

**STUDENT & PARENT  
HANDBOOK  
2024-2025**



SCHOOL OF SCIENCE  
& TECHNOLOGY

*Better Education, Better Future*



# **SST PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Better Education, Better Future

2024

2025

**STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK**



## Table of Contents

Preface	1
Notice of Nondiscrimination in Career and Technical Education Programs	3
SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION	4
Student Rights	4
Equal Education Opportunity	4
SST Admission Policies and Procedures	4
Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery	4
Admission Process of Returning Students	5
Exceptions to Lottery Process	5
Exclusion from Admission	5
Non-Discrimination in Admission	5
Student Information	5
Food Allergy Information	5
Establishing Identification	6
Undocumented Students	6
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001	6
Residency Verification	6
Residency for Servicemembers	6
Pre-Kindergarten Age Requirement	7
Kindergarten Age Requirement	7
First Grade Age Requirement	7
Attendance	7
Compulsory Attendance	7
Tracking Student Attendance	7
Notice to Parents	8
Attendance for Credit or Final Grade	8
Students with Disabilities	9
Driver's License Attendance Verification	9
Absence and Tardiness	9
Absence in General	9
Excused Absences	9
Unexcused Absences	10
Make-Up Work	10
Tardy Policy	10
Closed Campus	12
Dismissal Policy	13
Dismissal/Pick Up Information Form	13
Loitering	13
Early Dismissal from School	14
Withdrawal from School	14
Voluntary Withdrawal	14
Involuntary Withdrawal	15

Dress and Grooming	15
Notice to Parents and Students	15
P.E. Uniform Policy	17
Additional Uniform Policy and Grooming Requirements and Limitations	17
Dress Code on Free Dress Days	17
Student Fees	18
Textbooks and Curriculum Materials	18
Student ID Cards	19
Lost and Found	19
Meals	19
State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines	19
Free and Reduced-Cost Meals	19
Lunch Periods	19
Public Areas	20
Library	20
Review and Reporting of Library Materials	20
Electronic Devices and Technology Resources	20
Possession and Use of Personal Telecommunications Devices, Including Cell Phones, and Other Electronic Devices	20
Instructional Use of Personal Telecommunications and Other Electronic Devices	21
Acceptable Use of Technology Resources	21
Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources	21
Phone Messages	22
Displaying a Student’s Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work	22
Distribution of Published Materials	22
School Materials	22
Non-School Materials	22
Fundraising	22
Sales	22
Demonstrations or Meetings on School Premises (Non-School Sponsored)	22
Bulletin Boards	23
Deliveries	23
School Activities	23
Field Trips	23
After-School Activities	24
Arts and Activity Groups	24
Transportation	24
Student Parking	25
Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence	25
Recitation of the Declaration of Independence	25
Prayer and Meditation	25
Damage to School Property	25
SECTION II: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY	26
General Information	26

Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures	26
Mental and Physical Health Resources	26
Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health	27
Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited	27
Alcohol-Free School Notice	28
Drug-Free School Notice	28
Asbestos Management Plan	28
Bacterial Meningitis	28
Communicable Diseases	30
Immunizations	31
Immunizations received outside the United States	31
Provisional Enrollment	31
Exclusions from Immunization Requirements	31
Immunization Records Reporting	32
Emergency Medical Treatment	32
Illness During the School Day	33
Sending Students Home from School	33
Head Lice	34
Administration of Medication	34
Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication	34
Unassigned Epinephrine	35
Opioid Antagonist Medication	35
Seizure Management Plan	35
Requirements for Seizure Management Plans Submitted Before January 1, 2024	35
Requirements for Seizure Management Plans Submitted On or After January 1, 2024	35
Health Screenings	36
Athletics Participation	36
Fitness Testing	36
Vision and Hearing Screenings	36
Spinal Screening	36
Acanthosis Nigricans Screening	37
Mental Health Promotion and Intervention	37
Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)	38
Information on Student ID Cards	38
Steroid Notice	39
Counseling Services	39
Preparedness Training	39
Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation	39
Statement of Nondiscrimination	39
Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)	39
Dating Violence	39
Retaliation	40
Reporting Procedures	40

Investigation	40
Appeal	41
Freedom from Sexual Harassment	41
General Definitions	42
Reporting Sexual Harassment	42
Notice of Allegations	43
Grievance Process	43
Consolidation of Formal Complaints	44
Dismissal of Formal Complaints	44
Investigating Formal Complaints	44
Determination Regarding Responsibility	45
Appeals	45
Emergency Removals	46
Informal Resolution	46
Retaliation Prohibited	46
Confidentiality	47
Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination	47
Freedom from Bullying	47
Reporting Procedures	48
Investigations	48
Child Abuse Reporting and Programs	49
Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Students	49
Lockers and Desks	53
Interrogations and Searches	53
Desk and Locker Searches	53
Computers and Electronic Devices	53
Vehicles on Campus	53
Trained Dogs	54
Law Enforcement Agencies	54
Questioning of Students	54
Students Taken into Custody	54
School Visitors	55
Disruptive Activity	55
Fire and Disaster Drills	56
Emergency Closings	56
Skateboards	56
Videotaping of Students	56
Use by Students Before and After School	57
Pest Control Information	57
SECTION III: ACADEMICS AND GRADING	58
Academic Programs	58
Required Curriculum	58
Social Studies Coursework	59



Middle School Advanced Mathematics Program	59
Academic Dishonesty	60
Homework Policy	60
Report Cards and Grading Scales	60
Honor Rolls for K-8	60
Tutoring	61
Credit and Acceleration by Exam	62
Kindergarten-Grade Acceleration Guidelines	62
Elementary and Middle School - Grade Acceleration Guidelines	62
High School - Exam for Acceleration(EA) for Initial Credit & Credit by Examination(CBE) for Credit Recovery	62
SST HIGH SCHOOL GUIDE	62
National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, and National Elementary Honor Society	62
Promotion and Retention	62
Yearly Average	62
NWEA MAP	62
High School Promotion	62
Transfer Students	62
Emergent Bilingual / English Learner Students	63
Kindergarten Promotion and Retention	63
Retention	63
Special Education Students	63
Parent Option for Students to Repeat Grades or Courses	63
Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test	64
Computer Resources	64
Distance Learning	64
Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations	64
Graduation (High School Grades Only)	65
Additional Graduation Requirements	65
Testing Requirements for Graduation	66
Foundation Graduation Program	66
Texas First Early High School Completion Program	67
Financial Aid Application Requirement	67
Students with Disabilities	68
Standardized Testing	69
Instructional Program	69
State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness	69
End-of-Course Assessments for Students in Grades 9–12	69
Paper Administration of Assessment Instruments on Parental Request	69
Accelerated Instruction	69
Accelerated Education Plan	70
AEP Grievance Procedure	70
Texas Success Initiative Assessment	70
SAT/ACT (Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test)	71

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System	71
Special Programs	71
Students Who Speak a Primary Language Other than English	71
Aiding Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education or Section 504 Services	71
Special Education Referrals	71
Contact Person for Special Education Referrals	72
Section 504 Referrals	72
Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals	72
Additional Information	72
Notification to Parent of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to General Education Students	73
Services for Title I Participants	73
Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504	73
Students Qualifying for Dyslexia Services	73
Contact List for Special Education/504 Referrals	74
SECTION IV: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT	75
Authority and Jurisdiction	76
Reporting Crimes	76
Standards for Student Conduct	76
School-Wide and Classroom Rules	76
Responsibilities of Parents	77
Discipline Management Techniques	77
Corporal Punishment	78
Core Ethical Values Connection	78
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)	78
CASEL “Five Competencies”	78
Restorative Discipline Practices	78
Procedures for Use of Restraint	78
Procedures for Use of Time-Out	79
Offenses and Consequences	80
Level I Offenses	80
Level II Offenses	82
Level III Offenses	85
Details on Code of Conduct Consequences	88
Detention	88
Suspension	90
Removal from School Transportation	91
Disciplinary Process	91
Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals	91
Process for Suspensions Lasting Under Five Days	92
Process for Out-of-School Suspensions Over Five Days or More (Extended Suspension) and Expulsion	92
Gun-Free Schools Act	93
Positive Behavior Award System	94

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	94
Glossary	94
SECTION V: FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS	100
SST Enrichment Programs	100
Student Clubs	100
Athletics	100
Student Mentoring Programs	101
SST Home Visit Program	101
SST Family Engagement Program	101
SST Parent Academy	101
Parent Activities	102
Expedition & Exploration Programs	102
Educational Field Trips	102
Camps	102
International Trips	103
Trip Cancellation Policy	104
Performing Arts	104
College and Career Success (CCS) Program	104
College Transition Programs	104
Scholarships	105
SECTION VI: ESPECIALLY FOR PARENTS	106
Accommodations for Children of Military Families	106
Communication between Home and School	106
Classroom Visit or Observation	106
Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction	106
Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking	107
Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service	107
Notification of Teacher Qualification	107
Notice of Threat Assessment	108
Parental Consent Required for Use of Certain Library Materials	108
Parent and Student Complaints and Concerns	108
Informal Conferences	108
Formal Process	108
Level One Complaint – Principal Review	108
Level Two Complaint – Regional Executive Director Review	109
Level Three Complaint – Superintendent Review	109
Level Four Complaint – Board of Directors Review	109
Additional Complaint Procedures	109
Surveys and Activities	110
“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities	111
Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)	111
Parent Notice and Directory Information Release	112
School Sponsored Purposes:	112

Military Recruiters and Higher Education (pertains to secondary students):	112
Law Enforcement Officials and Authorities:	112
Admissions Waitlist Vendors	112
Disclosure of PII without Consent	114
Student Acceptable Use Policy	114
Introduction	114
Using the Internet and Communications Systems	114
Proper and Acceptable Use of All Technology Resources	116
Personal Electronic Devices	118
Privacy and Security	119
Consequences	119
Limitations of Liability	120
Acknowledgment and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook and Student Code of Conduct	121
FERPA Directory Information Opt-Out Form	122
Use of Student Work in School Publications	123
Photo/Video Release Form	124
Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form	125
Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form	126

## **Preface**

### **Mission**

The School of Science and Technology drives academic and socio-emotional development through a college preparatory, STEM-based learning model. SST's model is anchored on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, embraced by a character-building approach, and delivered in an enriching, safe, and student-centered learning environment.

### **Vision**

Nurturing world-class scholars and ethical citizens to build a better future for all.

Code Values: M.A.G.I.C.

**M** » Moral Compass

**A** » Accountability

**G** » Generosity

**I** » Innovation

**C** » Citizenship

### **District Core Ethical Values**

Accountability, Citizenship, Dedication, Honesty, Integrity, Kindness, Leadership, Respectfulness, and Responsibility.

Campuses may have different core ethical values.

### **Board of Directors**

**President:** Dr. Suleyman Tek

**Vice President:** Mr. Christopher John Gieseke

**Secretary:** Dr. Turgay Korkmaz

**Member:** Mr. Denis Akhiyarov

**Member:** Mrs. Valarie Aktepe

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to SST Public Schools! A new school year always means a new beginning and new promise for the future and this year is no exception. The entire SST Family is committed to making this year a tremendously successful one by dedicating to work closely with all the families we serve, ensuring that everyone is able to play their part in developing a world-class educational learning environment at all SST Schools. Together we can create the amazing schools our communities desire and our students deserve.

We believe that in its most effective form, education is a collective endeavor in which all stakeholders of a school (staff, parents, students, and community leaders) must share responsibility for the successful operation of the school. This is why a primary goal of SST Schools has always been to foster strong partnerships within what we call the Parent-Student-School Triad which we believe props students up for success.

This handbook serves as a compendium of our school's goals, rules, expectations, policies, and procedures to be widely shared with all stakeholders in our community so that our roles within this partnership are more clearly defined leading to a safer and more orderly school environment. Thus, we strongly encourage all SST Stakeholders to become familiar with the programs, and activities outlined in this handbook so that they may become actively involved in our school system and contribute to the strengthening of the Parent-Student-School triad.

This essential reference book was written in plain simple language so that everyone in the SST Family may know what we expect of our students and parents, what they can expect from us, and how we will achieve our educational mission.

This Handbook is designed to be a reflection of current Board Policy, and is updated yearly.

Changes in policy and procedure that occur during the school year and that affect the Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through communications during the school year. In case of conflict between Board Policy and any provision of this handbook, the provision that was most recently adopted by the Board of Directors will be followed.

We ask our parents to review the entire Handbook with their students and to keep it as a reference during this school year. Parents or students with questions about the material in this Handbook should contact their principal.

Thank you for being part of the SST Family.

Sincerely,

Fawzy Shemshack

Superintendent

## **Notice of Nondiscrimination in Career and Technical Education Programs**

SST Schools offers career and technical education programs in Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources; Architecture and Construction; Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications; Business Management and Administration; Education and Training; Finance; Government and Public Administration; Health Science; Hospitality and Tourism; Human Services; Information Technology; Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security; Manufacturing; Marketing; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. Admission to these programs is based on enrollment in SST Schools.

It is the policy of SST Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of SST Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

SST Schools will take steps to ensure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator and/or the Section 504 Coordinator, at 1450 NE Interstate Loop 410, San Antonio, X 78209 Phone: (210) 957-1955.

Additional contact information for these Coordinators is include later in this Handbook.

## Student Rights

SST pledges to allow all students to

- Feel safe in the school environment.
- Take full advantage of learning opportunities.
- Work in an environment free from disruptions and chaos.
- Express opinions, ideas, thoughts, and concerns.
- Have a healthy environment that is smoke, alcohol, and drug-free.
- Use school resources and facilities for self-improvement.
- Expect courtesy, fairness, and respect from all members of the community.
- Be informed of all expectations and responsibilities.
- Take part in a variety of school activities.

## Equal Education Opportunity

SST Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex or gender, age, or disability in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational and career technology programs. SST Public Schools complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”); Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law.

As required by Title IX, SST Public Schools does not (and is required not to) discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. This non-discrimination requirement applies to admission to and employment with SST Schools. Inquiries into issues related to Title IX may be referred to SST’s Title IX Coordinator (identified later in this Handbook), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

## SST Admission Policies and Procedures

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the geographic boundaries stated in SST’s open-enrollment charters, and who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. Additionally, as allowed by Chapter 12 of the Texas Education Code, SST may admit a child of a school employee regardless of whether the child resides within the geographic area served by SST. The total number of students enrolled in SST shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may also be limited by SST based on occupancy limitations, code compliance, and staffing requirements, as deemed necessary.

### Submission of Applications and Admissions Lottery

Students wanting to attend SST must submit an application during the school’s open-enrollment period, which is designated by the school administration.

If fewer applications than spots available are received, students will be offered admission on a first-come, first-served basis. If SST receives more applications than it has spots available in any grade level, it will conduct a random lottery. Each applicant selected during the lottery (up until all open seats are filled) will be offered admission. Once all enrollment spots have been filled by the lottery, the lottery will continue and applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which they are drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the next school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

If an application is received after the application period has passed, the applicant’s name will be added to the waiting list behind the names of the applicants who timely applied.

Families offered an enrollment seat will be sent a registration packet with instructions for registering. Families must complete and return the registration packet by the published deadline in order to secure enrollment. If an enrollment offer is declined or if you do not complete the registration packet by the



established deadline, your child's seat will be offered to the next potential student on the waiting list.

#### Admission Process of Returning Students

Returning students (students currently attending SST) who remain qualified to attend the school and who notify the school of their intent to return for the next school year by the fourth Friday of January are exempt from the lottery and will remain enrolled. Parents shall submit Proof of Residency with each year's re-enrollment.

#### Exceptions to Lottery Process

Federal guidelines to exempt certain applications from the admissions lottery process. Applicants who qualify for any of these lottery exemptions will be automatically enrolled, space permitting.

The first category of lottery-exempt applicants is children of SST's founders, teachers, and staff, so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption does not exceed 3% of the total enrollment.

The second category of lottery-exempt applicants is siblings of returning students currently enrolled at an SST campus who have qualified as returning students.

The third category of lottery-exempt applicants is siblings of applicants selected through the required lottery who were also registered for that lottery.

For purposes of SST's lottery policy, the term "sibling" shall mean a biological or legally adopted brother or sister residing in the same household as the applicant. Cousins, nieces, nephews, and unrelated children sharing an address with the applicant are not siblings. Sibling enrollment is dependent on available space and does not guarantee enrollment.

Priority of admission in the order of each above-listed category of lottery-exempt students shall also be determined by lottery.

#### Exclusion from Admission

As authorized by the SST charter and Texas Education Code § 12.111(a)(5)(A), students with a documented history of a criminal offense, juvenile court adjudication, or other discipline problems listed under Texas Education Code Chapter 37, Subchapter A, will be excluded from admission and enrollment in SST Schools.

#### Non-Discrimination in Admission

In accordance with state law, SST Schools does not discriminate in its admissions policy on the basis of sex, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, academic, artistic, athletic ability, or the district the child would otherwise attend.

#### **Student Information**

Any student admitted to SST Public Schools must provide records, such as report cards from the previous school attended, to verify his or her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required for each student enrolling for the first time in the SST system.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in SST, the parent and school in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school. Students will not be denied enrollment if they fail to meet this requirement.

SST Public Schools will forward a student's records on request to a school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll without the necessity of the parent's consent.

#### Food Allergy Information

Parents should notify SST Public Schools when a student has been diagnosed with a food allergy, especially an allergy that could result in dangerous or life-threatening reactions either by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact with the particular food. It is important to disclose the food to which the student is allergic as well as the nature of the allergic reaction. Please contact the health aid on the campus if your child has a known food allergy or as soon as possible after any diagnosis of a food allergy.

Students with special dietary needs due to food allergies or students who need other food modifications must have a physician complete a special dietary needs form available from SST.

Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child's student records, and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board of Director's policy and as

permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (“FERPA”).

#### Establishing Identification

Any of the following documents are acceptable proof of identification and age: birth certificate; driver’s license; passport; school ID card; records, or report card; military ID; hospital birth records; adoption records; church baptismal record; or any other legal document that establishes identity.

#### Undocumented Students

Enrollment may not be denied to children who are not legally admitted into the United States.

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001**

Homeless children and youth are ensured specific educational rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act of 2001. “Children and youth who are homeless,” as defined by this federal law, means and includes children who:

- Are abandoned in hospitals, or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.
- Are living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations.
- Are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain policies and procedures, including proof of residency requirements; immunization requirements; educational program placement; award of credit; eligibility requirements for participating in extracurricular activities; continuing enrollment in the

“school of origin” or enrollment in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing; graduation requirements; and other related matters.

Questions concerning assistance offered to homeless students can be obtained from:

Director of Accountability and Compliance

superintendent.office@ssttx.org  
1450 NE Interstate  
410 Loop, San  
Antonio, TX 78209  
210-957-1955

### **Residency Verification**

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in SST Public Schools, each student’s parent must show proof of residency at the time

- P.O. Box cannot be listed as an address.
- A recently paid rent receipt.
- A current lease agreement.
- The most recent tax receipt is indicating home ownership.
- A current utility bill indicating the address and name of the residence occupiers.
- The mailing address of the residence occupiers.
- Visual inspection of the residence.
- Interviews with persons with relevant information.
- Building permits are issued to a parent on or before September 1 of the school year in which admission is sought as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only.

#### Residency for Servicemembers

A person whose parent is an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, may establish residency by providing SST a copy of a military order requiring the parent’s transfer to a military installation in the school’s geographic boundaries. Proof of residence in SST’s

geographic boundaries shall be provided not later than the 90th day after the arrival date specified in the order. “Residence” includes residence in a military temporary lodging facility.

Falsification of residence on an enrollment form is a criminal offense.

### **Pre-Kindergarten Age Requirement**

To be eligible for Pre-Kindergarten, your child must be at least four years of age by September 1st of the school year they are applying for and reside within SST’s geographic boundaries, and meet at least one of the following eligibility requirements:

- Unable to speak and comprehend the English language;
- Is educationally disadvantaged (eligible to participate in the national school lunch program);
- Is homeless, as defined by 42 U. S. C. § 1143a, regardless of the residence of the child, of either parent of the child, or of the child’s guardian or other person having lawful control of the child;
- Is the child of an active-duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;
- Is the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty;
- Is or has ever been in the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (foster care) following an adversary hearing, or has been in foster care in another state or territory but currently lives in Texas; or
- Is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as a peace officer, a firefighter, or an emergency medical first responder.

### **Kindergarten Age Requirement**

To qualify for kindergarten, the child must be five years old on or before September 1st of the school year they are applying for.

### **First Grade Age Requirement**

To qualify for first grade, the child must be six years old on or before September 1st of the school year they are applying for.

**Exception:** Students who are five years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year are automatically eligible for the first grade for the full school term if the student has completed public school kindergarten or has been enrolled in the first grade in a public school in another state before transferring to a Texas public school. “Enrolled” means actually receiving instruction in attendance in a public school rather than being registered before receiving instruction. Students who are five years of age on or before September 1 of the current school year may also enroll in first grade after successfully completing the SST Kindergarten acceleration process.

### **Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, students and parents 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. These laws are discussed below.

#### Compulsory Attendance

Students enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to compulsory attendance requirements as long as they remain enrolled.

State law also requires that a student who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached their 19th birthday, shall attend school as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended-year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

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

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 19 years of age or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, SST revoke the student's enrollment, except that SST may not revoke the enrollment on a day on which the student is physically present at school. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. Prior to revoking the student's enrollment, SST shall issue a warning letter to the student after the third unexcused absence stating that the student's enrollment may be revoked for the remainder of the school year if the student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking enrollment, SST may impose a behavior improvement plan.

#### Tracking Student Attendance

SST staff must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered "truant" and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. SST may file a complaint against the parent if the student incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year.

#### Notice to Parents

Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093; and the student is subject to referral to a truancy court for truant conduct under Texas Family Code § 65.003(a).

SST shall notify a student's parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school; the student is subject to truancy prevention measures under Texas Education Code § 25.0915; and that a conference between school officials and the parent is needed to discuss the absences.

#### Attendance for Credit or Final Grade

To receive credit or a final grade in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. These include both excused and unexcused absences.

A student who attends for at least 75%, but fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered, may be referred to a campus Attendance Review Committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit.

In determining whether there are extenuating circumstances for an absence, the Attendance Review Committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, will be reviewed, with consideration given to special circumstances discussed in the Texas Education Code.
- For a student transferring into SST Public Schools after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching a consensus about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student, parent, or other representatives will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost or a final grade is not earned due to excessive absences, the Attendance Review Committee will decide how the student may regain credit. If the committee determines that there are no

extenuating circumstances and that credit may not be regained, the student and/or parent may appeal the decision by filing a written request with the Campus Principal within 15 days of the last day of the semester. The appeal will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Campus Principal or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

#### Students with Disabilities

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD or Section 504 committee will determine whether the attendance issues warrant an evaluation, a reevaluation, and/or modifications to the student's individualized education program or Section 504 plan, as appropriate.

#### **Driver's License Attendance Verification**

To obtain or renew a driver's license, a student under 18 years of age must annually provide to the Texas Department of Public Safety a form obtained from the school verifying that the student has met the requirements set forth by the state regulation. Eligible students may obtain the required Verification of Enrollment form from the main office.

