy FFE and FFG(EXHIBIT).]

## CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The District permits high school students to take correspondence courses (courses by mail) for credit. Students in Grades 9 – 12 may earn credits toward high school graduation using this method. Prior to enrollment in correspondence courses, students shall make a written request to the principal or designee for approval to enroll in the course. If approval is not granted prior to enrollment, the student shall not be awarded credit toward graduation. Students may be enrolled in only one correspondence course at a time .

Credit toward state graduation requirements may be granted for correspondence courses only under the following conditions:

1. The institution offering the course is The University of Texas at Austin, Texas Tech University, or another public institution of higher education approved by the commissioner of education.
2. The correspondence course includes the state-required essential knowledge and skills for such a course.

3. No more than two correspondence credits may be accepted for state graduation credits.

[For further information, see policy EEJC.]

## DUAL CREDIT COURSES / COLLEGE COURSES

The District shall grant a maximum of two years' credit toward the academic course requirements for high school graduation for courses a student successfully completes at the Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities or the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science.

The District has entered into an agreement with the El Paso Community College that allows the El Paso Community College to offer a course in which a student attending a District high school may enroll and for which the student may receive both course credit toward high school graduation requirements and course credit as a junior college student. Such a student will receive El Paso Community College credit if the student has been admitted to the El Paso Community College or subsequently is admitted to the El Paso Community College.

The Board of Trustees has adopted a policy that allows a student to be awarded credit toward high school graduation for completing a college-level course. (See the principal/designee or a counselor for specifics on this program.) The course must be provided only by an institution accredited by any of the following regional accrediting associations:

- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Colleges and Schools
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools

To be eligible to enroll and be awarded credit toward state graduation requirements, a student shall have the approval of the high school principal/designee or other school official designated by the District. The course(s) for which credit is awarded shall provide advanced academic instruction beyond or in greater depth than the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

Students in grades 9-12 may earn college credit from institutions outside the district. For more information, contact the Director of Guidance Services at (915) 881-2591.

## GRADE CLASSIFICATION

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

<u>Credits Earned</u>	<u>Classification</u>
0 – 5	Grade 9 (Freshman)
5.5 - 11	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
11.5 – 17.5	Grade 11 (Junior)
18 - 24	Grade 12 (Senior)

Beginning with the freshman class of 2007-2008, the following credits shall be required for each classification:

<u>Credits Earned</u>	<u>Classification</u>
0 – 6	Grade 9 (Freshman)
6.5 – 12 (must have a minimum of .5 credit of Algebra 1)	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
12.5 – 18	Grade 11 (Junior)
18.5 - 26	Grade 12 (Senior)

## HOMEWORK

See individual campus policy.

## LIBRARY

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading or listening pleasure. Each school has a library available for student research and study, with resources appropriate for the needs of the grades served by the campus. A certified librarian/library aide supervises the library. Students have access to the library during the school day and during posted hours before and after school. If you have a concern about library materials available to your child, please contact the school librarian, teacher, or the campus principal/designee. The District has a policy and a process that will allow you to explain your concerns and reach an understanding about your child's access to the questioned materials.

## TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Each student (or the student's parent or guardian) is responsible for each textbook not returned by the student. Failure to return all textbooks forfeits the right to free textbooks until each textbook previously issued but not returned is paid for by the student, parent, or guardian. If a textbook is not returned or paid for, the school may not withhold the student's records, prevent a student from graduating or participating in a graduation ceremony, or receiving a diploma [Board Policy CMD (LEGAL)]. The school shall allow the student to use textbooks at school during each school day; however, the student is not allowed to take the book home until he/she has paid for the damaged/lost book. Students shall be responsible for textbooks issued to them and be required to pay the full price for lost textbooks [Board Policy CMD (LOCAL)]. Payment plans are available through each individual campus.

The following textbook fine schedule has been established by the District:

• no book cover	\$.50 per incident
• marking(s) in book	\$1.00 per page
• marking(s) on edge of book	\$1.00 per edge
• excessive markings	full price of book
• torn page(s)	\$1.00 per page
• page torn out	full price of book
• broken or bent cover	\$2.00
• missing/unreadable bar code	\$1.00
• willful damage, unfit for use or reissue	full price of book

## SECTION 8 - SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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

To meet the requirements of state and federal law, the District also offers several programs designed to meet specific needs of some of our students. Students are identified as eligible for one or more of these programs based on assessments made after referrals in addition to recommendations from teachers, parents, and counselors. The District will always inform you about the program beforehand. If you have any questions about the referral and identification process for any of the following programs, please contact your child's teacher(s), counselor, or the campus principal/designee.