#### **Absence and Tardiness**

##### Absence in General

When a student must be absent from school, parents are asked to call the school each day the student will be absent. Upon returning to school, it is mandatory that the student bring **a note from a parent explaining the absence. The principal or designated school administrator will have final approval as to if the absence will be excused. Notes must be received within three days of the absence, or the absence will be unexcused.** A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted.

All assignments missed will be due on the day the student returns to school unless otherwise arranged with teachers or the Assistant Principal. Any absence not approved in advance will be unexcused.

Because excessive unexcused absences are considered truancy under state law, SST reserves the right to take extreme absence cases to court.

SST recognizes two kinds of absences: excused and unexcused. Students and parents should read this section carefully to understand the school's expectations. Students and parents should also be

aware of the school's policy regarding homework, quizzes, and tests following an absence.

##### Excused Absences

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

- An absence resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's parent provides a certification from a physician licensed to practice medicine in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or related treatment.
- An absence for a student who is 15 years of age or older to visit a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner license, provided that more than one day of school may not be excused during the period the student is enrolled in high school for the purpose of (i) obtaining a driver's license or (ii) obtaining a learner license, and the school verifies the student's visit to the driver's license office in accordance with procedures adopted by SST.
- Religious holy days. For purposes of excusing a student from attending school to observe a religious holy day, SST may not require documentation from a clergy member or other religious leader, and shall accept a note from the student's parent verifying the purpose of the student's absence.
- Required court appearances.
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship.
- Service as an election clerk.
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, if the student comes to school or returns to school on the same day as the appointment. A note from the health-care provider must be



submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus.

- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who need to attend: (i) an activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or (ii) any other court-ordered activity, provided is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

A junior or senior student may also be absent for up to two days per school year for purposes of visiting a college or university, and/or for a career investigation day for the purpose of determining the student's interest in pursuing a career in the professional's field, so long as the student obtains permission for the visit from the principal or designee, follows the school's procedures to verify the visit, and makes up any work missed due to the absence.

A student may also be absent for up to two days in a school year for service as an early voting clerk, provided the student receives approval from the Principal prior to the absence and informs his or her teachers of the absence.

Absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

Additionally, SST may excuse up to four days of school for a high school student who is 17 years of age or older to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard, provided that SST verifies the student's activities relating to pursuing enlistment.

For religious holy days, required court appearances, activities related to obtaining citizenship, and service as an election clerk, one day of travel to the site and one day of travel from the site shall also be excused by SST.

The only additional excused absences are for personal illness, death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, or member of the immediate household), a school-related absence or an absence approved in advance by the principal due to extenuating circumstances.

### Unexcused Absences

Any absence not listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Examples of unexcused absences include, but are not limited to

- Failure to bring a written note within three school days following an absence;
- Leaving school without the permission of the Principal/ Assistant Principal;
- Walking out of class, and
- Receiving a pass to report to a certain school area and failing to report.

### Make-Up Work

A student must submit an "excused absence slip" to be eligible for make-up work. Students who are absent for school-related reasons or for an anticipated or planned absence must make arrangements for make-up assignments prior to the absence.

For any class missed, the teacher may assign make-up work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the student's needs in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher.

Students should receive credit for satisfactory makeup work after an absence. They may receive a zero as a placeholder until missed work is completed and turned in.

If a student misses a test due to an excused absence, a make-up test will be scheduled by the teacher. Students are responsible for taking the test at that time. Teachers are not obligated to reschedule a makeup exam.

**Students may not make up work following an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence may result in an "F" or grade of 0% for each assignment missed.**

### Tardy Policy

SST's tardy policy has been developed to emphasize the importance of each student arriving on time to school every day and remaining in the classroom for the entire period. Learning personal responsibility by arriving at school and class on time is an integral part

of the school's standard of excellence, which helps prepare students for success.

Tardiness interrupts instructional time. Students should be inside the classroom by the school's announced start time. If a student is more than 20 minutes late to any class, he/she will be counted absent for the period. A student arriving after this time must first report to the front office and obtain a tardy slip. Tardiness to school will be unexcused unless the student arrives on-campus late for one of the following reasons:

- Attendance at a required court appointment
- Appointment with a doctor, dentist, or other professional
- Inclement Weather (Principal's Approval Needed).

During the first few days of school, the school will be working with the students, focusing on getting organized and arriving at class on time. **This Tardy Policy will become effective on the 10th day of school.**

**The student's responsibility** is to move quickly and safely through the school's hallway and report to class before the tardy bell rings. It is the student's responsibility to BE ON TIME to class!

**The parent's responsibility** is to discuss the school's tardy policy with their child, reinforcing the student's ability to be responsible for arriving to class on time, and most importantly, it is the parent's responsibility to bring the student to school on time.

**Note: Parents who bring their children to school after the 1st-period tardy bell rings must park their car, enter the building and sign their child in at the front office. The student will not be allowed to attend classes until the parent signs their child in at the front office.**

### CONSEQUENCES FOR TARDINESS TO CLASS

<b>Number of Tardies</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
5-9	Saturday or after-school detention
10-14	In-School Suspension
15-19	One day out-of-school suspension
20 and above	Up to three days out-of-school suspension

#### Closed Campus

The school operates a closed campus. Students are not allowed to leave for any reason during the school day without properly checking out per campus rules and procedures.



## Dismissal Policy

Students should be picked up no later than thirty minutes after dismissal each day. Students should not be in the corridors, at their lockers, or in the school building later than ten minutes following dismissal time unless accompanied by a staff member. Students must follow all school rules during dismissal time.

### Dismissal/Pick Up Information Form

Parents must fill out a form provided by the after-school coordinator to provide dismissal information about their child. The school is not responsible for students who leave campus without written permission from an administrator. Students are not allowed to loiter in front of neighboring businesses and/ or school grounds. Disciplinary action will be taken against students who leave and return to campus without having written permission from an administrator.

### Loitering

Students are not allowed to remain on campus unsupervised after designated dismissal times. The school will not have adult supervision after school hours. A student who remains on campus unsupervised after dismissal time may be subject to state criminal trespass laws.

Disciplinary consequences for remaining on campus unsupervised after designated dismissal times within a school year are as follows:

Number of Times Unsupervised after Dismissal Times	Consequences
2-3	Warning notice sent to parent informing of loitering policy and possible consequences for continued loitering
4	Meeting with parents
5	Student assigned to Saturday detention; school contacts CPS
7-9	Student assigned to one-day in-school suspension
10-14	Student assigned to one-day out-of-school suspension
15 and above	Student assigned up to three days out-of-school suspension; school contacts local law enforcement

Additionally, students who have not been picked up after their designated dismissal time may be placed in the school's after-school program. Parents of these students will be responsible for all fees incurred as a result of such placement.

#### Early Dismissal from School

In all instances of early dismissal, the following precautions are taken to ensure student safety:

Approval of parent or guardian is required in all instances of early dismissal. The principal may release a student before the end of a school day only upon presentation of a written or face-to-face request from a parent (no telephone calls), or for reasons of emergency. Students may be released only to a parent or guardian whose signature is on file in the school office or to a properly identified person, authorized in writing by the parent or guardian to act on his or her behalf.

A student is over the age of 18 years of age may be released "on his or her own" only with verified parental permission. No staff member shall permit or cause a student to leave school prior to the regular dismissal time, except with the knowledge and approval of the principal and parent.

### **Withdrawal from School**

#### Voluntary Withdrawal

A parent wishing to withdraw a student from school should notify the school at least 24 hours in advance. By providing this information in advance, parents help facilitate the withdrawal process. A withdrawal form may be obtained from the school registrar's office. The principal or other administrator will verify the information on the withdrawal form when the parent arrives to sign withdrawal papers to complete the process. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school in which the student will be enrolled, and must sign the formal withdrawal request to document that the student will continue to be enrolled in a school as required by compulsory attendance laws. On the student's last day, a copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student and a copy placed in the student's permanent record. The student will also be provided with a copy of the completed withdrawal form showing the student's grades earned to date to provide to his or her new school.

A student who is 18 years of age or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without a parent's signature.

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

- Return all textbooks and checked-out materials and equipment;
- Complete any make-up work assigned;
- Pay any unpaid balance for student fees, if any; and
- Sign a release of student records.

#### Involuntary Withdrawal

The school may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for nonattendance under the following conditions:

- 1) The student has been absent ten consecutive school days, and
- 2) Repeated efforts by the attendance officer and/or Principal to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

#### **Dress and Grooming**

As authorized by state law and SST's charter, students are required to wear uniforms to school. SST's uniform policy and grooming standards are established to teach grooming and hygiene, create a safe and orderly environment, instill discipline, and eliminate competition and distractions caused by varied dress styles. Students are expected to arrive in a proper school uniform every day, display modesty and

neatness, and take pride in their uniforms. The school relies on student common sense and the support of parents to help maintain this dress code.

Parents must provide their student(s) with the required uniform, except in the case of educationally disadvantaged students as provided in the Texas Education Code. The school may provide a uniform for economically disadvantaged students. A request for school assistance for purchasing uniforms must be made in writing to the principal, and include evidence of the inability to pay. Further details are available in the principal's office.

A parent may choose for his or her student(s) to be exempted from the requirement of wearing a uniform and/or grooming if the parent provides a written statement that, as determined by the Board of Directors, states a bona fide religious or philosophical objection to the requirement.

#### Notice to Parents and Students

If a student arrives at school out of uniform or is groomed inappropriately, the student's parent(s) will be called to bring a change of clothes. The student will not be allowed to attend class until he or she is appropriately dressed. Any class time missed will be counted as an unexcused absence. The school reserves the right to determine and restrict unbecoming styles. Violations of the school's uniform policy and grooming standards will result in incremental disciplinary action.

Uniforms with torn pants or shirts with holes are not allowed. All damaged uniform items should be replaced.

## Dress Code



**Uniform top for K-5**  
Will be sold at school



**Uniform top for 6-8**  
Will be sold at school



**Uniform top for high school**  
Will be sold at school

ITEM	ACCEPTABLE DRESS	SPECIAL COMMENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS
<b>Uniform Top</b>	All students must wear the SST School uniform shirt.	This shirt must be purchased from the school and may not be substituted with a plain red polo shirt or any other type of shirt.
<b>Pants / Belts</b>	Properly fitting navy blue, black, or khaki pants/slacks/Capri. Capri pants are allowed only for K-8 grades. Black, brown, or any neutral-colored belt. (4-12 grades only)	Pants/Slacks may NOT be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Jeans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cargo-style pants/shorts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Yoga pants, joggers, jeggings, leggings, and/or spandex</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Baggy or sag, or tight-fitted</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Must be appropriately worn at the waist, no low waistline</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rolled up at the legs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Belts may not have rhinestones, wording, or designs</li> </ul>
<b>Shorts</b>	Properly fitting navy blue, black, or khaki shorts or shorts (K-8th grades only)	Shorts must be to the mid of the knee or longer
<b>Dress / Skirts</b>	Dresses, Skirts, and Skorts are NOT allowed	
<b>Footwear</b>	Socks must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> White, navy, blue or black</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Footies are not allowed</li> </ul> Shoes must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plain/Neutral-colored lace-up shoes or loafers with closed toes/heels, or athletic shoes.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure straps on the heel for safety.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kept clean at all times</li> </ul>	Socks must be worn at all times. Shoes may not be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sandals, mules, "Ugs high heels, boots, or Crocs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Heelies (shoes with wheels)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Illuminated or light up</li> </ul> Shoelaces must be tied at all times.
<b>Hair</b>	Hair must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Well-groomed</li> </ul>	Facial hair must be clean and well-groomed and styled in a way that is neither distracting nor conspicuous.

	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-distracting hair color that is styled in a way that is neither distracting nor conspicuous.	Extreme hairstyles (Mohawk/Fauxhawk/Designs Cut and Spiked-up) or extreme unnatural colors are not permitted.
<b>Jewelry</b>	<p>Earrings, hair jewelry, watches, bracelets, rings, and necklaces that are not a safety hazard or material or substantial disruption may be worn.</p> <p>Necklaces must be tucked into the uniform shirt. Bracelets and necklaces are limited to two.</p>	<p>Clip-on jewelry (earrings, nose rings, etc.) is not permitted.</p> <p>Students may wear only one pair of stud earrings; no large dangling or hoop earrings.</p> <p>Spike/gaged earrings, necklaces, and bracelets are not permitted.</p> <p>No facial or body piercing.</p>
<b>Outwear</b>	<p>V-neck cardigans must be</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Color of navy, red, or black. (A cardigan is defined as a knitted sweater fastening down the front, with long sleeves).	<p>Outwear, such as “hoodies” (any clothing item with a hood), pullovers, jean jackets, or sweatshirts, are not permitted to be worn inside the building. These items must be stored in the student’s locker.</p> <p>Hats, caps, bandannas, or other headwear are not permitted indoors except in the interest of religious practices, safety, or with the permission of the principal.</p>
<b>General</b>	<p>Solid colored, long sleeve shirt may be worn under the school uniform shirt.</p> <p>SST embroidered jackets may be worn. Students may also have unembroidered jackets. It should be purchased from the school. The jacket must be color of navy blue or black.</p> <p>Uniform style loose-fitting pants are the only acceptable option.</p>	<p>No tattoos (permanent or temporary)</p> <p>No accessories such as sunglasses</p> <p>No extreme make-up or nail color</p> <p>No wallet with chains</p>

P.E. Uniform Policy

Kindergarten thru 3rd grade: Students are required to wear their school uniforms during P.E. classes.

Some campuses may require the purchase of a school PE uniform. Other campuses may require wearing a gray t-shirt (no sleeveless shirts/tank tops) and gray shorts (must be to the mid of the knee level or longer), or gray sweatpants. No spandex or tight-fitting t-shirts, shorts, sweatpants, or slip-on/ballet slipper style shoes are allowed. Students are required to change back to their school uniform after their P.E. class.

Some campuses may not require P.E. uniforms for 4th and 5th grades. Parents must check with campus administration for the local school policy.

Additional Uniform Policy and Grooming Requirements and Limitations

In addition to wearing proper school uniforms, SST Public Schools requires that students follow the following dress code guidelines. SST prohibits any clothing or grooming that, in the administration's

judgment, may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of, or interference with, normal school operations.

SST’s dress and grooming policy, including any dress or grooming policy for extracurricular activities, will not discriminate against a hair texture or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race.

Dress Code on Free Dress Days

All general guidelines for dress apply on free dress days, even though school uniforms are not mandatory. Garments must be free of holes, tears, inappropriate wording, logos, messages, or advertising. No short, skin-tight, or legging dresses or skirts may be worn. All dresses must have sleeves. Students may not wear low-cut, midriff-baring, or backless blouses. Students may wear jeans, but they cannot be tight pants, including jeggings, tights, or skinny style pants. Clothing items must not depict images of violence. Parents will be called to bring a change of clothes or pick up a child if he or she violates the dress code.

## Student Fees

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds at no charge to a student. Students are expected to provide their own consumable items, such as pencils, paper, pens, erasers, and notebooks. Students may be required to pay certain fees or deposits, including;

- 1) A fee for materials for a class project that the student will keep if the fee does not exceed the cost of materials.
- 2) Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees for extracurricular activities.
- 3) A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies, or equipment.
- 4) A fee for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel, although a student may provide his or her equipment or clothing if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety.
- 5) A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, class rings, pictures, yearbooks, and graduation announcements.
- 6) A fee for voluntary student health and accident benefit plan.
- 7) A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by the school.
- 8) A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student.
- 9) A parking fee or a fee for an identification card.
- 10) A fee for a driver training course, not to exceed the actual cost per student in the program for the current school year.
- 11) A fee for an optional course offered for credit that requires the use of facilities not available on campus or the employment of an educator who is not part of the school's regular staff.
- 12) A fee for summer school courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- 13) A reasonable fee for transportation of a student who lives within two miles of the campus.
- 14) A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required for class credit, so long as the fee would not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program.
- 15) A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- 16) A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

SST may waive any fee or deposit if the student and parent are unable to pay. A request for such a waiver must be made in writing to the principal, and include evidence of the inability to pay. Details for the fee waiver are available in the principal's office.

Families are responsible for paying all fees associated with extra-curricular programs, including clubs, parking, athletics, fine arts, University Interscholastic League ("UIL") academics, and academic supervision prior to participation.

## Textbooks and Curriculum Materials

State-approved textbooks and additional curriculum materials are provided free of charge for each subject or class, except for dual credit courses. Materials must be used by the student as directed by the teacher. A student who is issued damaged materials should report the damage to the teacher.

Students must return all textbooks and supplemental materials to the teacher at the end of the school year or when the student withdraws from school. Any student failing to return issued materials in an acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and educational materials until the damages are paid for by the student and/or parent. However, a student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day. The school may reduce or waive the payment required if the student is from a low-income family. The release of student records, including official transcripts, will be delayed pending payment

for lost or severely damaged textbooks or supplemental materials.

Electronic textbooks shall be returned free of viruses or any other malicious software, and free of any plug-ins or software not specifically approved by the school. All components or applications that are a part of the electronic textbook when issued must be returned.

### **Student ID Cards**

ID cards may be issued to each student for a reasonable fee. This fee may be waived under appropriate circumstances; details for the fee waiver are available in the principal's office on each campus. All students must wear student IDs as part of their uniforms. Students may be asked to show their ID cards in order-to-order breakfast or lunch. If a student loses an ID card, he or she should go to the main office before or after school to purchase a replacement. Students shall return their student ID cards upon withdrawal from the school.

### **Lost and Found**

Anyone who finds books, clothing, or other personal items left unattended should bring these items to the front office. Students who have lost these items should check at the front office. Items will be kept lost and found for up to seven days. The hallways are inspected each evening, and all unsecured items are placed in the front office. Students should label all books, uniforms, and other personal belongings with their names to ensure the prompt return of an item that has been misplaced.

### **Meals**

SST participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. Guidelines set by the Texas Department of Agriculture ("TDA") and the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") are followed to meet the nutritional needs of all students. Menus may be viewed online on the school's website. Each student has a meal account in which money may be deposited. Payments may be made online or at the school office.

#### State-Mandated Nutrition Guidelines

TDA establishes nutrition standards for all food and beverages sold during the school day. The school day is defined as midnight the day before to 30 minutes after the last dismissal bell. These "Smart Snack" standards apply to a la carte items sold by Child Nutrition as well as any sales conducted by other

organizations. More detailed information may be obtained at the school office or online at [www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org).

#### Free and Reduced-Cost Meals

Free and reduced-price breakfasts and lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See the Principal to apply. Students must apply for meal assistance each school year.

#### Lunch Periods

All students will remain on-campus during the lunch period. Students may buy lunch at school or bring a packed lunch. During the lunch period, students are expected to display good manners and courtesy. Students may eat only in the lunch area and must clear their place and dispose of all trash appropriately. The lunch area will be monitored by teachers.

The following guidelines apply to the cafeteria.

- Students must dispose of plates and utensils in garbage bins.
- Students must keep tables, seats, and floors clean.
- Students must talk in a normal voice. No shouting is allowed.
- Students must use appropriate language at all times.
- Students must keep cafeteria lines orderly; no pushing, running, horse playing, or cutting in lines.
- Students may not loiter in the cafeteria and hallways during lunch.
- Students must remain seated unless otherwise instructed.
- Students must keep hands, feet, personal belongings, and food to themselves.
- No backpacks or books are allowed in the lunch area.
- Students who deface school property will be fined an amount necessary to cover the cost of restoring the damaged property.
- Students may not order food from outside.

Students who do not follow these guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action.

## Public Areas

Hallways, stairways, the cafeteria, and restrooms are used by all students and school employees. The following rules of conduct apply to all students:

- Students may not loiter in hallways, stairways, the cafeteria, or restrooms.
- Students may not eat in these areas except in the cafeteria.
- Students may not run in these areas.
- Students may not use any profane or vulgar language while in these areas.
- Students may not yell, scream, hit lockers, or otherwise make excessive noise while in these areas.
- Students may not draw graffiti, post fliers, or write on walls, bulletin boards, doors, desks, books, or any other school property.
- Students must keep these areas clean and safe.
- Students may not leave belongings on the floor, outside of, or on top of lockers.
- Students must clean up after themselves and properly dispose of all trash.
- Students must immediately report any leaks, spills, or other problems in the restroom to a teacher or the office.
- Students may not roughhouse, wrestle with, or trip others in these areas.

Students are not permitted in the halls during class periods or the lunch hour unless they are accompanied by a teacher or have a hall pass from an authorized staff member. Students in the halls without passes or who violate the guidelines listed above will be subject to disciplinary action.

Additionally, teachers have the authority to submit referrals to

- the use of a classroom without teacher permission.
- Using or removing any item from a teacher's desk.
- Using laboratories when no teacher is present.
- Using the playground without permission.

- Presence in construction areas or any other area deemed "off-limits" by the Principal or Assistant Principals.
- Use of the school phone during the day without permission from authorized school personnel.

## Library

The library is a resource center used by all students for class assignments and leisure-time reading of appropriate materials. The library resources are available to support and improve student learning and understanding and encourage students to become independent, lifelong learners. Students may use the library before and after school and during study hall. Books, magazines, and reserve materials may be checked out at varying times. Desks and carrels are available for studying. Students may perform group work for class if they work quietly. School policy does not allow students to bring food or drink into the library. The total number of students who may use the library at any one time will be limited.

### Review and Reporting of Library Materials

Not later than January 1 of every odd-numbered year, SST shall review the content of each library material in the catalog of the school library that is rated as sexually relevant material under Texas Education Code §35.002(a) by the library material vendor and determine, in accordance with SST Board policy as to whether to retain each library material reviewed under and shall post a report on SST's website and/or provide physical copies of the report at the school's central administrative building.

The posted report must include the title of each library material reviewed, the decision of the review committee, and the location of the library material.

## Electronic Devices and Technology Resources

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

SST permits students to possess personal cell phones for safety purposes; however, these devices **must remain turned off and kept in student lockers during the instructional day, including during all testing**, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes.

A student must also have approval to possess other personal telecommunications devices at school, such



as netbooks, laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

Students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices (such as MP3 players, smart watches, video or audio records, DVD players, cameras, games, or similar electronic devices) at school unless prior permission has been obtained.

If a student has unauthorized personal electronic or telecommunication devices at school, school staff will collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return the item(s) to students at the end of the day or contact a parent to pick up the item(s).

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

If a student uses a telecommunications device (such as a cell phone) without authorization during the school day, the device will be confiscated. If a student and parent have executed a waiver permitting the student to possess an electronic communication device at school, school officials may power on and search the device if there is a reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation. A confiscated device may be picked up from the Principal's office for a fee of \$10. Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or a parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law.

Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

SST will not be responsible for damage to or loss or theft of confiscated personal devices.

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

Students must obtain prior approval to use personal telecommunications or other personal electronic devices for instructional purposes while on campus. Students must also sign a user agreement, separate from this Handbook, that contains applicable rules for use.

All personal devices must be turned off during the instructional day when not in use for approved instructional purposes. Violations of the user

agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

SST is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen personal devices.

#### Acceptable Use of Technology Resources

School-owned technology resources for instructional purposes may be issued to individual students. Use of these technological resources, which include SST's network systems and use of school equipment, is restricted to approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form regarding use of these school resources. Violations of the user agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

#### Unacceptable and Inappropriate Use of Technology Resources

Students are prohibited from possessing, sending, forwarding, posting, accessing, or displaying electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal. This prohibition also applies to conduct off school property, whether the equipment used to send such messages is district-owned or personally owned, if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring, possessing, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct, may be required to complete an educational program related to the dangers of this type of behavior, and, in certain circumstances, may be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, as well as possibly impede future endeavors of a student, we encourage you to review with your child the "[Before You Text: Sexting & Bullying Prevention, Education & Intervention Course](#)," a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

In addition, any student who engages in conduct that results in a breach of SST's computer security will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and, in some cases, the consequence may rise to the level of expulsion.

## Phone Messages

During school hours, parents should not try to reach a student's cell phone. Parents should call the main office in emergency situations. The school will then notify the student of any emergency.

## Displaying a Student's Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work

Teachers may display student work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement. However, SST will seek parental consent before displaying student artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and other original works on the SST website, on any campus or classroom website, in printed materials, by video, or by any other method of mass communication. SST will also seek consent before displaying or publishing an original video or voice recording in this manner.

## Distribution of Published Materials

### School Materials

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

### Non-School Materials

Students must obtain express prior approval of the principal before distributing, **posting, selling, or circulating** written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials on campus.

Non-school literature shall not be distributed by students on school property if:

- The materials are obscene, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience.
- The materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students.
- The materials promote the illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances.
- The distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person.

- The materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others.
- The materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action.
- The materials are hate literature or similar publications that scurrilously attack ethnic, religious, or racial groups or contain content aimed at creating hostility and violence, and the materials would materially and substantially interfere with school activities or the rights of others.
- There is reasonable cause to believe that distribution of the non-school literature would result in material and substantial interference with school activities or the rights of others.

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 approval will be removed.**

### Fundraising

No person may solicit contributions or collect funds for any purpose from students or school personnel on school property, at school-sponsored events, or on school transportation unless he or she has the written permission of the Principal or Superintendent.

### Sales

Advertising may be permitted for approved school-related activities. This may include school newspapers, yearbooks, and other fundraising projects. Advertising material that promotes the use of alcohol and/or tobacco is strictly prohibited. No person may display, solicit, or sell any item or service to students or school personnel while on school property, at school-sponsored events, or on school transportation without the written permission of the principal.

### Demonstrations or Meetings on School Premises (Non-School Sponsored)

Any student who wishes to promote, organize or participate in a non-school sponsored demonstration or meeting on school premises must obtain prior written approval from the principal at least three days prior to the requested activity. This three-day period does not include the day of the request or the day of the activity. The school may prohibit demonstrations

or meetings that materially and substantially interfere with school activities or the rights of other students or teachers; are vulgar or profane; might reasonably be perceived to advocate drug or alcohol use, irresponsible sex, or conduct otherwise inconsistent with the shared values of a civilized order; inappropriate for the maturity level of the audience; associates the school with a non-neutral position on matters of political controversy; and/or the school demonstrates reasonable cause to believe that the expression would create material and substantial interference with its educational program.

### Bulletin Boards

Students must obtain permission from teachers to post materials on classroom bulletin boards and from the principal to post materials on hallway bulletin boards. Materials should not be taped to glass surfaces, and students should not damage any surface by using tacks or pins to post materials.

### **Deliveries**

Flowers, balloons, food items, etc. should not be delivered to the school for students. These will not be delivered to the classroom. Students may not receive any form of delivery (balloons, food, flowers, etc.) except by any parent/guardian in person and as necessary for the school day. Food items, including but not limited to, fast food, pizza, cakes, etc., will not be accepted for delivery to the students. However, parents are welcome to join students for a cafeteria lunch in our school cafeteria.

Parents who want to organize activities in school such as birthday parties, pizza parties, etc., must receive prior approval from the principal or his/her designee. All items must be store-bought items with ingredients listed. Teachers must be given notice and provide approval at least 48 hours in advance. For PK-2, the parent and treat may go back 15 minutes before dismissal. For 3-8 grades, the treat may go back 15 minutes before dismissal without a parent.

### **School Activities**

The school offers a wide range of activities to enrich student learning during and after school. Students participating in such activities are subject to the provisions of this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct whenever the students are under the direct supervision of a school employee.

### Field Trips

Field trips offer exciting ways to learn. Students will have the opportunity to go on field trips at various times during the school year. The following rules apply to all field trips:

- Students must return a Field Trip Permission Slip signed by his or her parent(s) by the specified date. Phone calls will not be accepted as permission.
- Students must wear their school uniforms unless otherwise specified.
- Students will abide by the Student Code of Conduct while on the field trip.
- Students will be responsible for making up any missed assignments.
- The group will leave within five minutes of the scheduled departure time. After a group returns from a field trip, the school is not responsible for students who are not picked up at the designated time.
- School officials may require parents to participate in the field trip to supervise his/her child.
- While field trips are an important part of a student's education, they are also a privilege that must be earned. A student will be eligible to attend the campus field trip if he/she meets all of these requirements three days prior to the trip taking place:
  - passing ALL classes
  - no more than one office referral within 30 calendar days of the trip
  - having school attendance of 90% or higher for the year.

*\*Grades, behavior, and attendance will all be verified three days prior to the trip, but students may still lose the chance to attend at any time. Teachers and administrators reserve the right to exclude a student based on negative classroom behavior even if they meet the above requirements. The parent will be notified if the student may not attend. All decisions are approved by the administration and final.*

SST may (as allowed by law) require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however,

students will not be denied participation because of financial need.

### After-School Activities

There is no better way for students to enrich their education than by taking part in clubs and after-school activities, or working with a teacher. Students who stay for after-school activities are expected to follow these rules:

- Students must be with a teacher or other staff member at all times.
- Students must arrange for their own transportation; the student's ride should arrive promptly at the end of the activity.
- Students must abide by the Student Code of Conduct while participating in the activity.
- Students may not stay after school to wait for another student.

### Arts and Activity Groups

Students participating in arts and activity groups will be evaluated on both practice and performance. Students and parents should be aware of possible conflicts with other activities within and out of the school system.

Students participating in performing arts and activity groups are subject to the following guidelines:

- Participating students must adhere to all organizational rules and policies.

Students are expected to attend rehearsals and performances. Participation will be a determining factor of the student's grade.

- A student may have his or her semester grade lowered by one letter grade for any unexcused absences from scheduled rehearsals or performances. Additionally, the student may lose his or her position in the group and become an alternate performer.

The following conditions constitute the reason for an excused absence for a required rehearsal or performance:

- Scheduled family trip or vacation, provided the student provides five days' written notice and obtains prior approval from the director.
- Family emergencies.

- Illness. The student should notify the activity director of the illness as soon as possible.
- Conflicting school activities that have been cleared with the activity director and the principal.

The principal may review a request to miss a required rehearsal or performance if the director denies the request. The principal will meet with the concerned student and the director. The decision of the principal is final.

### **Transportation**

SST does not provide regular transportation to and from school, unless required by a student's Individualized Education Plan ("IEP") for a student with disabilities. However, SST may provide transportation for educational trips and participation in extracurricular activities.

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips may be required to ride a school vehicle to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent personally requests that the student be permitted to ride with the parent, or if the parent presents a written request that the student be permitted to ride with an adult designated by the parent, so long as the written request is presented before the scheduled trip.

Riding a school vehicle is a privilege. School vehicle drivers have the authority to maintain discipline and require seating charts. Students are expected to assist school staff in ensuring that school vehicles remain in good condition. When riding a school vehicle, students are held to behavioral standards established in this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the vehicle or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, legs, or any object out of any window, or throw objects within or out of the vehicle.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.

- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver’s signal in order to leave or cross in front of the vehicle.

Only designated students are allowed to ride in school vehicles. Students may neither ride the vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities. Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, and the student’s bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

If bus transportation is required as a result of an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), the Admissions Review and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee will have discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary consequences for improper behavior in a school vehicle.

### **Student Parking**

Students shall acquire administration before parking a vehicle on school property. In order to park on campus, students must hold a valid driver’s license and have proof of insurance. Unauthorized vehicles will be towed at the owner’s expense. Students driving on school property must follow all posted speed limits and comply with traffic laws. Unsafe operation of a vehicle on campus (speeding, improper parking, etc.) may result in disciplinary action and/or removal of parking privileges.

Students are instructed to leave their vehicles immediately after parking. Under no circumstances will students be allowed to sit in their vehicles.

### **Pledges of Allegiance and Moment 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 Campus Director to excuse their child from reciting a pledge.

State law requires that one minute of silence follow the recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. In addition, state law requires that each campus provides for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first-class period when September 11 falls on a

regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

### **Recitation of the Declaration of Independence**

For all public schools in Texas, the week of September 17 is designated as “Celebrate Freedom Week.” During that time, social studies classes will provide instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and students in grades 3 and above will recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence. A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, SST determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States extends diplomatic immunity.

### **Prayer and Meditation**

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

School Facilities

### **Damage to School Property**

Students shall not vandalize or otherwise damage or deface any property belonging to or used by the school, including furniture and other equipment, textbooks, and library books. To ensure that school facilities can serve those for whom they are intended—both this year and in coming years—littering, defacing, or damaging school property will not be tolerated. In addition to disciplinary sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct, parents or guardians of students who are guilty of damaging school property shall be liable for damages in accordance with state law.



## SECTION II: STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

### General Information

Student health and safety are a high priority of SST Public Schools. Student cooperation is essential to ensuring health and safety. Students should:

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

Immediately follow instructions from staff members who are overseeing student welfare.

### Potty Trained

All students entering SST Public Schools must be potty trained unless it states otherwise in their Individualized Health Plan (IHP) or Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

### Health-Related Resources, Policies, and Procedures

#### Mental and Physical Health Resources

Parents and students in need of assistance with physical and mental health concerns may contact the following campus and community resources:

- The medical assistant at each campus.
- The school counselor at each campus.
- The local public health authority. A list of local public health organizations is available online at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regional-local-health-operations/public-health->

[regions/texas-local-public-health](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/regional-local-public-health).

- The local mental health authority. Information for locating local mental health authorities is available online at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use/mental-health-substance-use-resources/find-your-local-mental-health-or-behavioral-health-authority>.

*Policies and Procedures that Promote Student Physical and Mental Health*

SST has adopted Board policies that promote student physical and mental health, including:

- Food and nutrition management,
- Wellness and health services,
- Physical examinations,
- Immunizations,
- Medical treatment,
- Communicable diseases,
- Crisis intervention,
- Trauma-informed care,
- Student safety,
- Child abuse and neglect,
- Freedom from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, and
- Freedom from bullying.

SST has also developed administrative procedures as necessary to implement these policies. Please contact regional office for information on these policies and procedures.

**Tobacco and E-Cigarettes Prohibited**

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, selling, giving, or delivering any type of tobacco product, electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) as defined by Section 161.081 of Health and Safety Code, or any form of smokeless tobacco or electronic vaporizing product while on school property or while attending an off-campus school-related activity. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## Alcohol-Free School Notice

To provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on school property at all times and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property. Student violators are subject to the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## Drug-Free School Notice

SST believes that student use of illicit drugs is both wrong and harmful. Consequently, SST prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of illicit drugs by students on school premises or any school activity, regardless of its location. SST also prohibits the use, sale, possession, or distribution of look-alike substances and/or synthetic substances designed to imitate the look and/or effects of illicit drugs. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

## Asbestos Management Plan

All school facilities have been inspected for asbestos by a licensed Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (“AHERA”) inspector. An Asbestos Management Plan has been created for the school in accordance with federal regulations.

Parents may view the Asbestos Management Plan by contacting the principal.

## Bacterial Meningitis

State law requires SST Public Schools 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 the 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.

Bacterial meningitis can be caused by multiple organisms. Two common types are *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, with over 80 serogroups that can cause illness, and *Neisseria meningitidis*, with five serogroups that most commonly cause meningitis.

### 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 bacterial meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness, 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. If left untreated or treatment is delayed, bacterial meningitis 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; or sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes) or when people cough or sneeze without covering their mouth and nose.

The bacteria do not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the bacteria 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?

Vaccination: Bacterial meningitis caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis* may be prevented through vaccination. The vaccine which protects against *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is called pneumococcal conjugate vaccine or PCV. This vaccine is recommended by the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for children in the first year of life. *Neisseria meningitidis* is prevented through two types of vaccines. The first is a



meningococcal conjugate vaccine which protects against 4 serogroups A, C, W, and Y and is referred to as MCV4. The second is a vaccine against *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup B and is referred to as MenB.

The ACIP recommends MCV4 for children at age 11-12 years, with a booster dose at 16-18 years. In Texas, one dose of MCV4 given at or after age 11 years is required for children in 7th-12th grades. One dose of MCV4 received in the previous five years is required in Texas for those under the age of 22 years and enrolling in college. Teens and young adults (16-23 years of age) may be vaccinated with MenB. This vaccine is not required for school or college enrollment in Texas.

Vaccines to protect against bacterial meningitis are safe and effective. Common side effects include redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops about 1-2 weeks after the vaccines are given and lasts for 5 years to life depending on vaccine.

Healthy Habits: Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Wash your hands. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. Maintaining healthy habits, like getting plenty of rest and not having close contact with people who are sick, also helps.

### **Who is at Risk for Bacterial Meningitis?**

Certain groups are at increased risk for bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. These risk factors include HIV infection, travel to places where meningococcal disease is common (such as certain countries in Africa and in Saudi Arabia), and college students living in a dormitory. Other risk factors include having a previous viral infection, living in a crowded household, or having an underlying chronic illness.

Children ages 11-15 years have the second highest rate of death from bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*. And children ages 16-23 years also have the second highest rates of disease caused by *Neisseria meningitidis*.

### **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 infectious

diseases. You may call your family doctor or [local health department](#) office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- <https://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>

and the Texas Department of State Health Services:

- <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/PreteenVaccines.aspx> or
- <https://dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/meningitis/Meningitis.aspx>.

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

## Communicable Diseases

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the principal or designee so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted. School authorities will report those students who are suspected of having a reportable condition. A list of reportable conditions can be found on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at:

- <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/investigation/conditions/>.

Any student excluded from school attendance for reason of communicable disease may be readmitted by one or more of the following methods, as determined by the local health authority:

- Certificate of the attending physician, advanced practice nurse, or physician assistant attesting that the child does not currently have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease or to the disease's non-infectiousness in a school setting
- Submitting a permit for readmission issued by a local health authority; or
- Meeting readmission criteria as established by the commissioner of health.

Please contact the health aid if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether a child should stay home.

## Immunizations

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with an established immunization schedule. To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read the “2024–2025 Immunization Requirements for Schools” available on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/school/school-requirements.aspx>.

Proof of immunization may be shown through personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

For Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Students: A current Immunization record must be provided to the school during the registration process. The students in these grade levels cannot attend school unless all immunization requirements are met.

### Immunizations received outside the United States

Vaccinations received outside the United States must be adequately documented and compared to the schedule and dosage required by the State of Texas. Foreign immunization records must be legible and officially certified.

### Provisional Enrollment

A student may be provisionally admitted to or enrolled in SST if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate vaccine required by law. To remain enrolled, the student must continue to receive the necessary immunizations as rapidly as medically feasible, and complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible. The student and/or parent must also provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to SST.

A nurse or school administrator shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If, at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, the student is not in compliance and SST shall exclude him or her from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

Homeless Students: A student who is homeless, as defined by federal law, shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. SST shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

Children in Foster Care: A student who is a “child in foster care” as defined by 45 C.F.R. § 1355.20(a) shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. SST shall promptly refer the student to an appropriate health provider to obtain the required vaccinations.

Transfer Students: A student can be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if the student transfers from one Texas school to another, and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record.

Military Dependents: A military dependent can be enrolled provisionally for no more than 30 days if the student transfers from one school to another and is awaiting the transfer of the immunization record. The collection and exchange of information pertaining to immunizations with respect to military dependents shall be subject to confidentiality provisions prescribed by federal law.

### Exclusions from Immunization Requirements

Exclusions from immunization compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the child’s physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician’s opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child or any member of the child’s household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the

secretary to update any information.

exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed DSHS affidavit must be presented by the student's parent, stating that the student's parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the Texas Department of State Health Services Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#).

The form must be submitted to the Superintendent or designee within 90 days from the date it is notarized. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students, who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

To claim an exclusion for military service, the student must prove that he or she is serving on active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

If a parent seeks an exemption for more than one student, a separate form must be provided for each student.

#### Immunization Records Reporting

The school's record of your student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments, and the Texas Department of Health and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of your student to those schools.

#### **Emergency Medical Treatment**

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, school employees will seek emergency medical treatment unless a parent has previously provided a written statement denying this authorization. Therefore, parents are asked each year to complete an emergency care consent form, which includes information about their student's allergies to medications, etc. Parents should keep emergency care information up-to-date. Please contact the Principal or

covered.

## Illness During the School Day

Students becoming ill or injured during the school day are directed to report to the medical assistant. If the medical assistant is not available, the student should report to the main office. Parents or other persons designated on the student's enrollment application will be contacted as appropriate.

Except in emergencies, students failing to report to the medical assistant or main office will be counted absent, or unexcused. Students must report to the main office before leaving the building.

If your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. Students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours. A complete list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school medical assistant.

If your child vomits during the school day due to illness, he/she will be sent home and will not be able to return until he/she is vomit-free without vomit-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours.

Conjunctivitis (pink eye) can sometimes be confused with allergies, so it can be difficult to determine if they have it. Indications include crusty eyelids and/or redness and conjunctival swelling in only one eye. If the student presents these symptoms, he/she will be sent home and will be able to return with clearance to return with orders from the treating physician.

### *Sending Students Home from School*

Students will be sent home for:

- Fever of more than 100 Degrees
- Vomiting (unless the cause can be attributed as non-illness related)
- Clear indication of conjunctivitis (pink eye). This is sometimes confused with allergies, so it can be difficult to determine whether a student needs to go home. Crusty eyelids and/ or redness and conjunctival swelling in only one eye are indications of conjunctivitis, not allergies.
- Ringworm on the scalp only. If ringworm is suspected on the body, students may stay at school as long as the ringworm stays

- ❑ Scabies, until treatment is completed and the doctor approves readmission
- ❑ Unexplained rash, especially if accompanied by other viral symptoms. Parents will be contacted and students must bring a physician's note for readmission.
- ❑ Lice (no nit policy).

### Head Lice

Head lice (which are not an illness or disease) are common among children, and may spread easily through contact during play or when students share items such as headphones, brushes, combs, hats, or other items that come in contact with hair.

SST does not require or recommend that students be removed from school because of lice or nits.

If SST observes that a student may have head lice, an appropriate administrator will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student needs to be sent home and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse. When an elementary student has head lice, SST will also provide written notice to the student's parent and the parents of each child assigned to the same classroom as required by state law.

### **Administration of Medication**

All medication should be administered outside of school hours, if possible. If necessary, medication can be administered at school under the following circumstances:

- 1) The school will NOT dispense over-the-counter medication (i.e., acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, etc.) to students without physician's orders and parent(s)/guardian will need to bring the medication in a sealed container.
- 2) Medication brought to school must be submitted to the school medical assistant, along with a Medication Administration Directions Form signed by the student's physician and parent. Prescription medications administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced medical assistant practitioner ("ANP") and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. **In accordance with the Texas Board of**

### **Nursing Practices Act, SST will not administer medications prescribed or fulfilled in Mexico.**

- 3) Prescription medications must be submitted in a labeled container showing the student's name, name of the medication, the reason the medication is being given, proper dosage amounts, the time the medication must be taken, route of transmission, and the method used to administer the medication. Medications sent in plastic baggies, or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
- 4) Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to the school, i.e., enough medication to last one day, one week, etc. In cases of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Extra medication will not be sent home with the student.
- 5) If the school provides liability insurance for a licensed physician or registered medical assistant who provides volunteer services to the school, the Board may allow the physician or medical assistant to administer to any student nonprescription medication or medication currently prescribed for the student by the student's personal physician.
- 6) The SST medication administration form must be filled by the treating physician in order for the medical assistant to administer any medication.

Changes to daily medications require written instruction from the physician or ANP and written permission from the parent. Parents are responsible for advising the school office that a medication has been discontinued.

### Asthma and Anaphylaxis Medication

Asthma and anaphylaxis are life-threatening conditions, and students with those conditions are entitled to possess and self-administer prescription medication while on school property or at school-related events with physicians' orders.

Student possession and self-administration of asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school requires the student to demonstrate his or her ability to self-administer the medication to the student's physician or other licensed health care provider and the school medical assistant, if available. Requirements also

include written authorization from the student's parent and physician or other licensed health care provider on file in the school office indicating the student is capable of independently administering his or her own asthma or emergency anaphylaxis medication. Medication in a student's possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

#### Unassigned Epinephrine

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.208, SST has adopted a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors. Under this policy, school personnel who are authorized and trained may administer an epinephrine auto-injector to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing anaphylaxis on a school campus, at an off-campus school event, or while in transit to or from a school event.

SST will ensure that each campus has one or more personnel authorized and trained to administer an epinephrine auto-injector present during regular school hours.

#### Opioid Antagonist Medication

In accordance with Texas Education Code § 38.222, SST has adopted a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists for students in grades 6-12 or for students in grades 12 and below. Under this policy, school personnel and volunteers who are authorized and trained may administer an opioid antagonist to a person who is reasonably believed to be experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose.

SST will ensure that each campus has one or more personnel authorized and trained to administer an opioid antagonist present during regular school hours.

### **Seizure Management Plan**

The parent of a student with a seizure disorder may seek care for the student's seizures while the student is at school or participating in a school activity by submitting to SST a copy of a seizure management and treatment plan developed by the parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment. The plan must be submitted to and reviewed by SST:

1. Before or at the beginning of the school year;

2. On enrollment of the student if the student enrolls after the start of the school year; or
3. As soon as practicable following a diagnosis of a seizure disorder for the student.

#### Requirements for Seizure Management Plans Submitted Before January 1, 2024

A seizure management and treatment plan must:

1. Identify the health care services the student may receive at school or while participating in a school activity;
2. Evaluate the student's ability to manage and level of understanding of the student's seizures; and
3. Be signed by the student's parent and the physician for the student's seizure treatment.