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

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

Other designated staff you may need to contact include:

- Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths, who coordinates services for homeless students: Kathy Ortega, Director, Guidance Services, 915-881-2591
- Saul Torres, Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs: 915-881-2369.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

The El Paso Independent School District offers a variety of services to meet the special needs of its students. Through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), students with disabilities are ensured services and assistance needed for effective progress. This law mandates that Special Education students have an Individual Education Program (IEP) designed to meet their unique needs. EPISD provides programs for students who are autistic, developmentally delayed, emotionally disturbed, visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically disabled and learning disabled. For specific questions about Special Education in EPISD, call 881-2500 or visit the web site at [www.episd.org](http://www.episd.org).

**Academic and Independent Management (AIM)** — The AIM program is designed to meet the academic needs of students who are functioning at a level significantly below their grade level peers and who require significant content modifications to the general curriculum. (AIM I, 1st-3<sup>rd</sup> grade; AIM II, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade; AIM III, middle school; and AIM IV, high school)

**Behavior Intervention Classroom (BIC)** — The BIC program is designed to meet the academic, behavioral and emotional needs of students by providing significant behavioral support/strategies. Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are typically developed for these students as part of their Individual Education Program. (BIC I, 1st-3<sup>rd</sup>; BIC II, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> grade; BIC III, middle school; and BIC IV, high school)

**Homebound** — A student with a disability who is receiving special education and related services may receive those services in a home or hospital setting for medical reasons based upon their diagnosis, prognosis, or recommendation from a physician licensed to practice in the United States (All grade levels)

**Learning in Functional Environment (LIFE)** — This instructional arrangement is designed to meet the needs of students with severe cognitive and physical limitations, requiring integrated therapies and educational services that focus on developing functional life skills. (LIFE I, 1st-3<sup>rd</sup> grade; LIFE II, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>; LIFE III, middle school; and LIFE IV, high school)

**Mainstreamed Instructional Services** — Special education students that attend all regular education classes remain eligible for special education supplementary aids and services (All grade levels)

**Mental Health Team** — EPISD provides social workers, counselors and psychologists for students dealing with mental health-related problems. (All grade levels)

**Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)** — The half or full-day program provides special education and related services to children ages 3-5 within a self-contained classroom. A student profile may include moderate to severe disabilities with deficiencies in cognitive skills, visual and auditory perception, receptive and expressive language, gross and fine motor skills, social-emotional skills and self-help skills. (Ages 3-5)

**Providence Memorial Hospital Classroom** — Within the Providence Memorial Hospital Pediatric Unit is a classroom staffed by EPISD teachers and paraprofessionals. The classroom provides chronically-ill children with an opportunity to continue their school work while undergoing treatment at Providence. (All grade levels)

**Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD)** —The Regional Day School Program for the Deaf provides audiological services, speech and language services, counseling services, interpreting services, assistive technology, transition experiences, career and technology classes and a variety of language modes. The RDSPD is housed at Hillside Elementary, Burleson Elementary, Ross Middle School, and Burges High School. (All grade levels)

**Resource** — An instructional arrangement (pull-out and/or push-in) which requires a sharing of lesson plans, instructional materials, and collaboration between the regular and Special Education teachers to provide necessary support for individual students with disabilities. (All grade levels)

**Structured Learning Unit (SLU)** — These highly structured units are designed to meet the needs of students diagnosed with a disorder within the autism spectrum. (All grade levels)

**Transition to Career Program** — High school Special Education students can participate in the transition to career program and become employed by EPISD. Students work as teaching assistants, custodians, clerical assistants, construction assistants and operate a districtwide recycling/ shredding program. (Age 16 and up)

**Visually Impaired** — The program serves students from pre-school to grade 12 who have a diagnosis of blindness or uncorrectable visual impairment. This is not a separate class, but rather itinerant services provided in another educational placement/class. (All grade levels)

An Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee decides whether a student needs special education after a complete comprehensive individual assessment is administered. Contact the Special Education Director for your child's school or the campus principal/designee to receive full information about the District's special education services. Additional information is provided in the final section of this document.

## **DISABLED STUDENTS UNDER SECTION 504**

Students with a 504 disability are those served in general education programs with accommodations and do not meet the specific criteria required for a disability under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. An eligible student is a student who (1) has, (2) has a record of having, or (3) is regarded as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning. A substantial limitation on learning must be demonstrated by an education need, i.e., a serious academic deficit and/or serious behavior problems resulting from the student's disability and not from other causes. A campus 504 Review Committee determines eligibility for services and appropriate accommodations. For more information contact the 504 Coordinator at (915) 881-2527.

## **BILINGUAL EDUCATION/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE**

The El Paso ISD offers the transitional bilingual education program at the elementary level, with instruction of content in Spanish. The goal of the transitional bilingual program is to transition the Limited English Proficient (LEP) students into the mainstream curriculum as they are acquiring the academics in Spanish. They are learning the English language as well. At the middle and high school, the district offers English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) in the form of LAMP and HILT, respectively. Instruction is delivered in English with second language learning strategies to make it comprehensible. At the time you enroll your child(ren) for the first time, you will be asked to complete a Home Language Survey so that the District knows whether to take additional steps to be sure that your child is properly served. An outreach to inform parents of limited English proficient students concerning how parents can be involved in their children's education and how parents can be active participants in helping their students attain English proficiency, high achievement levels in core academic subjects, and meet state standards. (Title I-A, Title III-A)

## **GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

Some children demonstrate or show a potential for demonstrating a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to other children of similar age, experience, or environment. These children may perform at a very high level in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area, show an unusually high capacity for leadership, or excel in a particular academic field. The District provides a variety of programs, activities, and learning opportunities for these students.

## **AT RISK STUDENTS**

Some students do not qualify for special education programs but still need additional assistance to be successful in school and complete the high school program. The District provides tutorial programs and intensive or accelerated instruction in subjects with which students have difficulty, and provides specially focused instruction to improve students' language and math skills. Some of our specialized programs are designed to help students who are pregnant, who are teen parents, students at-risk of withdrawing, or who have been involved in the juvenile justice system.

## **DYSLEXIA/RELATED DISORDERS (DRD)**

The Dyslexia/Related Disorders (DRD) Program is state-required and is offered to students who are identified as having characteristics of dyslexia in the El Paso School District. The instruction is designed to help students' specific needs and is conducted during the regular school day. This program is a separate, independent program and is not part of Special Education. Sometimes students who are already in Special Education may also be eligible for the Dyslexia /Related Disorders Program.

Students may be referred for assessment if the student's teacher or another professional staff member notices that the student is having problems as indicated by low grades and lack of progress in acquiring reading. When a student struggles with one or more components of reading, the classroom teacher will gather such information as: vision screening, hearing screening, classroom concerns, accommodations and modifications provided in the classroom, academic progress reports, information from parent conferences, testing information from English proficiency (if needed), and interventions in which the student participated and progress made as a result of these interventions. For further information, contact the DRD Facilitator at (915) 881-2500.

## **OPTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED OR MAY NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION**

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention such as the Student Success Team. The implementation of Response to Intervention has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of school districts to meet the needs of all struggling students

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the district must provide the parent with or inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*. The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is the campus principal.

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

## **SECTION 9 - PROMOTION, RETENTION AND GRADUATION INFORMATION**

A student will be promoted only on the basis of academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student—with limited exceptions—will be required to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and April 15 and is a Texas resident during the week that the TAKS is administered the first time.

- In order to be promoted to grade 4, students must have performed satisfactorily on the Reading section of the grade 3 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must have performed satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 5 assessment in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2007–2008 school year must perform satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 8 assessment in English.

Parents of a student in grade 3, 5, or 8 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. Such students will have two additional opportunities to take the test. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal or designee, the teacher, and the student's parent, will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive. After a third failed attempt, the student will be retained; however, the parent can appeal this decision to the committee. In order for the student to be promoted, based on standards previously established by the district, the decision of the committee must be unanimous. Whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year. [See policy EIE.]

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

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

## **GRADUATION**

### **Requirements for a Diploma**

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam. The grade 11 exit-level test, required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and

early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

### **Graduation Programs**

The district offers the graduation programs listed below. All students entering grade 9 are required to enroll in the Recommended High School Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program. Permission to enroll in the Minimum Graduation Program will be granted only if an agreement is reached among the student, the student's parent or person standing in parental relation, and the counselor or appropriate administrator. [See policy EIF.]

### **Number of Credits**

- Recommended High School Program - 24 credits
- Recommended High School Program – 26 credits - for students entering grade 9 in the 2007-2008 school year and thereafter.
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program – 24 credits
- Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program – 26 credits - for students entering grade 9 in the 2007-2008 school year and thereafter.

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

### **Certificates of Coursework Completion**

A certificate of coursework completion will be issued to a senior student who successfully completes state and local credit requirements for graduation, but fails to perform satisfactorily on the exit-level tests.

### **Students with Disabilities**

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

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

### **Graduation Exercises**

Graduation exercises are held at the end of the school year for students meeting the requirements for high school graduation. Graduation exercises will not be held for elementary or middle school transition purposes. Only those students who have completed all state and local requirements, including passing the TAAS or TAKS exit-level examination, for receiving a diploma are eligible to participate in graduation exercises. All students who have completed all graduation requirements, whether in three years or four years, are eligible to participate in graduation exercises. For seniors who are eligible to graduate and are placed in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) just prior to the time of graduation, the last day of placement in the program will be the last instructional day, and the student will be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities unless the student was ordered placed into a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program, JJAEP, or arrested by any law enforcement agency during the last 30 school days (or final six weeks) prior to the graduation date for a term through the end of the semester for any of the following offenses, in which case the placement in the program will continue through graduation, and the student will not be allowed to participate in the graduation ceremony and related graduation activities:

- a. selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of a controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or other contraband.
- b. abusable glue or aerosol paint offenses.
- c. aggravated assault.
- d. use or possession of a firearm, club, or other weapon.
- e. sexual harassment or assault.
- f. public lewdness.
- g. arson.
- h. indecency with a child.
- i. graffiti, defacing school property, or vandalism.