#### Requirements for Seizure Management Plans Submitted On or After January 1, 2024

A seizure management and treatment plan must be submitted on the form adopted by the Texas Education Agency and provide the following:

1. The student's name and date of birth;
2. The names and contact information of the student's parent and the physician responsible for the student's seizure treatment, and at least one other emergency contact;
3. Any medical history significant to the student's seizure disorder;
4. The type, length, and frequency of the student's seizures;
5. A description of each type of seizure the student has experienced;
6. The student's seizure triggers or warning signs;
7. The student's ability to manage seizures and the student's level of understanding of the seizures;
8. The student's response after a seizure;
9. The basic first aid to be provided to the student during a seizure, including whether the student needs to leave the classroom after a seizure and the process for the student's return to the classroom, if applicable;

10. A description of what constitutes a seizure emergency for the student;
11. A description of seizure emergency protocol for school personnel to follow in the event of a seizure emergency for the student;
12. A treatment protocol for any medications or other procedures to be administered by school personnel to the student during school hours, including:
  - a. Each daily or emergency medication, including (i) the name and dosage of the medication and the time at which the medication is to be given; (ii) common side effects for the medication; and (iii) any special instructions regarding the medication; and
  - b. Whether the student has a vagus nerve stimulator and, if so, appropriate magnet use for the stimulator;
13. Any special considerations or precautions applicable to the students; and
14. The signature of the student’s parent and the physician responsible for the student’s seizure treatment.

## Health Screenings

### Athletics Participation

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit to certification from an authorized health-care provider. The certification must state that the student has been examined and is physically able to participate in the relevant program, including:

- An athletics program;
- Marching band; or
- Any extracurricular programs identified by the Superintendent.

Students should be aware of the rare possibility of sudden cardiac arrest, which in athletes is usually caused by a previously unsuspected heart disease or disorder.

### Fitness Testing

According to requirements under state law, SST will annually assess the physical fitness of students. The

school is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

### Vision and Hearing Screenings

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually. A student may be screened using photo screening or an electronic eye chart as a substitute for a printed eye chart to assess visual acuity.

Screening records for individual students may be inspected by the Texas Department of State Health Services or a local health department and may be transferred to another school without parental consent.

**Exemption:** A student is exempt from screening requirements if screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or a member. To qualify for the exemption, the individual or, if the individual is a minor, the minor’s parent, managing conservator, or guardian, must submit to the principal on or before the day of admission an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### Spinal Screening

School-based spinal screening helps identify adolescents with abnormal spinal curvature and refer them for appropriate follow-up by their physician. Screening can detect scoliosis at an early stage, when the curve is mild and may go unnoticed. Early detection is key to controlling spinal deformities.

All students who meet Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. Spinal screening is non-invasive and conducted following the most recent, nationally accepted and peer-reviewed standards for spinal screening.

A parent who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by SST must submit to the principal documentation of a professional examination which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to the school during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the



following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

*Exemption:* A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the principal on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

#### *Acanthosis Nigricans Screening*

Children in certain grades identified by the state must be screened for warning signs of diabetes.

*Exemption:* A student is exempt from screening if the screening conflicts with the tenets and practices of a recognized church or religious denomination of which the individual is an adherent or member. To qualify for the exemption, the student's parent, managing conservator, or guardian must submit to the principal on or before the day of the screening procedure an affidavit stating the objections to screening.

### **Mental Health Promotion and Intervention**

SST has developed protocols for providing a parent with a recommended intervention for a student with early warning signs and a possible need for early mental health or substance abuse intervention, or who has been identified as at risk of attempting suicide. SST's Regional Behavior Counselors will notify a parent within a reasonable amount of time after learning that a student has early warning signs and possible need for intervention, and will also provide additional information on available counseling options.

#### Mental Health and Intervention Procedures for SST Schools

##### 1. Awareness and Training:

1.1. All teachers, staff, and personnel will undergo an annual training on recognizing

signs and symptoms of mental health concerns in students.

1.2. School personnel will be educated on the steps to take when a student exhibit

signs of a mental health issue or crisis.

1.3. Refresher courses will be offered semi-annually and new staff will be trained upon

hiring.

##### 2. Communication and Collaboration:

2.1. A communication protocol will be established detailing steps for communicating

concerns between teachers, counselors, nurses, and administrators.

2.2. The school will maintain active partnerships with local mental health professionals

and organizations for additional support.

2.3. Parents and guardians will be involved in collaborative discussions regarding their

child's well-being.

##### 3. Screening and Assessment:

3.1. An optional screening process will be available for students who might be at risk,

with parental consent.

3.2. Periodic voluntary mental health assessments will be implemented, ensuring

parental consent is received.

##### 4. Intervention and Support:

4.1. A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) will be adopted to cater to students based

on individual needs.

4.2. Short-term counseling or support groups will be available for students in need.

4.3. A clear referral process for more intensive support or therapy will be established

and communicated to all stakeholders.

##### 5. Crisis Response:

5.1. A crisis response team (CRT) will be formed, comprising school counselors, medical

assistant, administrators, and designated staff.

5.2. CRT will develop and follow guidelines for addressing mental health crises, including

de-escalation, immediate action, and subsequent steps.

5.3. A communication protocol will be established for informing parents and guardians

promptly in the event of a crisis involving their child.

## 6. Privacy and Confidentiality:

6.1. All student mental health records will be kept confidential and stored securely.

6.2. Staff will receive training on the importance of student privacy, specifically

concerning mental health, and will adhere to the privacy policy.

## 7. Continuous Review and Improvement:

7.1. These procedures will be reviewed semi-annually by a committee comprising school

administrators, counselors, a representative group of teachers, and mental health

professionals.

7.2. Feedback will be actively sought from students, parents, and staff to refine and

improve procedures.

7.3. The school will stay updated with new research or best practices in the field of

school mental health and adjust procedures accordingly.

SST has also developed protocols for staff members to notify the Regional Behavior Counselors to identify a student who may need intervention.

The campus can provide additional information about the school's intervention program, as well as materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment, and accommodations available at school.

### Mental Health Support (All Grade Levels)

SST has implemented programs to address the following mental health, behavioral health, and substance abuse concerns:

- Mental health promotion and early intervention;
- Building skills to manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and engage in responsible decision-making;
- Substance abuse prevention and intervention;

- Suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (interventions after a suicide in a community);
- Grief, trauma, and trauma-informed care;
- Positive behavior interventions and supports;
- Positive youth development; and
- Safe, supportive, and positive school climates.

We prioritize student well-being through:

**Professional Support:** Trained counselors and

psychologists offer tailored assistance. **Early**

**Identification:** We monitor for signs of mental distress to provide timely help.

**Educational Workshops:** Seminars inform students,

staff, and parents about mental health. **Peer**

**Support:** Mentoring programs encourage

understanding and empathy.

**Safe Environment:** Students can seek help in a stigma-free

setting.

**External Collaboration:** We partner with specialists for

comprehensive care

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health concern or

substance abuse, SST has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the Regional

Behavior Counselors for additional information.

Teachers and other school employees may discuss a student's behavior or academic progress with the

student's parent or another employee; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic

drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as

a component of a medication and that is intended to alter perception, emotion, or behavior. An employee

who is a registered nurse, 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.

### Information on Student ID Cards

Each student ID card issued to a student in grade six or higher will have printed on the card the contact

information for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the Crisis Text Line.

## **Steroid Notice**

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.

SST does not permit steroid use. A notice shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the school gym or in each other place in a building where physical education classes are conducted.

## **Counseling Services**

SST provides a teacher to see students regarding problems that they may be experiencing at school or home. Usually, a student's class teacher will refer the student to the designated teacher with the approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal.

## **Preparedness Training**

SST will offer instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") and the use of an automated external defibrillator ("AED") to students in grades 7–12. This instruction may be provided as part of any course. Students shall receive the instruction at least once before graduation.

SST will annually offer students in grades 7–12 instruction on the use of bleeding control stations to respond to traumatic injury. For more information, see [Homeland Security's Stop the Bleed](#) and [Stop the Bleed Texas](#).

## **Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**

### Statement of Nondiscrimination

SST Public Schools prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint and/or grievance process is a violation of school policy.

### Discrimination and Harassment (Prohibited Conduct)

For purposes of SST policy, the term "Prohibited Conduct" means discrimination or harassment against a student involving conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender or sex, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law and that adversely affects the student, and/or that is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

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

Examples of Prohibited Conduct may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another 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; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

As noted above, SST also considers gender-based harassment to be Prohibited Conduct. Gender-based harassment includes harassment based on a student's gender, expression by the student of stereotypical characteristics associated with the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical behavior related to gender. Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

### Dating Violence

SST also considers dating violence to be a form of Prohibited Conduct. Dating violence occurs when one partner in a dating relationship, either past or current, intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, 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, to stalk, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

### Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of Prohibited Conduct (meaning discrimination or harassment) is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of reported Prohibited Conduct is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a SST investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline.

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

### Reporting Procedures

**\*\*NOTE\*\*** The following procedures apply to allegations of Prohibited Conduct other than allegations of harassment prohibited by Title IX. For allegations of sex-based harassment that, if proved, would meet the definition of a formal complaint of sexual harassment under Title IX, please see the procedures outlined in “Freedom from Sexual Harassment” in this Handbook.

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation or believes that another student has experienced Prohibited Conduct or retaliation should immediately report the alleged conduct to a teacher, counselor, the principal or designee, or other school employee. The report may be made by the student’s parent. Alternatively, a report may be made directly to the appropriate Compliance Coordinator identified below:

- The Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender (including sexual harassment), is:

Director of Accountability and Compliance

superintendent.office@ssttx.org

1450 NE Interstate

410 Loop, San

Antonio, TX 78209

210-957-1955

- The Dean of Students at each SST school is also

designated as a Campus Title IX Coordinator. Contact information for each Dean of Students will be provided to all parents and students.

- The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is:

Director of Accountability and Compliance

superintendent.office@ssttx.org

1450 NE Interstate

410 Loop, San

Antonio, TX 78209

210-957-1955

- The Dean of Students at each SST school is also designated as a Campus ADA/Section 504 Coordinator. Contact information for each Dean of Students will be provided to all parents and students.
- For the concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is:

Director of Accountability and Compliance

superintendent.office@ssttx.org

1450 NE Interstate

410 Loop, San

Antonio, TX 78209

210-957-1955

- All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to:

Director of Accountability and Compliance

superintendent.office@ssttx.org

1450 NE Interstate

410 Loop, San

Antonio, TX 78209

210-957-1955

### Investigation

To the extent possible, SST 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 will be promptly investigated.

The investigation may be conducted by the Compliance Coordinator or designee, or by a third party designated by SST, such as an attorney. When

appropriate, the principal or the student's teacher(s) will be involved in or informed of the investigation.

If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies SST that it is investigating the matter and

requests that the school delay its investigation, SST will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

During the course of an investigation and when appropriate, SST will take interim action to address the alleged Prohibited Conduct.

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

All involved parties will be notified of the outcome of the investigation within the parameters and limits allowed under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA").

### Appeal

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the process set forth in Board Policy PG-3.30 (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances), beginning at Level Two.

### **Freedom from Sexual Harassment**

SST prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment, by an employee, volunteer, or another student.

Sexual harassment means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school employee conditioning the provision of aid, benefit, or service on an individual's participation in unwelcome sexual conduct;
2. Unwelcome conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to SST's educational programs or activities;
3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking (as those offenses are defined in the Clery Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1092(f), and the Violence Against Women Act, 34 U.S.C. § 12291(a)).

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature;

conduct; or other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

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

#### General Definitions

A “complainant” means an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A “respondent” means an individual who is reported to be the perpetrator of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

A “formal complaint” means a document filed by a complainant or signed by the Title IX Coordinator alleging sexual harassment against a respondent and requesting that SST investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

“Supportive measures” means non-disciplinary, non-punitive individualized services offered appropriate and without fee or charge to the complainant or the respondent before or after the filing of a formal complaint or where no formal complaint has been filed. Such measures are designed to restore or preserve equal access to SST’s educational program or activity without unreasonably burdening either party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or SST’s educational environment, or deter sexual harassment. Examples of supportive measures include, but are not limited to, counseling, extensions of deadlines or other course-related adjustments, modifications of class schedules, mutual restrictions on contact between the parties, and other similar measures.

#### Reporting Sexual Harassment

Any person may report sexual harassment (whether or not the person reporting is the person alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sex discrimination or sexual harassment), in person, by mail, by telephone, or by email, using the contact information listed for the Title IX Coordinator included in this Handbook, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person’s verbal or written report. Such a report may be made at any time, including during non-business hours, by using the telephone number or email address, or by

mail to the office address, listed for the Title IX Coordinator.

SST's response to a report of sexual harassment must treat complainants and respondents equitably by offering supportive measures and by following a grievance process before the imposition of any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent.

After a report of sexual harassment has been made, the Title IX Coordinator must promptly contact the complainant to discuss the availability of supportive measures, consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures, inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint, and explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

#### Notice of Allegations

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, SST must provide the following written notice to the parties who are known:

- Notice of SST's grievance process, including any informal resolution process.
- Notice of the allegations of sexual harassment, including, to the extent known, the identity of the parties, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the alleged incident.
- Notice that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility is made known at the conclusion of the grievance process.
- Notice that the parties may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney.
- Notice that the parties may inspect and review evidence related to the complaint.
- Notice that SST prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

If, during an investigation, SST decides to investigate allegations about the complaint or respondent that are not included in the initial notice of the complaint, SST must provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

#### Grievance Process

At the time of filing a formal complaint, a complainant must be participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activity of SST.

The following guidelines apply when SST receives a formal complaint of sexual harassment. This process is designed to incorporate due process, principles, treat all parties fairly, and to assist SST reach reliable responsibility determinations.

- SST will require an objective evaluation of all relevant evidence – including both inculpatory and exculpatory evidence – and credibility determinations may not be based on a person's status as a complainant, respondent, or witness.
- Any individual designated by SST as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, or to facilitate an informal resolution process must not have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent responsible. SST will ensure that Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and anyone who facilitates an informal resolution process receive appropriate training related to the requirements of Title IX and SST's sexual harassment policy.
- SST recognizes a presumption that the respondent is not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the complaint process.
- SST shall attempt to complete an investigation of reported sexual harassment within 60 calendar days of receiving a complaint. However, the investigation process may be delayed or extended for a limited time for good cause with written notice to the complainant and the respondent of the delay or extension. Good cause may include considerations such as absence of a party, a party's advisor, or a witness; concurrent law enforcement activity; or the need for language assistance or accommodation of disabilities.
- Students found to have engaged in sexual harassment are subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.



- SST shall employ the preponderance of the evidence standard to determine responsibility when reviewing formal complaints.
- SST may not require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions of evidence that constitute, or seek disclosure, of information protected under a legally recognized privilege, unless the person holding such privilege has waived the privilege.

#### Consolidation of Formal Complaints

SST may consolidate formal complaints as to allegations of sexual harassment against more than one respondent, or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents, or by one party against the other party, where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances.

#### Dismissal of Formal Complaints

SST must investigate the allegations in a formal complaint.

SST must dismiss a formal complaint if the conduct alleged in the formal complaint:

- Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;
- Did not occur in SST’s education program or activity; or
- Did not occur against a person in the United States.

SST may dismiss a formal complaint or any allegations therein if, at any time during the investigation:

- A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations there in;
- The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by SST; or
- Specific circumstances prevent SST from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

Upon a dismissal, SST must promptly send simultaneous written notice to the parties of the dismissal and the reason(s) for the dismissal. Dismissal

of a formal complaint does not preclude SST from taking appropriate action under the Student Code of Conduct or any other school policy that may apply to the alleged conduct.

#### Investigating Formal Complaints

The following guidelines apply during the investigation of a formal complaint and throughout the grievance process.

- SST will ensure the burden of proof and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination regarding responsibility rests on SST and not on the parties.
- SST cannot access, consider, disclose, or otherwise use a party’s records that are made or maintained by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional or paraprofessional acting in the professional’s or paraprofessional’s capacity, or assisting in that capacity, and which are made and maintained in connection with the provision of treatment to the party, unless SST receives that party’s voluntary, written consent to do so.
- SST will provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, including fact and expert witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence.
- SST will not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or to gather and present relevant evidence.
- SST will provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any grievance proceeding, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisory of their choice, and not limit the choice or presence of an advisor for either the complainant or respondent in any meeting or grievance proceeding. SST may establish restrictions regarding the extent to which the advisor may participate in the proceedings, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties.
- SST will provide to a party whose participation is invited or expected written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all investigative interviews or other

meetings with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate.

- SST will provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint, including the evidence upon which the recipient does not intend to rely in reaching a determination regarding responsibility and inculpatory or exculpatory evidence whether obtained from a party or other source, so that each party can meaningfully respond to the evidence prior to conclusion of the investigation.
- Prior to completing an investigative report, SST must send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completing the investigative report.
- SST must create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence and, at least 10 days prior to a determination regarding responsibility, send to each party and the party's advisor, if any, the investigative report in an electronic format or a hard copy, for review and written response.
- After sending the investigative report to the parties and before reaching a determination of responsibility, the decision-maker(s) must afford each party the opportunity to submit written relevant questions that a party wants asked of any witness, provide each party with the answers, and allow for additional, limited follow-up questions from each party. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the questions and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent. The decision-maker(s) must

explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant.

#### Determination Regarding Responsibility

The decision-maker(s) making a determination regarding responsibility cannot be the same person(s) as the Title IX Coordinator or the investigator(s). The decision-maker(s) must review the investigation report and make a written determination, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, regarding responsibility. The written determination must include:

- Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;
- A description of the procedural steps taken from receipt of the formal complaint through the determination, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, or methods used to gather other evidence;
- Findings of fact supporting the determination;
- Conclusions regarding application of SST's Code of Conduct to the facts;
- A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility, any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent, and whether remedies designed to restore or preserve equal access to SST's education program or activities will be provided to the complainant; and
- SST's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal.

SST must provide the written determination to the parties simultaneously. The determination becomes final either on the date SST provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal would no longer be considered timely.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any remedies.

#### Appeals

SST will offer both parties an appeal from a determination regarding responsibility, and from SST's

dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegations therein, on the following bases:

- Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;
- New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; and
- The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

As to appeals, SST will ensure that the decision-maker(s) for the appeal is not the same person as the decision-maker(s) that reached the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal, or the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. SST will provide both parties a reasonable equal opportunity to submit a written statement in support of, or challenging, the outcome.

The decision-maker(s) for the appeal will issue a written decision, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, describing the result of the appeal and the rationale for the result, and provide the written decision simultaneously to both parties.

A party who is dissatisfied with the appeal decision may file an appeal to the Board of Directors through the process outlined in SST's grievance procedures.

#### Emergency Removals

SST is able to remove a respondent from SST's education program on an emergency basis, provided that SST undertakes an individualized safety and risk analysis, determines that an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any student or other individual arising from the allegations of sexual harassment justifies removal, and provides the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal. SST's ability to do so may not be construed to modify any rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504, or the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### Informal Resolution

At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility, SST may facilitate an informal resolution process, such as mediation, that does not involve a full investigation and adjudication. However, SST may not require as a condition of enrollment or continuing enrollment, or employment or continued employment, or enjoyment of any other right, waiver of the right to an investigation and adjudication of formal complaints. Additionally, SST may not require the parties to participate in an informal process and may not offer an informal resolution process unless a formal complaint is filed.

Prior to facilitating an informal resolution process, SST must:

- Provide to the parties a written notice disclosing the allegations and the requirements of the informal resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations. The notice must also inform that, at any time prior to agreeing to a resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint, as well as of any consequence resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.
- Obtain the parties' voluntary, written consent to the informal resolution process.

SST may not offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

#### Retaliation Prohibited

Neither SST nor any other person may intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX, or because the individual has made a report or complaint, testified, assisted, or participated or refused to participate in any manner in an investigation or proceeding under this policy.

Examples of retaliation may include, but are not limited to, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination.

Complaints alleging retaliation may be filed according to the grievance procedure described above.

### Confidentiality

SST must keep confidential the identity of any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination, including any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment, any complainant, any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination, any respondent, and any witness, except as may be permitted by FERPA or as required by law, or for purposes related to the conduct of any investigation, hearing, or judicial proceeding arising under the Title IX regulations.

### Non-Sexual Harassment Sex Discrimination

The formal complaint investigation and resolution process outlined above in “Freedom from Sexual Harassment” applies only to formal complaints alleging sexual harassment as defined by Title IX, but not to complaints alleging sex discrimination that do not constitute sexual harassment. Complaints of non-sexual harassment sex discrimination may be filed with the Title IX Coordinator and will be handled under the process described under “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation” as outlined above.

## **Freedom from Bullying**

SST Public Schools prohibits bullying as defined below, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Bullying is defined in state law as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that:

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

- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the school, or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying also includes cyberbullying, which is defined as state law as bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including through the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.

SST will also take steps to prevent and mediate bullying incidents between students that:

- Interfere with a student’s educational opportunities; or
- Substantially disrupt the orderly operations of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

SST is integrating into instruction and curriculum age appropriate, research-based content that is designed to assist in the reduction and prevention of bullying incidents.

Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade shall receive the following:

- Explicit instruction designed to students can recognize bullying, including cyberbullying, behaviors and how to report them;
- Age-appropriate classroom culture-building discussions that encourage peers to intervene when they observe bullying behaviors; and
- Explicit instruction that characterizes bullying as a behavior that result from the student’s need to acquire more mature social coping skills.

Students in grades 9 through 12 shall receive the following:

- Explicit direct instruction on the brain’s ability to recognize bullying, including cyberbullying, as the behavior can come from a developmental need to acquire more social skills, can change when the brain matures and learns better ways of coping, and is not an immutable trait; and

- Classroom-culture building discussions that portray bullying as an undesirable behavior and means for attaining or maintaining social status in school, and to dissuade students from using bullying as a tool for reputation management;
- Explicit direct instruction designed so students can recognize the role reporting plays in promoting a safe school community.

SST shall create an age-appropriate survey with appropriate privacy controls in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that includes relevant questions on bullying, including cyberbullying, and defines who is responsible to develop and oversee the implementation of action plans based on the results that address student concerns regarding bullying, including cyberbullying.

Each campus will establish a committee, which must include parents and secondary level students in schools where secondary students are served, to address bullying by focusing on prevention efforts and health and wellness initiatives.

SST's bullying policy applies to

- Bullying that occurs on or is delivered to school property or to the site of a school- sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property;
- Bullying that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and
- Cyberbullying that occurs off school property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying:
  - Interferes with a student's educational opportunities; or
  - Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, school, or school-sponsored or school-related activity.

#### Reporting Procedures

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, school counselor, the principal, or another

school employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. SST will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. Reports of potential bullying may be submitted anonymously.

Once a report of bullying, including cyberbullying, is received, SST will track the progress of the report and investigation of the reported incident(s) and shall monitor the reported counts of bullying incidents to assist SST with bullying prevention efforts and determination of the school's response to the incident.

#### Investigations

The principal or designee shall determine whether the allegations in the report, if proven, would constitute prohibited harassment and, if so, proceed under that policy instead. The principal or designee shall conduct an appropriate investigation based on the allegations in the report, and shall take prompt interim action calculated to prevent bullying during the course of an investigation, if appropriate.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying occurred, the administration will take appropriate disciplinary action and may notify law enforcement in certain circumstances. Disciplinary or other action may be taken even if the conduct did not rise to the level of bullying. Available counseling options will be provided to these individuals, as well as to any students who have been identified as witnesses to the bullying.

A student who receives special education services will be disciplined for conduct meeting the definition of bullying or cyberbullying within applicable requirements under federal law, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.). SST may not impose discipline on a student who, after an investigation, is found to be a victim of bullying, based on that student's use of reasonable self-defense in response to the bullying.

The principal or designee may make a report to local law enforcement authorities if, after an investigation is completed, the principal or designee has reasonable grounds to believe that a student engaged in conduct that constitutes an offense under Texas Penal Code § 22.01 (Assault) or 42.07(a)(7) (Harassment).

sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional,

To the greatest extent possible, SST shall respect the privacy of the complainant and/or grievant, persons against whom a report is filed, and witnesses. Limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation. If a law enforcement or other regulatory agency notifies SST that it is investigating the matter and requests that the school delay its investigation, SST will resume the investigation at the conclusion of the agency's investigation.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the SST student and parent complaint and/or grievance procedure.

### **Child Abuse Reporting and Programs**

SST Public Schools provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. SST provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children, including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse or maltreatment. Assistance, interventions, and counseling options are also available.

SST's administration shall cooperate with law enforcement investigations of child abuse, including investigations by the Texas Department of Protective and Family Services. School officials may not refuse to permit an investigator to interview at school a student who is alleged to be a victim of abuse or neglect. School officials may not require the investigator to permit school personnel to be present during an interview conducted at school.

Investigations at school may be conducted by authorized law enforcement or state agencies without prior notification or consent of the student's parent, if necessary.

### **Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Students**

SST has established the following Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse of Children (the "Plan"). The Plan may be accessed through the school's website and is available in the principal's office and central administrative office.

#### ***What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?***

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any

or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in sexual conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

### ***What is Trafficking?***

Child trafficking in any form is prohibited by the Texas Penal Code. Sex trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, into sexual abuse, assault, indecency, prostitution, or pornography. Labor trafficking involves forcing a person, including a child, to engage in forced labor or services.

Traffickers may be trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently make contact with victims online.

### ***What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?***

Other maltreatment of a child under the Texas Family Code includes "abuse" or "neglect" of a child.

### ***Reporting and Responding to Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, and Other Maltreatment of Children***

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused, trafficked, or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the DFPS.

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

Parents, if your child is a victim of sexual abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or Principal will provide information regarding counseling options for you and your child that are available in your area. The DFPS also manages early intervention counseling programs. To find out what services may be available in your county, see [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#).

Reports of abuse, trafficking, or neglect may be made to:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400;
- In non-emergency situations, the [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#);
- Your local police department; or
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

## ***Methods for Increasing Awareness Regarding Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment of Children***

### **For Teachers**

SST trains staff in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration. The training includes prevention techniques for and recognition of sexual abuse, trafficking, and all other maltreatment of children, including sexual abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children with significant cognitive disabilities.

### **For Students**

School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age-appropriate conversation and materials no less than once per semester. These discussions will occur in classroom group settings for students in grades K–8 and in health or PE classes for students in grades 9–12.

### **For Parents**

Parents must be aware of warning signs indicating that their child may have been or is being sexually abused or otherwise maltreated. A child who has experienced sexual abuse or other maltreatment should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Be aware, as a parent or other trusted adult, that evidence of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may be more indirect than disclosures or signs of physical abuse. It is important to remain calm and comforting if your child, or another child, confides in you. Reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in coming to you.

The fact that the abuser is a parent or other family member does not remove your obligation to protect the child. Parents who permit their child to remain in a situation where he or she may be injured or abused may also be subject to prosecution for child abuse. And, if you are frightened for your own safety or that of your child, you should call 911 or 1-800-252-5400.

Also, remember that parents are legally responsible for the care of their children and must provide their children with safe and adequate food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care, and supervision, or arrange for someone else to provide these things. Failure to do so may be considered neglect.

These websites are also helpful:

- [Child Sexual Abuse: A Parental Guide from the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway Factsheet](#)
- [Human Trafficking of School-aged Children](#)
- [KidsHealth, For Parents, Child Abuse](#)
- [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments: Child Labor Trafficking](#)
- [Office of the Texas Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team](#)

### **Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment**

Possible warning signs of sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Fear of being alone with adults.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Verbal references or pretend games of sexual activity between adults and children, fear of being alone with adults of a particular gender, or sexually suggestive behavior.
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.



Possible warnings signs of sexual trafficking include:

- Changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups, vocabulary, demeanor, and attitude.
- Frequent runaway incidents.
- Isolation from friends, family, and community.
- Multiple phones or social media accounts.
- Older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Provocative pictures posted online or stored on the phone.
- Refillable gift cards.
- Social interaction and schedule being strictly controlled by someone else.
- Sudden appearance of expensive items (for instance, manicures, designer clothes, purses, technology).
- Tattoos or branding.
- Unexplained injuries.

Possible warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students.
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit.
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss.
- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips.
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver.
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours.
- Not being in control of his or her own money.
- Owning a large debt and being unable to pay it off.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused, trafficked, or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you

should begin asking questions and seeking help. Often signs first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

### **Actions That a Child Who is a Victim of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment Should Take**

During student awareness sessions concerning sexual abuse and other maltreatment issues, students will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in a private and confidential conversation if they have been a victim of sexual abuse or have been in situations that make them feel uncomfortable in any way. School employees are trained to take appropriate actions to help the child obtain assistance and to follow proper reporting procedures. Older students will also be provided with local crisis hotline numbers to obtain assistance.

### **Available Counseling Options**

A list of counseling providers can be found through the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Programs Available in Your County](#) website.

### **Notice of Penalties for Trafficking of Persons and Online Solicitation of a Minor**

Under Penal Code 20A.02(b-1), an offense related to human trafficking is a first-degree felony if the offense is committed in a location that was on the premises of or within 1,000 feet of the premises of a school, or on premises or within 1,000 feet of premises where an official school function was taking place or an event sponsored or sanctioned by the University Interscholastic League was taking place.

Additionally, under Penal Code 33.021(f-1), there are enhanced penalties for the offense of online solicitation of a minor if the actor committed the offense during regular school hours and the actor knew or reasonably should have known that the minor was enrolled in a public or private school at the time of the offense.

Notice of the increased penalties found under Penal Code 20A.02(b-1) and Penal Code 33.021(f-1) can be found in the main office of each campus, or in a place that it is reasonably likely to be viewed by all school employees and visitors.

## Lockers and Desks

Each student will be assigned a locker and desk for his or her individual use. The use of lockers is strongly encouraged, as backpacks and purses are not allowed in classrooms. Lockers are to be used to store books, coats, and personal items. Valuable items should not be stored in lockers or desks.

The school is not liable for personal items stored in lockers or desks. The school will provide a lock for each locker. Students may not put a personal lock on their lockers, and all students must keep their locker combinations private. Students may not trade or share lockers. Students are responsible to make sure that lockers are kept locked at all times. Any damage, vandalism, or other problems with lockers or desks should be reported to the front office. Students will be held responsible for the condition of their lockers if such damage, vandalism, or other problems are not reported.

During the school day, students may go to their lockers during the following designated times only:

- Before class begins in the morning.
- During the five-minute passing periods between classes.
- After classes are over.

Students may not visit their lockers during lunchtime.

## Interrogations and Searches

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

Administrators, teachers, and other professional personnel may question a student regarding the student's own conduct or the conduct of other students. In the context of school discipline, students have no claim to the right not to incriminate themselves.

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent. Express or implied coercion – such as threatening to contact parents or police – invalidates apparent consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation and (2) the scope of the search is reasonably related to the circumstances justifying the search; i.e., the measures adopted are reasonably related to the objectives of the search and are not excessively intrusive in light of the age and sex of the student and the nature of the infraction.

### Desk and Locker Searches

Students should have no expectation of privacy in the contents of their lockers, desks, or other school property. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain at all times under the control and jurisdiction of the school. The school will make periodic inspections of lockers and desks at any time, with or without notice or student consent. School officials will remove any item that violates school policy, or that may potentially be dangerous.

Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found during a search. The student's parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker or desk, or on the student's person, as a result of a search conducted in accordance with this policy.

### Computers and Electronic Devices

Use of school-owned equipment and its network systems is not private and will be monitored by SST.

Any searches of personal electronic devices will be conducted in accordance with law, and the device may be confiscated to perform a lawful search. A confiscated device may be turned over to law enforcement to determine whether a crime has been committed.

### Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property and property under school control are under the jurisdiction of the school and may be searched at any time if reasonable suspicion exists to believe that the search will result in evidence that school rules or other laws have been violated. If a vehicle subject to the search is locked, the student shall be asked to unlock the vehicle and consent to a search of the vehicle. If the student refuses to permit the vehicle to be searched, the school may contact the student's parents and/or law enforcement officials. A student may be held

responsible for and in possession of prohibited items found in his or her vehicle parked on school property or at a school-related event.

#### Trained Dogs

The school may use or contract for specially trained non-aggressive dogs to sniff out and alert school officials to the current presence of concealed prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. Such visits to the school may be unannounced. The dogs shall be used to sniff vacant classrooms, vacant common areas, the areas around student lockers, and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. The dogs shall not be asked to alert on students. If a dog alerts to a locker, a vehicle, or an item in a classroom, it may be searched by school officials. Searches of vehicles shall be conducted as described above.

### **Law Enforcement Agencies**

#### Questioning of Students

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school, the principal or designee will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, including without parental consent, if necessary, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

In other circumstances, the principal or designee will:

1. Verify and record the identity of the official and request an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
2. Ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent, unless the interviewer raises what the principal or designee considers to be a valid objection.
3. Ordinarily be present during the questioning or interview, unless the interviewer raises what the principal or designee considers to be a valid objection.

#### Students Taken into Custody

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

1. By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in conduct that violates a penal law,

delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision or conduct that violates a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

2. By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
3. By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs to establish a student's identity, where the child may have engaged in conduct indicating a need for supervision, such as running away.
4. By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
5. By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services ("DFPS"), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Texas Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
6. Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend.
7. To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.
8. To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
9. To comply with the laws of arrest.

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

The principal or designee will immediately notify the Superintendent or designee and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal or designee considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the Principal or designee 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.

## School Visitors

Visitors for educational purposes are welcome at the school. Visitors must sign in with the front office and present a valid photo ID upon arrival. Parents must also check in at the front office. Guests should not be brought to school without prior approval.

Visitors will not be allowed during the last two weeks of the semester or during the week prior to any school holiday. Parents or other visitors may not walk in the cafeteria, hallways, or classrooms unless a visitor's form has been completed at least 24 hours in advance of the school to provide notice of the visit. This form must also be completed when a parent requests to observe a class.

The principal may take the following actions whenever there is a school visitor: Require the visitor to display his or her driver's license or another form of identification issued by a governmental entity containing the person's photograph:

- Establish an electronic database to store information concerning visitors. Information stored in the electronic database may be used only for the purpose of school security and may not be sold or otherwise disseminated to a third party for any purpose.
- Verify whether the visitor is a sex offender registered with the computerized central database maintained by the Department of Public Safety or any other database accessible by the school.

Any visitor identified as a sex offender shall be escorted by school personnel at all times during a school visit and shall have access only to common areas of the campus.

## Disruptive Activity

In order to protect student safety and sustain an educational program free from disruption, state law permits the school to take action against any person who:

- Disrupts classes while on school property or on public property that is within 500 feet of school 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; entering a classroom without authorization; and disrupting the activity with profane language or any misconduct.
- Interferes with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to school property.
- Interferes with the movement of people at an exit, an entrance, or a hallway to a school building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interferes with the transportation of students in school vehicles.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Uses force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving school property without authorization from an administrator.
- Uses force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

## **Fire and Disaster Drills**

Fire, lock-down, evacuation, and shelter/hazard drill instruction will be discussed during the first week of each semester. Students need to understand and follow these procedures. Instructions will be posted in each teacher's room. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

## **Emergency Closings**

Weather conditions may occur, which will make it necessary for campuses to be closed. Parents and students are advised to view the website and listen to local radio or television for announcements that the school will be closed.

## **Skateboards**

Students and others are not permitted to use their skateboards, scooters, and/or roller blades on campus grounds at any time. If a student uses any of these items as a means of transportation to or from school, he or she must walk and carry the item while on school property. These items should be kept in a locker or designated place approved by campus administration until the end of the school day.

## **Videotaping of Students**

For safety purposes, video/audio equipment may be used to monitor student behavior in classrooms and hallways, on buses, and in common areas on campus.

Students will not be told when the equipment is being used. The principal may review the tapes routinely to document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

### **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 the dismissal of school in the afternoon, and unless involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher, students must leave campus immediately.

### **Pest Control Information**

SST periodically applies pesticides inside school buildings and on school grounds. While SST strives to use the safest and most effective methods to manage pests, including a variety of non-chemical control measures, periodic indoor and outdoor pesticide use is sometimes necessary to maintain adequate pest control and ensure a safe, pest-free environment.

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. SST will provide appropriate notice of treatments, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area. Parents who want to be notified prior to pesticide application may contact the Superintendent or designee.

## SECTION III: ACADEMICS AND GRADING

### Academic Programs

The principal or designee will provide students and parents with information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices.

Students and parents are encouraged to discuss options for ensuring that students complete all work required with a teacher, the Principal or designee.

### Required Curriculum

SST offers instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of the appropriate grade levels in the following required curriculum:

#### School of Science and Technology Curriculum Overview

Our School of Science and Technology district is committed to providing a comprehensive and engaging curriculum that fosters academic excellence, critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility. Our curriculum is designed to meet the unique needs of each student while adhering to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards. Our educational approach focuses on holistic development, preparing students for success in higher education, career endeavors, and active citizenship.

**Early Childhood Education (PreK):** Our early childhood curriculum combines play-based learning with foundational skills development. It encompasses language and literacy, numeracy, social-emotional development, motor skills, and exploration of arts and sciences. We emphasize building a strong foundation for future learning and cultivating curiosity.

**Elementary School (Grades K-5):** In the elementary years, our curriculum expands students' knowledge and skills across core subjects including English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Additionally, students engage in art, music, physical education, and character education. Integrated projects and interdisciplinary learning

foster connections between subjects, encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving.

**Middle School (Grades 6-8):** Our middle school curriculum focuses on building academic independence and deeper subject mastery. Core subjects are complemented by foreign languages, technology education, and comprehensive arts programs. Project-based learning and experiential activities encourage collaboration and real-world application of knowledge. A strong emphasis on character development and leadership skills prepares students for high school and beyond.

**High School (Grades 9-12):** The high school curriculum offers a range of advanced courses and electives, enabling students to tailor their education to their interests and goals. Rigorous coursework includes honors and Advanced Placement (AP) options. In addition to core subjects, students explore subjects like computer science, advanced sciences, humanities, and career-focused programs. College and career counseling support students in making informed post-secondary choices.

**Enrichment and Extracurriculars:** Beyond academics, we offer a variety of extracurricular activities including sports, arts, clubs, and community service initiatives. These opportunities allow students to develop their talents, interests, and leadership skills while promoting teamwork and a well-rounded education.

**Technology Integration:** Our school integrates technology into the curriculum to enhance learning experiences. Students develop digital literacy skills and use technology for research, collaboration, and creative expression.

**Civic and Social Responsibility:** We emphasize the importance of civic engagement, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making. Our curriculum encourages students to become active and informed citizens who contribute positively to their local and global communities.



Assessment and Progress Monitoring: We use a variety of assessment tools to monitor student progress and tailor instruction. These include standardized tests, formative assessments, projects, presentations, and portfolios.

Special Education and Inclusion: Our school is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive environment for students with diverse learning needs. We offer specialized instruction, accommodations, and individualized education plans (IEPs) to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality education.

Section 504 Program: The School of Science and Technology is firmly committed to inclusivity and ensuring that every student receives a high-quality education tailored to their unique needs. We offer a Section 504 program to support students with diverse learning requirements, including those covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Program: The School of Science and Technology offers a comprehensive English as a Second Language (ESL) program, recognizing the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our students. Through research-based instructional strategies, highly qualified ESL educators help students develop English proficiency while advancing in academic subjects. The program focuses on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, aiming to empower English language learners to excel both academically and socially, fostering a strong sense of community belonging.

Gifted and Talented Program: The School of Science and Technology is dedicated to nurturing the exceptional abilities of gifted and talented students. The Gifted and Talented (GT) program provides personalized instruction, enrichment, and acceleration to students demonstrating remarkable potential across diverse domains. GT students are engaged in advanced coursework, independent projects, and collaborative endeavors that stimulate critical thinking, creativity, and advanced problem-solving skills. Through customized education plans, we are committed to cultivating the full potential of GT students, empowering them to excel and thrive.

Our School of Science and Technology district is dedicated to nurturing a love for learning,

empowering students to become lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and compassionate individuals who are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

### Social Studies Coursework

For any social studies course in the required curriculum, SST may not require, make part of a course, or award a grade or course credit (including extra credit) for a student's:

1. Work for, affiliation with, or service learning in an association with any organization engaged in (i) lobbying for legislation at the federal, state, or local level, if the student's duties involve directly or indirectly attempting to influence social or public policy or the outcome of legislation, or (ii) social policy advocacy or public policy advocacy;
2. Political activism, lobbying, or efforts by direct communication to persuade members of the legislative or executive branch at the federal, state, or local level to take specific actions by direct communication; or
3. Participation in any internship, practicum, or similar activity involving social or public policy advocacy.

Additionally, SST may not implement or enforce any rules of student conduct in a manner that would result in a student's punishment for discussing, or have a chilling effect on reasonable student discussions involving those concepts described in Education Code § 28.002(a)(4) in school or during a school-sponsored activity.

### Middle School Advanced Mathematics Program

SST has adopted an advanced mathematics program for middle school students that is designed to enable students to enroll in Algebra I in 8th grade. Under this program, SST will automatically enroll in an advanced mathematics course each 6th grade student who performed in the top 40% on (1) the 5th grade STAAR assessment in math, or (2) a local measure that includes the student's 5th grade class ranking or a demonstrated proficiency in the student's 5th grade mathematics coursework.

Parents may opt a student out of automatic in the school's advanced mathematics principal by providing written notice to the principal or designee.



## Academic Dishonesty

Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall be subject to grade penalties on assignments or tests and disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. High school students may be kept out of advanced courses such as Pre-AP, AP, Dual credit, or PLTW courses for repeated offenses.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or other supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students.

## Homework Policy

Homework is an essential part of each student's successful education. Homework assignments help to develop many valuable skills, including good study habits, time management, responsibility, and perseverance. Teachers will assign homework that fosters individual learning and growth and that is appropriate for the subject area. Homework is part of all students' regular evaluations. Each student is responsible for completing and turning in homework on time. The teacher's record is final in cases of conflict regarding homework assignments. If a student or parent has questions about homework, contact the teacher who assigned it.

## Report Cards and Grading Scales

SST issues progress reports to all students at the middle of each nine-week progress period within a semester. Report cards for all students are issued at the end of each nine-week reporting period within a semester.

Report cards are mailed to parents. Please notify the school office immediately if your address or contact information changes.

Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with their child's teacher if the student is not making adequate progress.

All classes will follow a standard scale for assigning letter grades for nine-week periods and semester work. Individual teachers will follow the SST grading

practices/guidelines for their classes, with grades corresponding to the following scale:

A = 90–100% B = 80–89% C = 75–79% D = 70–74%  
F = 69% and below

**High School Regular & PLTW academic course letter grades have the following GPA weights:**

A = 4.0 B = 3.0 C = 2.0 D = 1.0 F = 0.0

**High School Pre-AP & Honors course letter grades have the following GPA weights:**

A = 4.5 B = 3.5 C = 2.5 D = 1.5 F = 0.0

**High School AP & Dual Credit course letter grades have the following GPA weights:**

A = 5.0 B = 4.0 C = 3.0 D = 2.0 F = 0.0

The report card for Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten is an evaluation style and does not follow the traditional grading system.

For Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Grades the following system will be used;

MS = Meets Standards

AS = Approaching Standards

NS = Needs Support

XS = Not Assessed at this time

### Honor Rolls for K-8

- Students at Grades K-8 who earn all "A" s will be named to the Distinguished Honor Roll.
- Students who earn "A" s and "B" s in all classes will be named to the Honor Roll.
- Students who exhibit a campus's core ethical values will be nominated by staff to receive the Excellent Character Award.

### Honor Rolls for High School

- High school students will be named to honor rolls based on the weighted GPA in that semester;
- Distinguished Honor Roll: 4.00 or above
- Honor Roll: 3.50 or above

## **Tutoring**

Students are encouraged and may be required to see teachers or tutors for tutoring. Tutoring services are also available for students receiving special education services. Private tutoring is the responsibility of a student's parents. Teachers employed by SST Public Schools are not permitted to privately tutor their students for pay.

## Credit and Acceleration by Exam

SST Public Schools uses examinations and guidelines established by the State Board of Education to offer credit and acceleration by exam.

### Kindergarten-Grade Acceleration Guidelines

See APPENDIX A

### Elementary and Middle School - Grade Acceleration Guidelines

See APPENDIX B

### High School - Exam for Acceleration (EA) for Initial Credit

Please refer to SST High School Guide

## National Honor Society, National Junior Honor Society, and National Elementary Honor Society

Every chapter (school) might have different qualifications for membership. At a minimum, high school students who have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.00 are eligible for nomination to the school's local chapter of the National Honor Society. Students seeking admission should contact the sponsor for admission guidelines. The student must have been enrolled in the current school for at least one semester. Selection for membership is based upon a student's evidence of scholarship, service, citizenship, leadership, and character. Selection will be made by a faculty council appointed by the principal. Discipline referrals and excessive absences will constitute evidence of deficiencies in character and leadership. Service contributions are determined by the completion of a service form by the nominee and scored by the faculty council. Induction is held only once during each academic year.

Distinguished honor and honor students in middle grades may apply for the National Junior Honor Society, and elementary students may apply for the National Elementary Honor Society.

## Promotion and Retention

A student may 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 or grade, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade level standards and meet SST's requirements for attendance. SST Public Schools considers the following when making promotion and retention decisions.

### Yearly Average

Students in grades 1-8 must achieve an overall cumulative average of 70 or above for all subject areas. For core subjects including Reading/English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science students in grades 1-8 must maintain an end of the year average of 70 or higher for promotion.

### NWEA MAP

Students in grades 1-8 must score in both Reading AND Mathematics NWEA MAP testing at or above the 10th percentile at least once throughout the current school year. The campus may apply for a waiver for the NWEA MAP promotion standard (as low as the 7th percentile) within their district. If a student passes STAAR assessments in Reading and Mathematics, then that student will be exempt from the NWEA MAP promotion requirement.

### High School Promotion

In grades 9-12, grade-level advancement shall be earned by course credits. To be promoted from one grade level to the next, a student in grades 9-12 must have met the following

- must have acquired at least six credits to be promoted to 10th Grade
- must have acquired at least twelve credits to be promoted to 11th Grade
- must have acquired at least eighteen credits to be promoted to 12th Grade.

### Transfer Students

A student who has been promoted upon completion of a school year in a school other than a Texas public school may be enrolled in that grade without regard to whether the student has successfully completed a grade advancement test. This does not limit the school's ability to place such a student by using appropriate assessments.