Participation in graduation exercises is a privilege, not a right, and students who do not comply with dress, grooming, and conduct standards for the ceremony will be removed from the ceremony. The graduation ceremony is a solemn event commemorating a milestone achievement in the lives of our graduates. The administration will exercise editorial review and approval of the speeches and other comments to be delivered by students. Nonsectarian and non-proselytizing student invocations and benedictions may be delivered, pursuant to Board Policy EIG. Graduation activities include the following:

- Project Celebration.
- Activities authorized by the school principal/designee.

### **Graduation Speakers**

Graduating students will be given an opportunity to provide opening and closing remarks during the graduation ceremony. Students assigned to a disciplinary placement at any time during the spring semester will not be eligible to speak at graduation. Students eligible to give the opening and closing remarks will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. In the event there are more eligible students volunteering than there are speaking roles at the graduation ceremony, the names of all eligible students who volunteered shall be randomly drawn. The student whose name is drawn first will give the opening remarks and the student whose name is drawn second will give the closing remarks (See FNA(LOCAL)).

### **Graduation Expenses**

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

## **CLASS RANK / TOP TEN PERCENT / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT**

Students completing requirements for graduation at the end of the fall semester will be ranked with the following spring semester class. Those completing requirements during the summer will be ranked with the preceding spring semester class. Duplicate ranks may occur.

For purposes of class ranking, the District uses both scores for a student who repeats a course acceptable for credit. When determining grade point averages (GPA), the District awards students eight points for each Pre-Advanced Placement (Pre-AP)/Pre-International Baccalaureate (Pre-IB) course successfully completed and ten points for each Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) course. The points are to be added to their aggregate grand point total only.

Students who transfer into the District shall also receive additional points for Pre-AP/Pre-IB and AP/IB courses, up to a total of eight points for Pre-AP/Pre-IB courses or ten points for AP/IB courses if, upon verification by school administration, the transfer courses are found to be the equivalent of Pre-AP/Pre-IB and/or AP/IB courses taught in the EPISD. An appeal of a denial of additional points may be made in accordance with the student and parent complaint policy, FNG (LOCAL) [EIC (LOCAL)].

Ten percent (10%) of the class membership shall be selected for the graduation honor group. The top two percent (2%) of this membership shall compose the high graduation honor group (with a minimum of three students). Any fraction above a whole number will add one student to the honor group.

The prerequisites for graduation honors include the following:

- a student must be enrolled in a secondary school prior to the end of the first day of the second six-week grading period of the first semester in which minimum graduation requirements are completed and must complete a minimum of six credits in the District prior to graduation.
- those students selected for graduation honor group participation in an academic school year must complete the requirements for graduation during the fall and/or spring semester of the selection year.
- students must be enrolled in regular, accelerated, Pre-AP, Advanced Placement, Pre-IB, or International Baccalaureate classes.

The graduation honor group will be determined for the academic year by the number of students on the fall “Senior List” and will include all eligible students who complete graduation requirements during the current year. If there is a change when final grades are averaged, new names may be added to the honor group without deleting names already announced.

In calculating grade averages for the graduation honor group, all subjects acceptable for credit by the District are averaged, except for credits earned through non-accredited schools, including home schools or the Advanced Placement/Credit by Examination program. The number of credits allowed for each course would determine the number of times the grade is counted in averaging. High schools complete class rank for the purpose of graduation ceremonies by utilizing spring semester projected grades based on work completed through the

end of the second six-week grading period. Honoring the top two percent at the graduation ceremony is to be based on the use of final grades for the spring semester.

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

1. Completes the Recommended or Advanced Distinguished Achievement Program; or
2. Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks or earns at least a 1500 out of 2400 on the SAT.

Students and parents should contact the counselor for further information about how to apply and the deadline for application. [For further information, see policies at EIC.]

## **STATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**

- Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended or Advanced (Distinguished Achievement) High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.
- Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement Program may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ.]