### Emergent Bilingual / English Learner Students

Status as an emergent bilingual or English learner student does not alter promotion criteria. However, if an emergent bilingual or English learner student is recommended for retention, the campus must consult with the relevant Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) members before making a promotion or retention decision. The LPAC may modify the NWEA MAP promotion standard depending on the student's English proficiency level.

### Kindergarten Promotion and Retention

For students in kindergarten, promotion to the next grade shall be based on the evidence of satisfactory progress with an emphasis on reading and mathematics. Evidence for promotion may include assessment of the student's reading/math level, information from the student's daily work, report cards, anecdotal records, and teacher recommendations

In kindergarten, retention shall be considered only in unusual circumstances and with the approval of the student's parents. A written recommendation for retention, including suggestions for assistance for the student, shall be signed by the student's teacher, parent, and principal.

### Retention

Students in danger of consideration for retention will receive a written request for a mandatory conference between February and May.

A student may be considered for retention if they have met any of the following criteria:

1. failed one or more core subject areas;
2. failed one or more state assessments;
3. is below level in one or more core subject areas; or
4. missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year. The decision must be made by a committee, which is comprised of the child's core subject area teachers, the counselor, and the principal or designee.
5. did not score at the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile or above, at least once during the current school year in both Reading AND Mathematics NWEA MAP testing.

Whenever the school is required to notify a parent or guardian about the requirements related to promotion and retention, SST shall make a good-faith effort to ensure that the notice is provided either in person or by regular mail, is clear and easy to understand, and is written in English or in the parent or guardian's native language.

### Special Education Students

A student's IEP can modify the school's promotion criteria in whole or in part. Any modified promotion standards shall be determined by the student's ARD committee and documented in the IEP. A student's ARD committee will also make determinations on whether a student will be promoted or retained.

### Retention and Appeal

A student who fails to satisfy the school's promotion standards shall be retained at the same grade level for the next school year. The parent or guardian may appeal the retention by submitting a request to the regional district office within five working days of receipt of the retention notification. If an appeal is initiated by the parent or guardian, the regional district office may decide in favor of promotion only if the regional district office concludes, upon review of all the facts and circumstances, and in accordance with standards adopted by the Board, that the student is likely to perform on grade level given additional accelerated instruction during the next school year.

### Parent Option for Students to Repeat Grades or Courses

In certain circumstances, a parent may elect for a student to repeat a grade or retake a high school course. Subject to certain restrictions, a parent may elect for a student to:

1. Repeat prekindergarten;
2. Enroll in prekindergarten if the child was eligible to enroll in free prekindergarten under Education Code § 29.153(b) and has not yet enrolled in kindergarten;
3. Repeat kindergarten;
4. Enroll in kindergarten if the child would have enrolled in kindergarten in the previous school year and has not yet enrolled in first grade;
5. For grades one through eight, repeat the grade the student was enrolled in the previous school year.

An election for a student to repeat a grade must be made in writing. If SST disagrees with a parent election for a student to repeat a grade, the school must convene a retention committee and meet with the parent to discuss retention. The meeting must be conducted in person, unless the parent agrees to alternative means. A student may not be retained for a grade if the parent does not meet with the retention committee.

The retention committee will be composed of the principal or designee, the student's parent, the teacher who taught the grade or course for which the parent wants the student retained, and additional teachers at the discretion of the principal, if the student will potentially repeat multiple courses. During the retention meeting, SST and the parent will discuss the merits of and concerns with advancement and retention, and review and consider the student's grade in each subject or course, the results of any formative or summative assessments administered to the student, and any other available academic information to determine the student's academic readiness for the next grade or a given course. After the parent has participated in a retention committee meeting, the parent shall decide whether the student should be retained or retake a grade or course. SST must abide by the parent's decision.

### **Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test**

A student in grades 10–12 will be offered an opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery ("ASVAB") test and consult with a military recruiter. SST will provide each student in grades 10–12 and their parents with notice of the date, time, and location of the scheduled administration of the ASVAB.

### **Computer Resources**

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, SST has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents must read and agree to abide by the Student Acceptable Use Policy found in this Handbook.

### **Distance Learning**

Distance learning and correspondence courses include courses that encompass the state-required essential knowledge and skills but are taught through multiple technologies and alternative methodologies, such as mail, satellite, Internet, video-conferencing, and instructional television.

The Texas Virtual School Network ("TxVSN") has been established as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation. If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child, be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the Superintendent or designee. Unless an exception is made by the Superintendent or designee, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course.

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

### **Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, and Organizations**

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 and not a right. Eligibility for participation in many school-related activities is governed by state law and rules of the UIL, a statewide association overseeing interscholastic competition between public schools. Additional information regarding extracurricular activities, clubs, and organizations may be obtained from the principal or designee.

Participation in these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. Students are required to use the transportation provided by SST to and from the event and exceptions may only be made with approval from the activity's coach or sponsor.

**Please note:** Sponsors of student clubs and academic and athletic teams may establish standards of behavior – including consequences for misbehavior – that are stricter than those for students in general. If a violation of organization rules 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.

### **Graduation (High School Grades Only)**

SST shall ensure that each student enrolls in the courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements identified by the SBOE for graduation. Additionally, students must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma:

1. Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (“EOC”) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law;
2. Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the SBOE;
3. Complete the required number of credits established by the SBOE and any additional credits required by SST;
4. Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by SST, in the specific communication skills required by the SBOE; and
5. Complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (“FAFSA”) or a Texas application for state financial aid (“TASFA”).

#### Additional Graduation Requirements

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Awareness – Texas law requires high school students to complete a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“CPR”) awareness and training program in order to graduate. The CPR awareness course is not taken for credit and does not result in CPR certification. SST will offer CPR awareness training, free of charge, to students during their junior or senior year to satisfy this requirement.

Peace Officer Training – Texas law requires high schools to provide students with instruction on proper interaction with peace officers during traffic stops and other in-person encounters. SST will offer this instruction during a student’s junior or senior year.

#### Testing Requirements for Graduation

Students are required, with limited exceptions, to perform satisfactorily on the following EOC assessments: English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. A student who has not achieved sufficient scores on the EOC assessments to graduate will have opportunities to retake the assessments. State law and state rules also provide for certain scores on norm-referenced national standardized assessments or on the state-developed assessment used for entrance into Texas public universities to substitute for the requirement to meet satisfactory performance on an applicable EOC assessment should a student choose this option. See the Principal or designee for more information on the state testing requirements for graduation.

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

In limited circumstances, a student who fails to demonstrate proficiency on two or fewer of the required assessments may be eligible to graduate, if an individual graduation committee, formed in accordance with state law, unanimously determines that the student is eligible to graduate. Please see the principal or designee for more information on the makeup of an individual graduation committee and all other requirements for graduation.

#### Foundation Graduation Program

Every student in a Texas public school will graduate under the foundation graduation program. Within the foundation graduation program are “endorsements,” which are paths of interest that include Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Business and Industry; Public Services; Arts and Humanities; and Multidisciplinary Studies. Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student’s transcript and diploma. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits.

State law and rules generally prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement. However, after the

student's sophomore year, the student and student's parent may request that the student graduate without an endorsement. The district will advise the student and the student's parent of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement. The student and the student's parent must then submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement.

A student who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether graduation under the foundation program without an endorsement will satisfy the admission requirements of the student's desired college or university.

Graduating under the foundation graduation program will also provide opportunities to earn "performance acknowledgements" that will be acknowledged on a student's diploma and transcript. Performance acknowledgements are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT exam; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgements are prescribed by state rules, and the principal or designee can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

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

#### Texas First Early High School Completion Program

Upon each student's initial enrollment in high school,

- The student's parent submits a form provided by SST indicating that the parent authorizes the student to opt out;
- A student who is 18 years of age or older or a legally independent minor submits a form

SST shall provide parents and students notice of eligibility criteria for the Texas First Early High School Completion Program and Texas First Scholarship Program.

#### Financial Aid Application Requirement

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit an application for financial aid for post-secondary education. Students must complete and submit either a FAFSA or TASFA. Students may consult with their CCMR Advisor for guidance in completing the FAFSA/TAFSA.

A student is not required to complete and submit a FAFSA or TASFA if:

- A form provided by SST indicating that the student opts out; or
- A CCMR Advisor authorizes the student to opt out for good cause.

To confirm that a student has completed and submitted a TASFA, the student must submit:

- A screenshot that includes the processed date field of the FAFSA Apply Texas Counselor Suite;
- Notification, such as a copy of an email, from the United States Department of Education verifying completion of the FAFSA;
- A copy or screenshot of the FAFSA acknowledgment page;
- A screenshot of the TASFA submission acknowledgment page (from those institutions that offer an electronic form);
- An acknowledgment receipt from an institution of higher education ("IHE")); or
- A copy of a financial aid award letter from an IHE

## Students with Disabilities

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

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

The admission, review, and dismissal committee for students with disabilities who receive special education services will make instructional and assessment decisions for these students in accordance with state law and rules. To earn an endorsement under the foundation graduation program, a student must perform satisfactorily on the EOC assessments and receive no modified curriculum in the student's chosen endorsement area. A student may still be awarded an endorsement when the student fails to perform satisfactorily on no more than two EOC assessments but meets the other requirements for graduation under state law.

## **Standardized Testing**

### Instructional Program

To ensure that each student achieves at least satisfactory performance on each state assessment, SST shall ensure that its curricular and instructional systems provide instruction to all students that:

1. is consistently aligned with the essential knowledge and skills for the applicable subject area and grade level; and
2. strategically and timely addresses deficiencies in the prerequisite essential knowledge and skills for the applicable subject area and grade level.

## State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students in grades 3–8 will take the state assessment, the STAAR exam, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8;
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8;
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4 and 7;
- Science in grades 5 and 8; and
- Social Studies in grade 8.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services and who meet certain state-established criteria, as determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee.

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

### End-of-Course Assessments for Students in Grades 9–12

STAAR or EOC assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I;
- Biology;
- English I and II; and
- United States History.

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state laws and rules.

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

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services and who meet certain state-established criteria, as determined by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee. The student's admission, review, and dismissal committee will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for a student receiving special education services to graduate, in accordance with parameters set in state regulations.



Paper Administration of Assessment Instruments on Parental Request

On the written request of a student’s parent, or teacher, SST may administer a STAAR or EOC assessment in paper format. This request must be submitted for a fall administration of STAAR or EOC assessment not later than **September 15** of the school year in which the assessment will be administered; and for a spring administration of STAAR or EOC assessment, not later than **December 1** of the school year in which the assessment instrument will be administered.

Please note that SST cannot administer paper assessments for more than three percent of the number of students enrolled in the district. If more requests for paper assessments are received than the maximum amount allowed by the law, SST will accept the requests in the order received until the maximum number is reached. This limitation does not apply to a student whose admission, review and dismissal committee determines that the administration of the STAAR or EOC assessments in paper format is a necessary modification for the student.

Accelerated Instruction

SST will provide accelerated instruction in applicable subject areas to each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the STAAR exam in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade or an end-of- course (“EOC”) assessment. This accelerated instruction will be provided either during the subsequent summer or school year, and consist of instruction meeting the requirements of Education Code § 28.0211(a-1) and 28.0211(a-4), as applicable.

Accelerated instruction provided during the following school year may require participation of the student before or after normal school hours. Failure of a student to attend accelerated instruction may result in violations of required school attendance.

In providing this accelerated instruction, SST may not remove a student, except under circumstances for which a student enrolled in the same grade level who is not receiving accelerated instruction would be removed, from: (1) instruction in the foundation and enrichment curriculum for the grade level in which the student is enrolled, or (2) recess or other physical activity that is available to

other students enrolled in the same grade level.

Accelerated Education Plan

SST will develop an Accelerated Education Plan (“AEP”) for each student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment to provide the necessary accelerated instruction to enable the student to perform at the appropriate grade or course level by the conclusion of the school year. The AEP will be documented in writing, and a copy will be provided to the student’s parent.

SST will make a good faith attempt to provide the parent of a student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment a parent-teacher conference with the student’s primary teacher at the start and end of the subsequent school year. At the conference, SST will provide the parent with:

1. Notice that the student is not performing on grade level in the applicable subject area; and
2. An explanation of the accelerated instruction to which the student is entitled and information on the AEP that must be developed for the student and the manner in which the parent may participate in developing the plan.

A parent of a student who fails to perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment may submit a written request to the Principal for SST to consider the student’s assignment to a particular classroom teacher in the applicable subject area for the subsequent school year, if more than one classroom teacher is available. SST retains discretion to make classroom assignments based on campus needs and classroom capacity.

During the school year, the student’s progress will be monitored to ensure that the student is progressing in accordance with the AEP.

AEP Grievance Procedure

A student’s parent may contest the content or implementation of an AEP developed by SST by submitting a written complaint to the principal within (1) seven calendar days of the parent’s receipt of AEP or (2) within seven calendar days of the parent’s concern that the AEP is not being properly implemented. The Principal or Principal’s designee will conduct a conference with the parent within five school days of the principal’s receipt of the written complaint and issue a written decision within five

school days of the conference. A parent who is dissatisfied with the Principal or Principal's designee's decision may appeal through SST's student and parent complaint process, beginning at Level Two.

*Special Education Students:* The ARD Committee of a student who participates in the school's special education program and who does not perform satisfactorily on a STAAR or EOC assessment shall, at the student's next annual ARD review meeting, review the student's participation and progress in, as applicable, accelerated instruction, supplemental, or an AEP. The student's parent may request, or SST, may schedule, an additional ARD meeting if a committee member believes that the student's individualized education program (IEP) needs to be modified. If SST refuses to convene an ARD meeting requested by the student's parent, SST shall provide the parent with written notice explaining the reason the school refuses to convene the meeting.

#### *Texas Success Initiative Assessment*

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the TSI assessment. The purpose of the TSI assessment is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

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

Many colleges require either the American College Test ("ACT") or the Scholastic Aptitude Test ("SAT") for admission. Students are encouraged to talk with the principal or designee early during their junior year to determine the appropriate examination to take; these examinations are usually taken at the end of the junior year. The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and ACT-Aspire are the corresponding preparatory and readiness assessments for the SAT and ACT, and more information can be obtained on these assessments from the principal or designee.

Note that participation in these assessments may qualify a student to receive a performance

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

#### *Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System*

The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System ("TELPAS") is a system of statewide assessments administered to all Limited English Proficient ("LEP") students in grades K–12. The TELPAS measures English ability based on the stages of language development of second language learners. These results will further the understanding of the educational needs of LEP students by providing a state-level measure of both their current academic English levels and their annual progress in English.

### **Special Programs**

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

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

Additionally, in keeping with state and federal law, SST offers Bilingual/ English as a Second Language ("ESL") services at all appropriate grade levels for emergent bilingual / English learners who are limited in their English proficiency. The school's goal is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Tests to qualify for placement in the program.

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

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

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

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

may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

#### Special Education Referrals

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

school agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to provide written consent for the evaluation.

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

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

There is an exception to the 45-school-day timeline. If a district or charter school receives a parent's consent for the initial evaluation at least 35 but less than 45 school days before the last instructional day of the school year, it must complete the written report and provide a copy of the report to the parent by June 30 of that year. However, if the student is absent from school for three or more days during the evaluation period, the June 30th due date no longer applies. Instead, the general timeline of 45 school days plus extensions for absences of three or more days will apply.

Upon completing the evaluation, the district or charter school must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost. Additional information regarding special education is available from the district or charter school in a companion document titled *Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process*.

#### Contact Person for Special Education Referrals

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

Contact Person: See the "Contact List for Special Education/504 Referrals" table for contact information.

Phone Number: See the "Contact List for Special Education/504 Referrals" table for contact information.

#### Section 504 Referrals

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

#### Contact Person for Section 504 Referrals

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

Contact Person: See the "Contact List for Special Education/504 Referrals" table for contact information.

Phone Number: See the "Contact List for Special Education/504 Referrals" table for contact information.

#### Additional Information

The following websites provide information and resources for students with disabilities and their families.

- Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process  
<http://framework.esc18.net>
- Partners Resource Network  
<http://prntexas.org>
- Special Education Information Center  
<http://www.spedtex.org>
- Texas Project First  
<http://texasprojectfirst.org>

Notification to Parent of Intervention Strategies for Learning Difficulties Provided to General Education Students

SST will annually notify parents that it provides assistance to students, other than those already enrolled in a special education program, who need assistance for learning difficulties, including intervention strategies.

Services for Title I Participants

Information regarding SST's Title I program may be obtained from SST Central Office at 210-957-1955.

Students with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504

A student with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504"). Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against persons with *Contact List for Special Education/504 Referrals*

disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be created to determine whether the student needs Section 504 services and supports in order to receive an appropriate education as required by federal law.

Students Qualifying for Dyslexia Services

A student may be eligible to receive dyslexia or related services as defined by the Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders as updated and approved by the State Board of Education in 2021.

If SST suspects or has reason to suspect that a student may have dyslexia, including after evaluation or use of reading diagnosis, SST will comply with the requirements of Texas Education Code §§ 29.0031 and 29.0032, as well as all federal and state reequipments regarding any evaluation of the student.

<b>Campus</b>	<b>Contact Person for Special Education/504 Referrals</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>
SST Advancement	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	12801 Brant Rock Dr, Houston, TX 77082	832-288-2523
SST Alamo	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	11214 N Weidner Rd, San Antonio, TX 78233	210-590-1115
SST Bayshore	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	2626 Airline Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78414	361-462-4741
SST Champions College Prep HS	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	15015 TC Jester Blvd Building 2, Houston, TX 77068	281-836-5742
SST Champions Elementary	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	15015 TC Jester Blvd, Houston, TX 77068	281-893-0802
SST Corpus Christi College Prep HS	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	6609 Evans Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78413	361-225-0044
SST Corpus Christi Early Elementary	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	3601 Saratoga, Corpus Christi, TX 78415	361-278-1340
SST Corpus Christi Elementary	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	6633 Evans Road, Corpus Christi, TX 78413	361-851-2475
SST Discovery	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	5707 Bandera Road, San Antonio, TX 78238	210-543-1111

SST Hill Country	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	9202 W Loop 1604 N, San Antonio, TX 78254	210-688-9758
SST Hill Country College Prep HS	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	9202 W Loop 1604 N, San Antonio, TX 78254	210-688-9758
SST Northwest	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	12042 Culebra Road, San Antonio, TX 78253	210-688-9990
SST San Antonio College Prep HS	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	4410 David Edwards Dr, San Antonio, TX 78233	210-549-4161
SST Schertz 2nd-8th	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	908 Fairlawn Ave, Schertz, TX 78154	830-625-2516
SST Schertz PK-1	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	908 Fairlawn Ave, Schertz, TX 78154	830-625-2516
SST Spring	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	2105 Louetta Road, Spring, TX 77388	281-528-0096
SST Sugar Land	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	10007 Clodine Rd, Richmond, TX 77407	281-277-7923
SST Sugar Land College Prep HS	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	10007 Clodine Rd, Richmond, TX 77407	281-277-7923
SST The Woodlands	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	27440 Kuykendahl Rd, Tomball, TX 77375	281-516-0600
SST Willow Creek	Campus Special Education/504 Coordinator	22719 Kuykendahl, Spring, TX 77389	346-435-9395

## SECTION IV: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

SST Public Schools is committed to helping every student fulfill his or her intellectual, social, physical, and emotional potential. To foster an orderly and distraction-free environment, SST Public Schools has established this Student Code of Conduct, which outlines prohibited behaviors and consequences for such behavior. The Student Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Board of Directors and provides information to parents and students regarding expectations for behavior, consequences for misconduct, and the school's procedures for administering discipline. SST Public Schools has the responsibility and authority to enforce the Student Code of Conduct and assign discipline when appropriate.

The Student Code of Conduct will be posted at each SST Public Schools' campus and/or will be available for review at the campus office. Parents will be notified of any violation that may result in a student being suspended or expelled from SST Public Schools. Students must be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as general campus and classroom standards for behavior.

The Student Code of Conduct does not define all types and aspects of student behavior. The Board of Directors and the Superintendent may establish written policies, rules, and regulations of general application governing student conduct in all schools. In addition, each Principal, within his or her own school, may establish certain rules and regulations not inconsistent with those established by the Board of



Directors and the Superintendent. When students participate in extracurricular or other school activities, they will also be expected to follow the guidelines and expectations for student behavior, along with any consequences that may result from misconduct.

### **Authority and Jurisdiction**

SST Public Schools has disciplinary authority over a student:

- 1) During lunch periods in which a student is allowed to leave campus;
- 2) During the regular school day and while the student is going to and from school on SST transportation;
- 3) For any expulsion offense committed away from SST property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event if the misconduct creates a substantial disruption to the educational environment;
- 4) For any expulsion offense committed while on SST property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity of SST or another school in Texas;
- 5) For any school-related misconduct, regardless of time or location;
- 6) When criminal mischief is committed on or off SST property or at a school-related event;
- 7) When retaliation against a school employee or volunteer occurs or is threatened, regardless of time or location;
- 8) When the student commits a felony, including those provided by Texas Education Code §§ 37.006 or 37.0081, regardless of time or location;
- 9) While a student is participating in any remote/ virtual classroom or other period of online instruction provided by SST;
- 10) While the student is attending any school-related activity, regardless of time or location; and
- 11) While the student is in transit to or from school or to or from school-related activities or events.

### Reporting Crimes

In addition to disciplinary consequences, misdemeanor and felony offenses committed on campus or while attending school-sponsored or school-related activities will be reported to an appropriate law enforcement agency.

### **Standards for Student Conduct**

#### School-Wide and Classroom Rules

Students shall:

- Adhere to all requirements of the Student Code of Conduct.
- Attend all classes regularly and on time.
- Be in your assigned seat and ready to work before the tardy bell rings.
- Be prepared for each class.
- Behave in a responsible manner, always exercising self-discipline and control.
- Bring pencils, pens, paper, books, and all assigned materials to class.
- Cooperate with and assist school personnel, including volunteers, in maintaining safety, order, and discipline.
- Demonstrate courtesy at all times.
- Follow dress code requirements.
- Follow instructions and directives immediately.
- Gum is prohibited on campus.
- Not disrupt classroom activities.
- Obey all campus and classroom rules.
- Raise their hand until recognized before speaking. Stand to speak once recognized, excluding normal class discussions. Not leave class without permission. Any student leaving class must have a hall pass.
- Respect the rights of others, including property belonging to others and school facilities.
- Show high standards of behavior to create a positive and welcoming school atmosphere.

## Responsibilities of Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Serve as a model for students by showing respect for themselves, students, teachers, other parents, and school staff.
- Ensure their student's compliance with school attendance requirements, and promptly report and explain absences and tardies to school.
- Assist their student in being properly attired.
- Take an active interest in the overall school program.
- Communicate regularly with the school concerning their student's conduct and progress.
- Discuss report cards and work assignments with their student.
- Bring to the attention of school authorities any problem or condition which affects their student.
- Maintain up-to-date home, work, and emergency telephone numbers at the school.
- Cooperate with school administrators and teachers in their efforts to achieve and maintain a quality school system.
- Respond promptly when notified by campus to pick up student due to medical or disciplinary problems.
- Respond promptly when notified of student disciplinary matters.

## **Discipline Management Techniques**

Disciplinary management techniques are designed to improve conduct and to encourage students to adhere to their responsibilities as members of the school community. Disciplinary action will draw on the professional judgment of teachers and administrators and on a range of discipline management techniques. Discipline will be correlated to the seriousness of the offense, the student's age and grade level, the frequency of misbehavior, the student's attitude, the effect of the misconduct on the school environment, and statutory requirements.

Because of these factors, discipline for a particular offense, unless otherwise specified by law, may bring into consideration varying techniques and responses.

SST may use the following discipline management techniques – alone or in combination – for behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct or by campus or classroom rules.

- Behavior Contract
- Expulsion, as specified in the expulsion section of the Student Code of Conduct
- Grade reductions for cheating and/or plagiarism
- Mediation/counseling
- Parent attending school with student
- Parent phone call/written notification
- Referral to an outside agency or legal authority for a criminal prosecution, in addition to disciplinary measures imposed by SST
- Removal from class or seating changes within the classroom
- Restitution (campus clean up with parent approval, community service, detention, presentations to classes, reports, research paper, letters of apology, etc.)
- Restorative Discipline Practices
- Student/Parent/Principal meeting
- Suspension ISS-In School Suspension or OSS-Out of School Suspension
- Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process
- Time-out or cooling-off time
- Verbal correction, oral or written
- Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, field trips, eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, or membership in school-sponsored clubs and organizations
- Withdrawal or restrictions on transportation privileges
- Other strategies and consequences as determined by school officials

### Corporal Punishment

**Corporal punishment is never an acceptable disciplinary measure**, and SST will NOT administer corporal punishment upon a student for misconduct.

### Core Ethical Values Connection

To promote good character, the campus may use and develop a Core Ethical Values Reflection Form or Positive Office Referral Form. The purpose of these forms is to allow the student to reflect on Campus Core Ethical Values for his/her behavior choices. Student completes the Reflection Form to designate if their performance displays or lacks one of the Campus Core Ethical Values or more. A student may be referred to the Dean of office with the Positive Office Referral Form to be acknowledged for his/her good character.

### Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. (CASEL, 2018)

### CASEL "Five Competencies"

- 1) Self-awareness: Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."
- 2) Self-management: Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.
- 3) Social awareness: Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- 4) Relationship skills: Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.
- 5) Responsible decision-making: Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms. CASEL, 2018

Along with focusing on academic excellence, SST strives to achieve in the Social-Emotional Learning of each child. We believe that our efforts on focusing on positive behaviors and rewarding the students when they are shown are a much more successful way to maintain a positive school culture instead of dealing with misbehavior through punishment.

### Restorative Discipline Practices

SST may utilize a wide variety of restorative discipline practices, which are designed to build a sense of school community based on cooperation, mutual understanding, trust, and respect, and emphasize the importance of positive relationships and pro-social relationships between students. Specifically, SST believes that when students engage in inappropriate conduct, restorative discipline practices may hold the potential to:

- Build trust, respect, and relationships
- Develop self-discipline and positive behaviors
- Encourage accountability and responsibility in the school community
- Establish mutual understanding
- Help students understand the harm caused by the misconduct
- Identify and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who caused the harm
- Increase parent partnerships
- Promote equitable input from all stakeholders
- Reintegrate students who have caused harm in the school community
- Strengthen school culture

Essentially, the restorative approach sees misbehavior or conflict as an opportunity for students to learn about consequences for their actions, develop empathy for others, and learn methods to make amends in a way that strengthens interpersonal bonds.

Examples of restorative discipline practices may include but are not limited to:

- Affective statements;
- Apologies;
- Community building circles;

- Mediation;
- Relationship building;
- Repairing harm circles;
- Restitution
- Restorative circles or conferences; and
- Restorative dialogues/making agreements.

Restorative discipline practices may take the form of alternatives in lieu of other disciplinary consequences allowed under the Code of Conduct and/or supplemental action taken along with other disciplinary consequences.

Restorative discipline practices are a collaborative process and may not be required or appropriate in all student discipline situations.

### **Procedures for Use of Restraint**

School employees, volunteers, or independent contractors are authorized to use restraint in the event of an emergency and subject to the following limitations:

- Only reasonable force as is necessary to address the emergency may be used.
- The restraint must be discontinued at the point at which the emergency no longer exists.
- The restraint must be implemented in such a way as to protect the health and safety of the student and others.
- The student may not be deprived of basic human necessities.

“Restraint” generally means the use of physical force or a mechanical device to significantly restrict the free movement of all or a portion of a student’s body.

“Emergency” means a situation in which a student’s behavior poses a threat of

- Imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others; or
- Imminent, serious property destruction.

In a case where restraint is used, school employees, volunteers, or independent contractors shall document the incident as required by the Texas Education Agency. Additionally, SST shall report electronically to the Texas Education Agency, following standards provided by the Commissioner of Education,

information relating to the use of restraint by a peace officer performing law enforcement duties on school property or during a school-sponsored or school-related activity. The report must be consistent with the requirements adopted by the Commissioner of Education for reporting the use of restraint involving students with disabilities.

## Procedures for Use of Time-Out

A school employee, volunteer, or independent contractor may use time-out with the following limitations:

- Physical force or the threat of physical force will not be used to place a student in time-out.
- Time-out may only be used in conjunction with an array of positive behavior intervention strategies and techniques and must be included in the student's IEP or BIP if it is utilized on a recurrent basis to increase or decrease targeted behavior.
- Time-out will not be utilized in a manner that precludes the ability of the student to be involved in progress in the general curriculum and advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals specified in the student's IEP.

“Time-out” means a behavior management technique in which, to provide a student with an opportunity to regain self-control, the student is separated from other students for a limited period in a setting:

- That is not locked; and
- From which the exit is not physically blocked by furniture, a closed-door held shut from the outside, or another inanimate object.

Necessary documentation or data collection regarding the use of time-out, if any, must be addressed in the IEP or BIP. The student's ARD committee must use any collected data to judge the effectiveness of the intervention and provide a basis for making determinations regarding its continued use.

## Offenses and Consequences

The categories of conduct below are prohibited at school and all school-related or school-sponsored activities.

### Level I Offenses

- 1) Accessing restricted areas or being in an unauthorized area.

- 2) Acts of disruptive behavior, including non-compliance and insubordination.
  - 3) Any violations of “Standards for Student Conduct” listed in the Student Code of Conduct.
  - 4) Causing an individual to act through the use of threat or coercion.
  - 5) Defacing or damaging SST property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and/or other equipment, in an amount less than \$50.
  - 6) Directing an obscene gesture toward other students and/or staff members.
  - 7) Disrespect of school staff (e.g., rolling eyes, sucking teeth, etc.).
  - 8) Engaging in disruptive actions or demonstrations that substantially disrupt or materially interfere with school activities.
  - 9) Engaging in misbehavior that gives school officials reasonable cause to believe that such conduct will substantially disrupt the school program or incite violence.
  - 10) Engaging in offensive conduct of a sexual nature, whether verbal or physical, directed toward another student or any other person.
  - 11) Failing to comply with directives of SST personnel.
  - 12) Failing to report hazing, harassment, and/or bullying of others.
  - 13) Improperly discharging a fire extinguisher.
  - 14) Inappropriate behavior towards another student.
  - 15) Leaving a classroom, school property, or school-sponsored activities without permission.
  - 16) Loitering (failing to leave campus within 30 minutes of dismissal, unless involved in an activity under supervision by SST) on campus 2-9 times per school year.
  - 17) Making false accusations or hoaxes regarding school safety.
  - 18) Parking infractions or violations of campus vehicle operation regulations.
  - 19) Persistent tardiness (tardy, without excuse, between 10-14 times within a period of 45 rolling school days).
  - 20) Possessing a laser pointer on SST property or at school-sponsored events.
  - 21) Possession of aerosol canisters or any other object used to set off fire alarms.
  - 22) Possession of any electronic and/or telecommunication devices (including, but not limited to, cell phones/paging devices) without permission during school hours or school activities.
  - 23) Possession of matches or lighters.
  - 24) Posting published materials or holding demonstrations or meetings on SST property without school approval
  - 25) Refusing to accept discipline management techniques assigned by a teacher or administrator.
  - 26) Scuffling or rough-housing with others.
  - 27) Switching lockers without permission.
  - 28) Throwing objects not considered an illegal weapon that can cause bodily injury or property damage.
  - 29) Unauthorized use of a school or classroom phone.
  - 30) Unruly, disruptive, or abusive behavior that interferes with the teacher’s ability to effectively communicate with students.
  - 31) Use of profanity and/or vulgar/offensive language (oral or in writing).
  - 32) Using a skateboard, scooter, bike, hoverboard, and/or roller blades while on school property.
  - 33) Verbal or written abuse, i.e., name-calling, racial or ethnic slurs, or derogatory statements that may disrupt the school environment.
  - 34) Violating SST’s dress code policy
- Disciplinary Consequences: (may not be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)*
- 1) After School Detention and core values reflection form.

- 2) Assignment of school duties such as scrubbing desks or picking up litter.
- 3) Behavioral contracts or individually developed behavior management plans.
- 4) Classroom management techniques.
- 5) Community service.
- 6) Confiscation of a cell phone; a fee of \$10.00 may be charged for the return of the phone. SST is not liable for lost or stolen cell phones.
- 7) Confiscation of electronic devices used during the instructional day.
- 8) Cooling-off time or "time-out."
- 9) Counseling by teachers, counselors, or administrative personnel.
- 10) Demerits.
- 11) Grade reductions for academic dishonesty.
- 12) In-School Suspension and core values reflection form.
- 13) Loss of computer privileges/Internet access.
- 14) Lunch Detention and core values reflection form.
- 15) Office redirection and core values reflection form.
- 16) Parent, student, and teacher meeting.
- 17) Parent/guardian conference with teacher or Campus Principal.
- 18) Parent/guardian contracts to restrict home privileges.
- 19) Parent/guardian observations in students' classes.
- 20) Peer mediation.
- 21) Placement in another appropriate classroom.
- 22) Refusing to allow a lawful student search or interfering with SST's attempt to conduct a search of any person or property.
- 23) Restitution/restoration, if applicable
- 24) Saturday Detention (3rd-12th grade) and core values reflection form.
- 25) School-assessed and school-administered probation.

- 26) Seating changes within the classroom.
- 27) SEL strategies / restorative discipline strategies.
- 28) Teacher redirection and core values reflection form.
- 29) Temporary confiscation of items that disrupt the educational process.
- 30) Verbal correction.
- 31) Voluntary peer mediation/family management classes/ community service.
- 32) Withdrawal of participation in school events such as field trips, assemblies, etc.
- 33) Withdrawal of privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities and eligibility for seeking and holding honorary offices, and/or membership in school-sponsored clubs or organizations.

Level II Offenses

- 1) Abusing a student's own prescription drug, giving a prescription drug to another student, or possessing or being under the influence of another person's prescription drug while on SST property or at a school-related event.
- 2) Abusing over-the-counter drugs.
- 3) Academic dishonesty.
- 4) Assault of another person that is not classified as a Level III Offense.
- 5) Being a member of, pledging to become a member of, joining, or soliciting another person to join, or pledge to become a member of a public-school fraternity, sorority, or gang, as defined in Texas Education Code § 37.121.
- 6) Bypassing of Internet blocks on school computers or networks to enter unapproved sites.
- 7) Committing extortion, coercion, or blackmail (obtaining money or another object of value from an unwilling person).
- 8) Committing or assisting in a robbery or theft, even if it does not constitute a felony according to the Texas Penal Code.
- 9) Computer system violations, including violations of SST's Acceptable Use policy. This

includes, but is not limited to, conduct involving:

- a. Attempting to access or circumvent passwords or other security-related information of SST or its students or employees, and uploading or creating computer viruses, including such conduct off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - b. Attempting to alter, destroy, or disable SST's computer equipment and/or data, the data of others, or other networks connected to the SST system, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption of the educational environment.
  - c. Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten SST students, employees, or volunteers, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - d. Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - e. Using e-mail or Web sites at school to encourage illegal behavior or threaten school safety.
- 10) Conduct endangering the health and/or safety of others.
  - 11) Creating or participating in the creation of a "hit list," meaning a list of people targeted to be harmed using a firearm, knife, or other objects to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.
  - 12) Defacing or damaging SST property, including textbooks, lockers, furniture, and/or other equipment, in an amount equal to or greater than \$50.
  - 13) Disobeying School rules regarding student transportation.
  - 14) Engaging in bullying and/or cyberbullying as defined by the Student Handbook and/or Board policy.
  - 15) Engaging in conduct is punishable by expulsion when the conduct occurs off SST property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event, and the conduct creates a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
  - 16) Engaging in conduct similar to prohibited discrimination or harassment, even if that conduct does not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or SST policy,
  - 17) Engaging in conduct that constitutes dating violence, including intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship.
  - 18) Engaging in conduct that constitutes discrimination or harassment, including conduct motivated by race, color, religion, national origin, sex or gender, disability, or age, and directed toward another student or an SST employee.
  - 19) Engaging in conduct that constitutes sexual harassment or sexual abuse, whether by word, gesture, or any other conduct directed toward another student and/or an SST employee or volunteer.
  - 20) Engaging in gang-related activity of any kind or nature.
  - 21) Engaging in inappropriate or indecent exposure of private body parts.
  - 22) Engaging in offensive conduct of a sexual nature (verbal or physical).
  - 23) Engaging in online impersonation. This occurs when a person sends an electronic mail, instant message, text message, or similar communication that references a name, domain address, phone number, or other items of identifying information belonging to any person (i) without obtaining the other



- person's consent and (ii) with the intent to cause the recipient of the communication to reasonably believe that the other person authorized or transmitted the communication.
- 24) Engaging in verbal or physical harassment or threat thereof, taunting, hazing, intimidating, or any other action whereby one or more individuals deliberately single out another student for cruel, mean, and/or humiliating treatment.
  - 25) Failure to comply with SST's medication policies
  - 26) Failure to comply with the conditions of an In-School Suspension placement and/or missing more than one scheduled In-School Suspension assignment without a confirmed excuse.
  - 27) False accusation of the commission of a misdemeanor or felony.
  - 28) Falsification and/or forgery of School records.
  - 29) Fighting or arranging a fight. Students involved in fighting will, at a minimum, be suspended for the remainder of the day.
  - 30) Flagrant violations of the SST Acceptable Use Policy or other actions that corrupt the educational value of the school's computers or Internet service.
  - 31) Gambling or playing cards, including but not limited to card playing, dice shooting, and/or sports pools, involves the transfer of money or other personal belongings or assistance from one person to another. Possessing, trading, or playing with any cards at school or during school-related activities is prohibited. Playing cards will be confiscated.
  - 32) Hazing, meaning an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off school property, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization, if the act involves situations outlined in Texas Education Code § 37.151.
  - 33) Inappropriate public displays of affection, including kissing, hugging, physical conduct, etc.
  - 34) Intentionally providing incorrect information to School officials.
  - 35) Interference with school activities or discipline.
  - 36) Involvement in a felony offense not listed in Title 5, Texas Penal Code, and SST is notified by the police.
  - 37) Knife possession.
  - 38) Loitering (failing to leave campus within 30 minutes of dismissal, unless involved in an activity under supervision by SST) 10 or more times in a school year.
  - 39) Misdemeanor vandalism and/or criminal mischief.
  - 40) Persistent tardiness (tardy, without excuse, 15 or more times within a semester.
  - 41) Possessing a razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person.
  - 42) Possessing a stun gun, mace, or pepper spray.
  - 43) Possessing ammunition.
  - 44) Possessing, distributing, exhibiting, and/or transmitting obscene materials, including pornography.
  - 45) Possessing, viewing, or distributing publications, pictures, text messages, emails, or other material of a sexual nature in any media format.
  - 46) Possession of drug paraphernalia.
  - 47) Possession of stolen property.
  - 48) Possession or use of fireworks or other explosive devices.
  - 49) Profanity/obscene gestures toward personnel.
  - 50) Refusal to follow directions from a school employee or administrator.
  - 51) Repetitive Level I Offenses (two or more Level I Offenses within a semester).
  - 52) Secret society activity.

- 53) Sending or distributing sexually suggestive, nude, or partially nude photographs and/or sexually explicit messages via text message, social media applications, or other methods of electronic delivery while at school or while away from school if the conduct creates a substantial disruption to the school environment.
- 54) Sending or posting abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, threatening, harassing, defamatory or illegal electronic messages, sexting.
- 55) Sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually-oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation, or illegal, including conduct occurring off school property if the conduct causes a substantial disruption to the educational environment.
- 56) Skipping class or leaving a school campus, classroom, or event without written permission from an administrator.
- 57) Threats against School personnel and/or other students.
- 58) Using a cell phone or other electronic device to make an audio and/or video recording of another person in a restroom, locker room, changing room, or other similar area.
- 59) Using the Internet or other electronic communications to threaten students or employees, or cause disruption to the school program.
- 60) Verbal or written abuse (e.g., name-calling, racial or ethnic slurs, or derogatory statements that may disrupt the school environment.
- 61) Violating the School's examination procedures.
- 62) Violating the terms of a student behavior contract.
- 63) Willful destruction of SST property, personal property belonging to another, and/or vandalism of property.

*Disciplinary Consequences: (may not be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)*

- 1) Any applicable Level I Disciplinary Consequence.
- 2) Out-of-school suspension for up to four days.
- 3) Expulsion upon Discipline Committee recommendation.

Level III Offenses

- 1) Aggravated assault.
- 2) Aggravated kidnapping.
- 3) Aggravated robbery.
- 4) Aggravated sexual assault
- 5) Any discretionary or mandatory expulsion violation under Texas Education Code, Chapter 37.
- 6) Any offense listed in Sections 37.006(a) or 37.007(a), (b), and/or (d) of the Texas Education Code, no matter when or where the offense takes place.
- 7) Arson.
- 8) Assault.
- 9) Attempts to copy and/or modify another student's work files stored on a computer.
- 10) Burglary of a motor vehicle on campus.
- 11) Capital murder.
- 12) Commission of a felony offense listed under Title 5, Texas Penal Code.
- 13) Committing the following offenses on school property or within 300 feet of school property as measured from any point on SST's real property boundary line or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off SST property:
  - a. Behaving in a manner that contains the elements of an offense relating to abusable volatile chemicals.
  - b. Behaving in a manner that contains the elements of the offense of public lewdness or indecent exposure.
  - c. Committing an assault under Texas Penal Code 22.01(a)(1).
  - d. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony.

- e. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person an alcoholic beverage; committing a serious act or offense while under the influence of alcohol; or possessing, using, or being under the influence of alcohol if the conduct is not punishable as a felony offense.
  - f. Selling, giving, or delivering to another person, or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, or a dangerous drug in an amount not constituting a felony offense.
- 14) Conduct is punishable as a felony.
  - 15) Criminal attempt to commit murder or capital murder.
  - 16) Criminally negligent homicide.
  - 17) Death threats.
  - 18) Deliberate destruction or tampering with SST's computer data or networks.
  - 19) Engaging in bullying and/or cyberbullying that encourages a student to commit or attempt to commit suicide.
  - 20) Engaging in conduct is punishable as a felony listed under Title 5 of the Texas Penal Code when the conduct occurs off SST property and not at a school-sponsored or school-related event and:
    - a. The student receives deferred prosecution;
    - b. A court or jury finds that the student has engaged in delinquent conduct; or
    - c. The principal or designee has a reasonable belief that the student engaged in the conduct.
  - 21) Engaging in conduct relating to a false alarm or report (including a bomb threat) or a terroristic threat involving a public school.
  - 22) Engaging in conduct relating to harassment of an SST employee, including but not limited to:
    - a. Initiating communication and in the course of the communication making a comment, request, suggestion, or proposal that is obscene;
    - b. Threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person, or to commit a felony against the employee, a member of the employee's family or household, or the employee's property;
    - c. Conveying, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the employee receiving the report, a false report, which is known by the scholar to be false, that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury; or
    - d. Sending repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another.
  - 23) Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of retaliation against any SST employee or volunteer, whether on or off school property.
  - 24) Engaging in the electronic transmission of sexually explicit visual material that:
    - a. Depicts any person engaging in sexual conduct; or
    - b. Depicts a person's intimate parts exposed; or
    - c. Depicts the covered genitals of a male that are in a discernibly turgid state; and
    - d. Is not sent at the request of or with the express consent of the recipient.
  - 25) Felony criminal mischief against school property, another student, or school staff.
  - 26) Inappropriate sexual conduct.
  - 27) Inciting violence against a student through group bullying.
  - 28) Indecency with a child.
  - 29) Issuing a false fire alarm.
  - 30) Manslaughter.
  - 31) Murder.
  - 32) Persistent Level I offenses (four or more Level I Offenses within a semester).

- 33) Persistent Level II offenses (two or more Level II Offenses within a semester).
- 34) Possessing, selling, and/or distributing “look-alike” drugs or items attempted to be passed off as drugs and/or contraband.
- 35) Possessing, selling, and/or distributing pieces of marijuana in less than a usable amount.
- 36) Possessing, selling, distributing, and/or being under the influence of alcohol.
- 37) Possessing, selling, distributing, and/or being under the influence of inhalants.
- 38) Possessing, selling, distributing, and/or being under the influence of a simulated controlled substance.
- 39) Possession of any prohibited items, including but not limited to:
  - a. A “look-alike” weapon (includes but is not limited to BB guns, CO2 guns, air pistols or rifles, pellet guns, or any other device designed to appear to be a firearm or other weapon);
  - b. A laser pointer for other than an approved use;
  - c. A pocketknife or any other small knife with a blade less than 1.5” in length;
  - d. A razor, box cutter, chain, or any other object used in a way that threatens or inflicts bodily injury to another person;
  - e. A stun gun;
  - f. Ammunition;
  - g. An air gun or BB gun;
  - h. Fireworks of any kind, smoke or stink bombs, or any other pyrotechnic or explosive device;
  - i. Matches or a lighter;
  - j. Tobacco products, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and any component, part, or accessory for an e-cigarette device or accessory to a vapor product; or
  - k. Any articles not generally considered to be weapons, including school

supplies, when the principal or designee determines that a danger exists.

- 40) Public lewdness.
- 41) Releasing or threatening to release intimate visual material of a minor or a student who is 18 years of age or older without the student's consent. “Intimate visual material” means visual material that depicts a person: (a) with the person’s intimate parts exposed, or (b) engaged in sexual conduct.
- 42) Required registration as a sex offender.
- 43) Selling, giving, and/or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, cannabidiol (CBD) substance, a dangerous drug, or an alcoholic beverage.
- 44) Setting or attempting to set fire on school property, not arson.
- 45) Sexual abuse of a young child or children.
- 46) Sexual assault.
- 47) Suspicious drug/alcohol involvement.
- 48) Targeting another individual for bodily harm.
- 49) Use of the School's Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief and/or deliberate attempts to bypass installed computer security software.
- 50) Use, exhibition, or possession of a hand instrument designed to cut or stab another by being thrown, including but not limited to a dagger; dirk; stiletto; poniard; bowie knife; sword; spear; switchblade; an assisted-open knife (regardless of length); or as otherwise defined by Board policy.
- 51) Use, exhibition, or possession of a knife with a blade more than 1.5” in length, including but not limited to switchblade knives or any other knife not defined as a location-restricted knife.
- 52) Use, exhibition, transfer, and/or possession of a firearm, handgun, improvised explosive device, location restricted knife, club, and/or any other prohibited weapon or harmful object (as determined by SST).
- 53) Use, sale, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of marijuana, controlled

substances or illicit drugs, or alcoholic beverages on School premises or during any School activity, regardless of location.