## **SECTION 10 - EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Participation in school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right. Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course, or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or a foreign language—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ten absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.
- All schools must check grades for all participants at the end of the first six weeks of the school year. From that point, grades are checked at the end of each grading period. Students who pass remain eligible until the end of the next grading period. All activity coaches and directors are responsible for obtaining official grade reports from the individual the principal designates as the keeper of official grades before the student represents the school. This provision applies to all grading periods. It also applies to all three week school evaluation periods for ineligible students.
- All students are eligible during a school holiday of a full calendar week or more. When the bell rings to dismiss students for the December holidays, all students are eligible until classes resume in January. The same is true for summer recess and fall and spring breaks provided those breaks consist of at least a full calendar week.
- If a grading period or three school week evaluation period ends on the last class day prior to a school holiday of one calendar week or more (e.g., spring break, winter holidays), the seven calendar day grace period to lose eligibility and the seven calendar day waiting period to regain eligibility begin the first day that classes resume.
- Students lose eligibility seven (7) calendar days after the end of the grading period. Loss of eligibility is for a three school week period. For purposes of the law, “three school weeks” is defined as 15 class days. Exception: one, but only one of the three school weeks may consist of only three or four class days, provided school has been dismissed for a scheduled holiday period. Two class days does not constitute a “school week” for purposes of this law except Thanksgiving week if schools are on holiday Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. In the event two of three school weeks are shortened, one of the shortened weeks may be counted as five days with ten other actual class days making up the fifteen class days.
- A student may not drop a class in which he/she has a grade below 70 after the end of the first four school weeks of the class without it being considered a failing grade for eligibility purposes. Dropping an advanced class which is exempted for no pass, no play does

not cause loss of eligibility at any time unless full time status is affected or the school has adopted a more stringent policy. Dropping a class after the fourth week into the course with a grade lower than 70 causes the student to lose eligibility for the next three school week evaluation period.

- A student with an “incomplete” grade is ineligible at the end of the seven day grace period unless the “incomplete” was replaced with a passing grade prior to the end of the seven day grace period. Students with an “incomplete” grade either within or beyond the end of the seven day grade period may retain eligibility if the work is made up in accordance with District policy in regard to time allowed for make-up work and the conditions under which make-up work are allowed.
- A student who misses a class because of participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

### **Absences**

The District shall make no distinction between absences for UIL activities and absences for other extracurricular activities approved by the Board. A student shall be allowed a maximum of 12 absences not related to post-District competition, a maximum of 5 absences for post-District competition prior to state, and a maximum of 2 absences for state competition in a school year.

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

- Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property. No provision of an extracurricular behavioral standard shall have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex, race, disability, religion, or ethnicity. Students shall be informed of any extracurricular behavior standards at the beginning of each school year or, in the case of interscholastic athletics and marching band, at the time the students report for workouts or practices that occur prior to the actual beginning of classes.
- Students and their parents shall sign and return to the sponsor or coach a statement that they have read the extracurricular behavior standards and consent to them as a condition of participation in the activity.

[For further information, see policies FM and FO.]

### **Pupil Transfer Request**

Pupil transfer requests cannot be granted for extracurricular purposes. Students who transfer from one attendance zone to another may not participate at the varsity level.

## **ATHLETIC AWARDS/LETTERING STANDARDS**

Subchapter 0, Section 480, (a) (1) -- Texas University Interscholastic League Contest Rules: “Awards School May Give.” A participating school district may give an award not to exceed \$70 in value to a student during that student’s high school enrollment at the same school for participation in UIL interschool competition(s) listed in Section 380. Each year a participant school or member school district may present additional awards, not to exceed \$10 each, for participation in each additional interschool activity listed in Section 380.

Each head athletic coach and sponsor of an extracurricular activity will establish and distribute definite criteria for lettering standards. Students shall be informed of the lettering standards prior to the competitive season. In addition to the lettering standards, each student must compete at the varsity level and complete the season of the activity and/or sport or have a valid excuse approved by the coach/sponsor and principal/designee.

Awards shall be given in accordance with administrative regulations as follows [FG (REGULATION)]:

- In order to be eligible to receive an award, the student must have the approval of the principal and the coach of the particular sport.
- Students may receive one athletic award sweater or jacket with a letter for his or her high school career. A student may receive a major and a minor award for the same activity in the same school year. Each year a student may receive an additional award for each school. This award may not exceed the UIL \$10.00 limit.
- Students earning awards in non-varsity sports will be given certificates.
- Sweaters or jackets will be purchased on bid, which will specify that the price will not exceed the UIL standard.
- The total amount spent for one athlete for any one year shall not exceed the UIL standard for sweater or jacket and symbolic award.
- No assembly shall be held for presentation of the athletic award.
- No parent or organization shall be permitted to purchase awards for athletic teams of the District.
- There shall be no deviation from the original awards list turned in to the athletics office.

## **SECTION 11 - STUDENT EXPECTATIONS, SAFETY AND DISCIPLINE**

### **APPLICABILITY OF SCHOOL RULES**

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of the standards. Students need to be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the Student Code of Conduct and other campus rules will apply whenever the interest of the district is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with classes and school-sponsored activities. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

Students are responsible for the following:

- demonstrate courtesy – even when others do not.
- behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline.
- attend class the entire time the class is in session, except when ill or otherwise lawfully excused, and be on time to classes.
- be prepared for each class with appropriate materials and assignments.
- attempt to master the essential knowledge and skills of the curriculum of study prescribed by the District and the state.
- maintain self-control in the classroom, in the cafeteria, on the bus, and all school-sponsored functions.
- dress in accordance with the campus/District standards of propriety, safety, health, and grooming.
- respect the rights and privileges of other students, teachers, and other District staff.
- respect the property of others, including District property and facilities.
- assist the school staff in operating a safe school.
- pay required fees and fines, except as exempted by law.
- seek changes in school policies and regulations in an orderly manner and through approved channels.
- deliver all communications from the school, in an unaltered condition, to the parent or guardian.
- express opinions and ideas in a respectful manner.
- cooperate with school staff in investigating disciplinary matters.
- maintain a demeanor of respect by demonstrating respectful behavior at all times including by not participating, verbally, physically or by association, in any action that could be characterized as bullying or harassment of other students, employees, volunteers, or community members.

### **CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**

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

### **DISRUPTIONS**

As identified by law, prohibited disruptions include the following:

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

## **RADIOS, CD PLAYERS, CELL PHONES, AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND GAMES**

Students are not permitted to possess such items as pagers, radios, CD players, tape recorders, camcorders, DVD players, cameras, electronic devices or games, or telecommunications devices with text messaging at school, unless prior permission has been obtained from the principal. Without such permission, teachers will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return the items at the end of the day for students to take home or whether parents will be contacted to pick up the items. For more information on the behavioral expectations and the use of cell phones, please see the EPISD Student Code of Conduct. Cell phones are not allowed in rooms where standardized tests including the TAKS are being administered. Students possessing cell phones in violation of this restriction will have their test form voided or invalidated and may face discipline under the EPISD Student Code of Conduct. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. For certain items, such as pagers, in which a third party retains a legal right of ownership, the school may charge for releasing the pager to the third party. [See policy FNCE (Local).]

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

The rules of conduct and grooming will be observed at all school social events held outside of the regular school day. Guests are expected to observe the same rules as students attending the event, and the person inviting the guest will share responsibility for the conduct of the guest. A student attending a party or social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the party; anyone leaving before the official end of the party will not be readmitted. Students who violate those standards may be removed or excluded from the activity for a period determined by the principal/designee or sponsor and may be subject to further disciplinary action (FO series).

## **BULLYING**

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students directs written or verbal expressions or physical conduct against another student and the behavior results in harm to the student or the student's property, places a student in fear of harm to himself or his property, or is so severe that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment. The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit bullying and to respond to reports of bullying (See FFI(Local)).

## **COMPUTER RESOURCES**

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, the district has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes.(Title II-D) Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and their parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action. Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers is not private and may be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policy CQ.]

### **Acceptable Use Policy For Internet/Computer System Access**

Access to the District's electronic communications system, including the internet, shall be made available to students, parents, and employees, exclusively for instructional and administrative purposes and in accordance with administrative regulations. Access to the District's electronic communications system is a privilege, not a right. Students need to be aware that the District computers are shared equipment and time limits may be imposed when people are waiting to use them. Any person using these resources through a District connection must accept and abide by the following policies:

1. Students may not allow anyone else to use their personal password.
2. Students must respect the rights of other individuals and not use language that is abusive (harshly or coarsely insulting, containing cursing in any language, or ethnic or racial slurs), profane (vulgar, irreverent toward god or sacred things, satanic), sexually offensive (sexual in nature, repugnant to the moral sense or good taste, sexual harassment), or threatening.
3. No one may access text or visual depictions (any picture, image, graphic image file, or other visual depiction) that are obscene and/or harmful to minors (appeals to a prurient interest; an actual or simulated sexual act or contact; and lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value).
4. Students may not access or participate in chat rooms at any time. If the curriculum mandates the use of a supervised chat room, chat rooms may be allowed if the chat room is monitored on-line by a third party and if the students are under close supervision of the instructor.
5. Students may access only those games approved by a teacher or librarian.
6. Students must respect the privacy of others and not intentionally obtain copies of or modify files, passwords, or data that belong to anyone else. No one should represent him/herself as someone else by using another's account. No one should forward personal material without prior consent of the originator.

7. Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communication system are not considered to be private and may be monitored at any time by designated District staff to ensure appropriate use. Transmitting obscene messages or pictures is prohibited. Messages dealing with illegal activities may be reported to the administrator or police.
8. For the safety and privacy of the student, no student information in any form except directory information will be posted on the internet without express parental permission.
9. Students must respect the integrity of computing systems and abide by existing federal and state laws regarding electronic communication. The following conduct is prohibited: accessing secure and/or confidential information without authorization, divulging passwords, causing system malfunction, developing programs that harass other users, attempting to infiltrate a computer or computing system, maliciously harming or destroying District equipment, materials, or data, the uploading or creation of computer viruses, accessing indecent information, and deliberately degrading or disrupting system performance. These actions may be viewed as violations of District policy and administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creation of computer viruses and accessing indecent information. These laws can carry penalties of up to 20 years in prison.
10. Students must respect the legal protection provided by copyright laws to computer programs, articles, graphics and data. (See Board Policies on copyright.) Students shall not copy anything that belongs to someone else without rewriting it in their own words and are reminded to give credit to the owner of the information.
11. Any expense incurred as a result of internet use is the responsibility of the student/parents.
12. Access to the internet is considered a privilege. Users should not waste school resources through improper use of the computer system. Anyone found using access in a way deemed inappropriate will be denied privileges. Noncompliance with applicable regulations may result in suspension or termination of privileges and other disciplinary action consistent with Board Policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*.

## DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

### Nonschool Materials...from students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any nonschool material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The student may appeal the principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without this approval will be removed.

### Nonschool Materials...from others

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

Prior review will not be required for:

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

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

### Student Publications/Distribution of Materials

School publications distributed include the following: the *Student Code of Conduct*, *Student Handbook*, and other publications approved by the administration. All materials prepared and published as part of a school's journalism or language arts programs are under the control and supervision of the administration and Board of Trustees. The principal/designee has final approval authority on all materials published or distributed in the name of the school. Students who have a complaint regarding the procedures or professional decision affecting the content or style of a school-sponsored publication shall present the complaint in accordance with FNG (LOCAL).

## DRESS AND GROOMING

The District expects students to come to school in clothes that are clean and that will not be a health or safety threat to themselves or to other students or staff. The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that, in the principal's/designee judgment, may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations.

If the student comes to school in violation of the dress code as specified in the *Student Code of Conduct* or the Handbook, he/she will be placed in in-school suspension until he/she is in compliance. The campus will make efforts to notify the parent/guardian as soon as possible. If the student comes into compliance with the dress and grooming standards, he/she will return to regular classes immediately.

The District prohibits pictures, emblems, or writings on clothing that have the following characteristics:

- lewd offensive vulgarities or obscenities.
- advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other substance prohibited under FNCF (LOCAL).
- show evidence of membership or affiliation in any gang, unauthorized club, or organization under FMC (LOCAL).

## UNIFORM DRESS CODES

The use of school uniforms has been established to improve students' self-esteem, reduce ethnic/racial tensions, bridge socioeconomic differences among students, and promote positive behavior, thereby enhancing school safety and improving the learning environment. Prior to the implementation of a mandatory uniform policy, each school will prepare a flyer describing in detail the uniform and listing the cost range for each competitively priced item of clothing as provided by a variety of vendors.

The District has compiled and maintains a list of community agencies, uniform retailers, organizations, and individuals willing to assist students in need, and has procedures to link identified resources with participating schools. If community funding is not available, each campus shall establish a specific uniform fund for students in financial need. This ensures that parents in need of financial assistance are able to access it by telephone, mail, or in person.

To ensure a smooth transition to the mandatory uniform policy, a five-day grace period shall be observed by each participating school during its first year of implementation.

Once the uniform policy is implemented, failure to adhere to the prevailing dress code may result in disciplinary action as provided within the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Requests for exemption from the mandatory uniform requirement shall be handled in accordance with Board Policy FNCA (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) and FNG (LOCAL). All Board Policies are available in the principal's office.

## SAFETY

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

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

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

From time to time, students, teachers, and other District employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded or code words spoken, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly fashion. If the campus is in a lock-down situation, all personnel on campus, including visitors, are required to follow outlined procedures as designated by campus authorities.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

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

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

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus. After dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Vandalism**

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

## SEARCHES

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

Personal property brought on school property or to school-related activities is permitted as a matter of privilege, not of right, with the understanding and agreement that the owner or possessor of the property consents to a search of that property when there is a reasonable basis to suspect a search may disclose evidence a student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. Included in this category of property are:

- non-District-owned vehicles
- personal books, supplies, and equipment (including athletic equipment)
- personal items such as lunch boxes, briefcases, backpacks, and/or similar containers used to carry materials.

If a school official has a reasonable basis to suspect that a search of this property may disclose evidence that a student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, the official may institute a search. If circumstances permit, the student should be requested to be present during the search which should be conducted out of the presence of other students; and the school official conducting the search should have another school official to act as a witness to the search.

Personal searches are authorized regarding students' purses, handbags, billfolds, and the emptying of pockets, the removal of shoes, socks, coats, and the like, but which do not involve the removal of other items of clothing or wearing apparel, if a school official has a reasonable basis to suspect a search may disclose evidence that a student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school. The manner and degree of the search must be reasonably related to the objective of the search and should not be excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the suspected infraction. The school official should advise the student of the reason for the search. If circumstances permit, the school official should perform the search out of the presence of other students and request another school official to act as a witness.

### **Students' Desks and Lockers**

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

The following areas and property owned by EPISD are under exclusive control of the District and subject to search at any time by school officials:

- all areas in school buildings, gymnasiums, halls, offices, assembly rooms, other facilities, and buildings.
- all books, education equipment (including athletic equipment), supplies, or vehicles owned by the District.
- all student lockers, desks, work tables, cabinets, and storage areas located within school buildings.

Students should not expect privacy regarding items placed in school property because school property is subject to search at any time by school officials. Students are responsible for whatever is contained in desks, lockers, or other property issued to them by the school.

### **Vehicles on Campus**

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle in accordance with EPISD Board Policy, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also Board Policy FNF (Local) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

### **Trained Dogs**

The district may use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials. Trained dogs may be used to conduct searches of students' luggage and personal belongings on any school function or athletic or extra-curricular event while out of town or preparing to leave town.

### **Metal Detectors**

At any time or at any school or school-related event or function, the District may decide to implement the use of Metal Detectors as deemed necessary. [For further information, see policy FNF.]

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

### **General Visitors**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office. The length and frequency of visits, especially to the classrooms, may be controlled by the campus principal. All visitors to any EPISD installation will be required to sign in and may be required to wear a Visitor Badge throughout their stay. Visitors may not have in their possession items prohibited in the Student Code of Conduct. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Law enforcement officers will intervene and take action as the situation warrants. For more information, please refer to EPISD Board Policies GKA (Local) and GKC (Local).

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

During College Week in the fall of each year, the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested high school students and parents. The representatives visit each high school to present to the students during the school day and several area evening meetings are arranged for parents to have the opportunity to visit with the representatives.

## **SECTION 12 - LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION**

### **QUESTIONING OF STUDENTS**

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

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

### **STUDENTS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY**

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

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

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

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

### **NOTIFICATION OF LAW VIOLATIONS**

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated of delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policy GRA.]

## **SECTION 13 - TRANSPORTATION RELATED INFORMATION**

### **SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRIPS**

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

### **BUSES AND OTHER SCHOOL VEHICLES**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from the home school, students living on a Board approved hazardous route, and for eligible special education students as approved by an ARD committee. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. Further information may be obtained by calling the campus principal/designee. When a pupil transfer request is approved, the parent is responsible for the student's transportation.

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. Students who misbehave or violate the *Student Code of Conduct* while on the bus will be disciplined according to the *Student Code of Conduct* and may be suspended from the bus for a period of time. Video cameras may be used in District vehicles to promote compliance

with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Videotapes are student records subject to the provisions in FL (LEGAL).

When riding school transportation, students must adhere to the following rules:

- Follow the driver’s directions at all times.
- Enter and leave in an orderly manner at the designated bus stop nearest the home.
- Keep books, band instrument cases, feet, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Do not deface/damage the vehicle or its equipment.
- Refrain from putting hands, arms, head, or legs out of the window, do not hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or outside the bus.
- Do not use any form of tobacco, illegal drugs, or alcohol.
- Upon leaving, wait for the driver’s signal before crossing in front of the vehicle.

See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the Disciplinary Alternative Education Program. Students are expected to assist district staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver’s directions at all times.
- Use seatbelts at all times when riding in a District van or car.
- Fasten seat belts, if available.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Wait for the driver’s signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

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

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

## VIDEO CAMERAS

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior on buses and in common areas on campus. Students will not be told when the equipment is being used.

The principal will review the audio/video recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and applicable local, state, and federal laws, including the involvement of law enforcement agencies as appropriate to the situation.

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# APPENDIX I

## STUDENT ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT FOR INTERNET ACCESS

(Please review Acceptable Use Policy on Page 32 of this Student Handbook)

Student's Name: (Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Apt.: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I am in the \_\_\_\_ grade at \_\_\_\_\_ school and will graduate in 20\_\_\_\_.

All should fill out this portion:

I understand and will abide by the El Paso ISD Acceptable Use Agreement for Network Use. I understand that my computer use is not private and the District may monitor my activity on the computer system. I further understand that any violation of the regulation is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked, school disciplinary action may be taken and/or appropriate legal action.

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

Parent or Guardian (if student under the age of 18)

I have read the District's electronic communications system policy and administrative regulations. In consideration for the privilege of my child using the District's electronic communications system, and in consideration for having access to the public networks, I hereby release the District, its operators, and any institution with which they are affiliated from any and all claims and damages of any nature arising from my child's use of, or inability to use, the system, including, without limitation, the type of damage identified in the District's policy and administrative regulations.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give permission for my child to participate in the District's electronic communications system and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not give permission for my child to participate in the District's electronic communications system.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX II ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

My child and I have received a copy of the El Paso Independent School district Student Handbook. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

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

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

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

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