- 54) Violent gang activity.
- 55) Possessing, selling, distributing, and/or using tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and/or any other device that uses a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver vapor that may include nicotine or a similar substance to the individual inhaling from the device, or any substance used to fill or refill the device, while on school property or at school-related events.

*Disciplinary Consequences: (may not be followed in order, and progressive disciplinary measures are not required)*

- 1) Any applicable Level I or Level II Disciplinary Consequence
- 2) Out-of-school suspension for five-ten days.
- 3) Expulsion.

### **Details on Code of Conduct Consequences**

#### Detention

Detention may be held on each day during school for up to eight hours. Students who serve detention must make arrangements to be picked up from school. Parents may request in person a delay of the detention; no phone calls or notes will be accepted. There are two types of detention: school and Saturday.

#### School Detention

- 1) Students will bring materials to work on-homework or books to read from the library; only school-acceptable materials are permitted. Classroom materials may be sent by a teacher.
- 2) Students will not be permitted to go to their lockers during detention; all materials must be brought to the detention room when reporting.
- 3) Sleeping is not permitted.
- 4) Do not address staff, teachers, or other students.
- 5) Students should use the restroom before detention starts and be prepared to stay in the

detention room for the entire length of time, except during an emergency.

- 6) Students will follow all rules concerning classroom behavior. Failure to comply will mean suspension from school.
- 7) Any student assigned to the detention room must stay the entire time. Students refusing to sit their time will be suspended from school.
- 8) Detention time will be assigned within 48 hours of the Assistant Principal meeting with the student. This allows the parent time to make transportation arrangements.
- 9) Students placed on after school detention will not be permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities that day.
- 10) If a student arrives to the detention room five minutes after the designated time without a confirmed excuse, the student will not be allowed into the detention room, and the miss will be considered unexcused. This will result in one day out of school suspension, and the student will be required to make up the detention.
- 11) If a student does not turn in a Parent Notification Form on the due date without a confirmed excuse, he or she will have another after-school detention.

### Saturday Detention

Saturday detention serves as an alternative to in-school suspension for violation of school rules and prevents students from losing instruction time. During the hours of detention, students work to increase academic skills, engage in activities to improve self-concept, and address discipline issues.

Students who attend Saturday detention may receive academic assistance and may be given the opportunity to do homework, make-up or remedial work under the supervision of a teacher. Each student may be given a behavior modification packet which may help students to understand why their misbehavior through introspection. This counseling will guide students toward acceptable behavior alternatives through goal-setting exercises. Students may also do some physical exercises during detention.

Written notification of a Saturday detention is sent home with the student. This notification lists the cause for and date of the detention. The only acceptable excuse for not attending a Saturday detention is a verified doctor's note of illness of the student or an emergency excuse acceptable to the campus.

## Rules

- 1) Detention will be held at the campus designated time and on school grounds. Parents are expected to provide transportation to and from detention, and students are required to wear their school uniforms. Should a student arrive late for a Saturday Detention without a note for an "emergency excuse," he or she will be assigned the next scheduled Saturday Detention. A second late arrival to an assigned Saturday Detention will result in in-of-school suspension beginning on the following Monday, plus attendance at the next Saturday Detention.
- 2) If an emergency arises and the student cannot attend, the parent must contact the Assistant Principal. If the reasons are acceptable, the detention will be rescheduled. If a student does not participate in a scheduled Saturday detention without any confirmed excuse, the student will receive a one-day out-of-school suspension plus attendance at the next scheduled Saturday detention.
- 3) Students left at the school after 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays will be unsupervised; SST is not responsible for students who are not picked up after Saturday school is dismissed.
- 4) Students may be asked to bring appropriate materials with which to work.
- 5) No radios, food, beverage, candy, comic books, etc., are allowed during Saturday detention.
- 6) Students will be expected to work the entire time while at Saturday detention. Any student not working will be removed from the detention and referred to the Assistant Principal. Any student acting disruptively will be removed from Saturday Detention and be referred to the Assistant Principal for further disciplinary action. Parents will be notified regarding the infraction immediately.
- 7) No student is permitted to sleep during Saturday Detention.
- 8) If a student does not turn in the Parent Notification form on the due date without any confirmed excuse, he or she will have another Saturday Detention.

Failure to follow these guidelines may result in one day of out-of-school suspension, plus attendance at the next scheduled Saturday Detention or any other Level I offense.

### Suspension

The school utilizes two kinds of suspension: in-school suspension and out-of-school suspension.

#### In-School Suspension

The following rules and regulations apply to all students assigned to in-school suspension.

- 1) Students must report to the detention room by the time specified by the campus. Students arriving five minutes after the specified time will be counted as absent. The in-school suspension will run from the specified time until dismissal time.
- 2) Students will bring materials from each class/teacher to complete. Students are responsible for obtaining assignments from each teacher.
- 3) Students must sign in when reporting to the detention room, and sign out when the suspension period is over. Students may not leave the detention room without permission from an Assistant Principal.
- 4) Students are to keep the detention room clean.
- 5) No talking or conversations. Students must be seated at all times. No physical contact of any kind between students is allowed.
- 6) Students will not be permitted to go to their lockers. All materials must be brought to the room when reporting.
- 7) Students will not be permitted to go to lunch. They will have their lunch in a detention room. Students may not bring food or drink into the detention room other than lunchtime.
- 8) No disruptive behavior will be allowed.
- 9) Unexcused absences from suspension will be referred to the Assistant Principal.

- 10) No visits by parents, relatives, or other students are allowed.
- 11) Sleeping is prohibited.
- 12) Transportation to the in-school suspension site is the responsibility of the student and his or her parents. Transportation arrangements must be made prior to arrival at the site. Telephones are not available for student use.
- 13) Students must abide by the provisions of this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct during their suspension period.
- 14) A student who misses a scheduled in-school suspension without a confirmed excuse will be assigned a one-day out-of-school suspension. The missed in-school suspension period will be rescheduled.

Failure to follow these guidelines will be reported to the Assistant Principal for further action, which may include up to three days of out-of-school suspension or any other Level I consequence.

#### Out of School Suspension

In deciding whether to assign out-of-school suspension, the deciding administrator may take into consideration factors including self-defense, prior discipline history, the student's status as a student in foster care or who is homeless, intent or lack of intent and other appropriate or mitigating factors determined by the administrator.

In addition to the Code of Conduct violations listed above that may result in suspension, the principal or designee has the authority to suspend a student for a period of up to five school days for any of the following additional reasons:

- 1) The need to further investigate an incident,
- 2) A recommendation to expel the student or
- 3) An emergency constituting endangerment to health or safety.

#### Special Rules for Suspensions Involving Homeless Students

SST may not place a student who is homeless in out-of-school suspension unless the student engages in the following conduct while on school property or while attending a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off of school property:

- 1) Unlawful possession of a firearm or other weapon;
- 2) Assault, sexual assault, aggravated assault, or aggravated sexual assault; or
- 3) Selling, giving, or delivering to another person or possessing, using, or being under the influence of any amount of marijuana or a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, or an alcoholic beverage.

#### Emergency Placement

If the Principal or designee reasonably believes a student's behavior is so unruly, disruptive, or abusive that it seriously interferes with a teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students in a class, with the ability of a student's classmates to learn, or with the operation of SST or a school-sponsored activity, the principal or designee may order the immediate removal of the student. The principal or designee may impose an immediate suspension if he or she reasonably believes such action is necessary to protect persons or property from imminent harm. At the time of such an emergency removal, the student will be given verbal notice of the reason for the action, and appropriate hearings will be scheduled within a reasonable time after the emergency removal.

#### Removal from School Transportation

A student being transported by SST transportation to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity may be removed from a school vehicle for conduct violating SST's established standards for conduct in a school vehicle.

#### **Disciplinary Process**

The principal will designate one Assistant Principal as the campus Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will form a Safe and Supportive School Team (SSSP) to review decisions regarding student discipline. The SSSP Committee may review all offenses under the Code of Conduct and identify positive behavior interventions and supports that can be used to redirect the misbehavior. The principal will review the SSSP Committee's recommendation and issue an appropriate consequence.

#### **Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals**

All students are entitled to conferences, hearings, and/or appeals of disciplinary matters as provided by state and federal law and school policy.



evidence;

Process for Suspensions Lasting Under Five Days

Prior to suspending a student for under five days, the Principal or designee must attempt to hold an informal conference with the student to

- 1) Notify the student of the accusations against him/her,
- 2) Allow the student to relate his or her version of the incident, and
- 3) Determine whether the student's conduct warrants suspension.

If the Principal or designee determines the student's conduct warrants suspension during the school day, the principal or designee will make a reasonable effort to notify the student's parent(s) that the student has been suspended before the student is sent home. The principal or designee will notify a suspended student's parents of the period of suspension, the grounds for the suspension, and the time and place for an opportunity to confer with the principal.

A student shall receive credit for work missed during the period of suspension if the student makes up work missed during the period of suspension within the same number of school days the student was absent on suspension.

Process for Out-of-School Suspensions Over Five Days or More (Extended Suspension) and Expulsion

Notice

When the Safe and Supportive School Team (SSSP) and/or the principal determine that a student's conduct warrants suspension for five days or more (an "extended suspension") or expulsion, but prior to taking any expulsion action, the principal or designee will provide the student's parents with written notice of

- 1) The reasons for the proposed disciplinary action; and
- 2) The date and location for a hearing before the principal, within five school days from the date of the disciplinary action.

The notice shall further state that, at the hearing, the student:

- 1) May be present;
- 2) Shall have an opportunity to present evidence;
- 3) Shall be apprised and informed of the school's

4) Maybe accompanied by his or her parent(s), and

5) Maybe represented by an

attorney. Hearing Before Principal

SST shall make a good faith effort to inform the student and the student's parent(s) of the time and place for the hearing, and the school shall hold the hearing regardless of whether the student, the student's parent(s) or another adult representing the student attends. The principal or designee may audio record the hearing.

Within the later of 48 hours or two school days following the hearing, the principal or designee will notify the student and the student's parent(s) in writing of his or her decision. The decision shall specify:

- 1) The length of the suspension or expulsion, if any;
- 2) When the expulsion is not permanent, the procedures for re-admittance at the end of the removal; and
- 3) The right to appeal the principal's decision to the Regional Executive Director.

The notice shall also state that failure to timely request such a hearing constitutes a waiver of further rights in the matter and that disciplinary consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal.

#### Appeal to the Regional Executive Director

The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the extended suspension or expulsion decision to the Regional Executive Director by notifying the principal in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the principal's decision. The Regional Executive Director will review the audio or transcribed record from the hearing before the principal and notify the student and his or her parents of the appeal decision, in writing, within ten calendar days of the date of the appeal.

#### Appeal to the Board of Directors

The student or his or her parent(s) may appeal the extended suspension or expulsion decision to the Board of Directors by notifying the Regional Executive Director in writing within seven calendar days of the date of receipt of the Appeal Decision.

The student and/or his or her parent(s) will be informed of the date, time, and location of the meeting in which the disciplinary consequence will be reviewed. The Board of Directors will review the disciplinary administrative record and any audio recording or transcription/minutes of any hearings or conferences before the principal or designee at a regular or specially called meeting in closed session as permitted by the Texas Open Meetings Act. The appeal shall be limited to the issues and documents considered during the disciplinary consequence, except that if the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the expulsion record, the administration shall provide the student or parent(s) notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the Board of Directors' meeting.

The Board of Directors may, but is not required to, allow an opportunity for the student or parent(s) and the administration to each make a presentation and provide a rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will consider the appeal and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the disciplinary decision.

The Board of Directors will communicate its decision if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors' meeting, the principal or designee's decision with respect to the disciplinary action appeal shall be upheld. The Board of Directors may not delegate its authority to issue a decision, and any decision by the Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed.

As stated above, disciplinary consequences will not be deferred pending the outcome of an appeal of an extended suspension or expulsion to the Board of Directors.

#### No Credit Earned

Except when required by law, students will not earn academic credit during a period of expulsion.

#### Placement of Students with Disabilities

All disciplinary actions regarding students with disabilities shall be conducted in accordance with the most current federal and state laws.

A student with a disability shall not be removed from his or her current placement for disciplinary reasons

and/or pending appeal to the Board of Directors for more than ten days without action by the student's admission, review, and dismissal committee to determine appropriate services in the interim and otherwise in accordance with applicable law. If a special education due process appeal to a TEA special education hearing officer is made, the student with a disability shall remain in the then current education setting in place at the time such appeal is noticed to SST, unless SST and the student's parent(s) agree otherwise.

If a student's IEP includes a behavior improvement plan or behavioral intervention plan, the student's ARD committee shall review the plan at least annually and more frequently if appropriate to address:

1. Changes in a student's circumstances that may impact the student's behavior, such as:
  - a. Placement of the student in a different educational setting;
  - b. An increase or persistence in disciplinary actions taken regarding the student for similar types of behavioral incidents;
  - c. A pattern of unexcused absences; or
  - d. An unauthorized unsupervised departure from an educational setting; or
2. The safety of the student or others.

#### **Gun-Free Schools Act**

In accordance with the Gun-Free Schools Act, SST shall expel, from the student's regular program for a period of one year, any student who is determined to have brought a firearm, as defined by federal law, to school. The principal may modify the term of expulsion for a student or assess another comparable penalty that results in the student's expulsion from the regular school program on a case-by-case basis.

For the purposes of this law, "firearm" means:

- 1) Any weapon - including a starter gun - which will, or is designed to, or which may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive from the frame or receiver of any such weapon;
- 2) Any firearm muffler or firearm silencer;

3) Any destructive device. “Destructive device” means any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas bomb, grenade, rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces, missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than 1/4 ounce, a device similar to any of the preceding described devices. It also means any type of weapon - other than a shotgun shell or a shotgun that is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes - by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than 1/2 inch in diameter; and any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into a destructive device as described, and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

**Positive Behavior Award System**

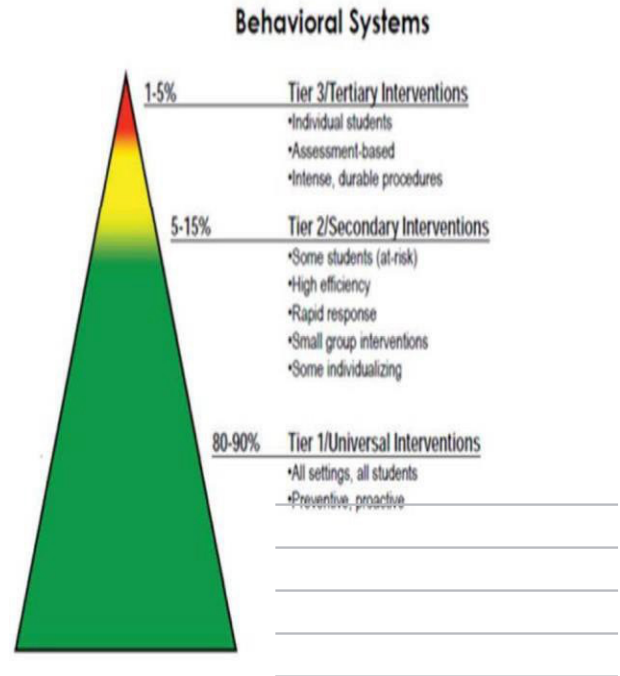
SST has adopted a system to reward positive behavior that is tied to Character Education. Each school will determine five-character traits of its own. Teachers may reward each behavior with “SST Bucks” that can be exchanged with rewards at the school store such as t-shirts, school or PE uniforms, school materials, free-dress day, field trips, or a free pass to the extracurricular event. The store procedure will be adopted by the School Principal.

**Multi-Tiered Systems of Support**

SST strives to give all of our students a quality education. Our staff will foster a positive student-centered learning environment where each student receives the behavioral support needed to be successful. Once the student enrolls, he or she is automatically considered a “Tier 1” student, which means he or she will receive quality, research-based classroom management. During the first marking period, the teacher will identify students who show behavior difficulty. The teacher will provide differentiated classroom techniques for struggling students and monitor students’ progress. Specifically, the teacher may color code the learners based on data such as but not limited to: written warnings, student discipline referrals, parent requests, medical information, attendance/ tardy record, informal/formal observations, et cetera and so forth.

Students may also be placed in a tier by the request of the parent, teacher, or administrator.

This is a support process to help the student to become successful. We do not want the student to internalize any negative messages.



**Glossary**

The glossary provides legal definitions and locally established definitions and is intended to assist in understanding terms related to the Student Code of Conduct.

**Abuse** is improper or excessive use.

**Abusable Volatile Chemical Offense**, as defined by Health and Safety Code § 485.001 and 485.031. No student shall inhale, ingest, apply, use, or possess an abusable volatile chemical with intent to inhale, ingest, apply or use any of these in a manner:

1. Contrary to the directions for use, cautions, or warnings appearing on a label of a container of the chemical; and
2. Designed to affect the central nervous system, create or induce a condition of intoxication, hallucination, or elation, or change, distort, or disturb the person’s eyesight, thinking process, balance, or coordination.

No student shall knowingly deliver to a person younger than 18 an abusable volatile chemical. Health and Safety Code § 485.032

No student shall knowingly use or possess with intent to use inhalant paraphernalia to inhale, ingest, or otherwise introduce into the human body an abusable volatile chemical. No student shall knowingly deliver, sell, or possess with intent to deliver or sell inhalant paraphernalia knowing that that person who receives it intends to use it to inhale, ingest, apply, use, or otherwise introduce into the human body an abusable volatile chemical. Health and Safety Code § 485.033

**Armor-piercing ammunition** is handgun ammunition used principally in pistols and revolvers and that is designed primarily for the purpose of penetrating metal or body armor.

**Arson** is defined by Texas Penal Code § 28.02 and occurs when a person starts a fire, regardless of whether the fire continues after ignition, or causes an explosion with intent to destroy or damage:

- Any vegetation, fence, or structure on open-space land; or
- Any building, habitation, or vehicle:
  - Knowing that it is within the limits of an incorporated city or town,
  - Knowing that it is insured against damage or destruction,
  - Knowing that it is subject to a mortgage or other security interest,
  - Knowing that it is located on property belonging to another,
  - Knowing that it is located within property belonging to another, or
  - When the person starting the fire is reckless about whether the burning or explosion will endanger the life of some individual or the safety of the property of another.

Arson also occurs when a person:

- Recklessly starts a fire or causes an explosion while manufacturing or attempting to manufacture a controlled substance and the fire or explosion damages any building, habitation, or vehicle; or

- Intentionally starts a fire or causes an explosion and in so doing recklessly damages or destroys a building belonging to another, or recklessly causes another person to suffer bodily injury or death.

**Assault** is defined in part by Texas Penal Code § 22.01 as intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury to another.

**Bullying** is defined as a single significant act or a pattern of acts by one or more students directed at another student that exploits an imbalance of power and involves engaging in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that (1) has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student, damaging a student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property; (2) is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student; (3) materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or the school; or (4) infringes on the rights of the victim at school. Bullying also includes "cyberbullying," which means bullying that is done through the use of any electronic communication device including a cellular telephone or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Bullying conduct includes conduct (1) that occurs on or is delivered to SST property or to the site of a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property; (2) that occurs on a publicly or privately owned school bus or vehicle being used for transportation of students to or from school or a school-sponsored or school-related activity; and (3) cyberbullying that occurs off SST property or outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity if the cyberbullying (i) interferes with a student's educational opportunities or (ii) substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a classroom, SST, or a school-sponsored or school-related activity.

**Breach of computer security** includes knowingly accessing a computer, computer network, or computer system without the effective consent of the owner as defined in Texas Penal Code 33.02, if the conduct involves accessing a computer, computer

network, or computer system owned by or operated on behalf of a public school; and the student knowingly alters, damages, or deletes school property or information; or commits a breach of any other computer, computer network, or computer system.

**Chemical dispensing device** is a device designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of dispensing a substance capable of causing an adverse psychological or physiological effect on a human being.

**Club** is an instrument specially designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury or death, including but not limited to a blackjack, nightstick, mace, and tomahawk.

**Controlled substances or dangerous drugs** include but are not limited to marijuana; any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, barbiturate; anabolic steroid; or prescription medicine provided to any person other than the person for whom the prescription was written. The term also includes all controlled substances listed in Chapters 481 and 483 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

**Criminal street gang** means three or more persons having a common identifying sign or symbol or an identifiable leadership who continuously or regularly associate in the commission of criminal activities.

**Dating violence** is the intentional use of physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse by a person to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control another person with whom the student has or has had a dating relationship, as defined by Texas Family Code § 71.0021.

**Deadly conduct** occurs when a person recklessly engages in conduct that places another in imminent danger of serious bodily injury, and includes, but is not limited to, knowingly discharging a firearm in the direction of an individual, habitation, building, or vehicle.

**Deferred adjudication** is an alternative to seeking a conviction in court that may be offered to a juvenile for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Deferred prosecution** may be offered to a juvenile as an alternative to seeking a conviction in court for delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

**Delinquent conduct** is conduct that:

- Violates either state or federal law, other than a traffic offense, and is punishable by imprisonment or confinement in jail;
- Violates a lawful order of a court under circumstances that would constitute contempt of that court in a justice or municipal court, or a county court for conduct punishable only by a fine;
- Constitutes an intoxication and alcoholic beverage offense under Chapter 49 of the Texas Penal Code; or
- Violates Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code § 106.041 relating to driving under the influence of alcohol by a minor (third or subsequent offense).

**Discretionary** means that something is left to or regulated by a local decision maker.

**E-Cigarette or electronic cigarette** means an electronic cigarette or any other device that simulates smoking by using a mechanical heating element, battery, electronic circuit to deliver nicotine or other substances to the individual inhaling from the device, or a consumable liquid solution or other material aerosolized or vaporized during the use of an electronic cigarette or other similar device. The term also includes any device that is manufactured, distributed, or sold as an e-cigarette, e-cigar, or e-pipe; a dab pen; a vapor product; or any other similar device under another product name or description. Also included is any component, part, or accessory for the device, regardless of whether the component, part, or accessory is sold separately from the device. The term does not include a prescription medical device unrelated to the cessation of smoking.

**Explosive weapon** is any explosive or incendiary bomb, grenade, rocket, or mine that is designed, made, or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious bodily injury, death, or substantial property damage, or for the principal purpose of causing such a loud report as to cause undue public alarm or terror, and includes a device designed, made, or adapted for delivery or shooting an explosive weapon.

**False Alarm or Report** occurs when a person knowingly initiates, communicates, or circulates a report of a present, past, or future bombing, fire, offense, or other emergency that he or she knows is false or baseless and that would ordinarily:

- Cause action by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place a person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury; or
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation of a building, room, or place of assembly.

**False alarm to induce emergency response** occurs when a person makes a report of a criminal offense or an emergency or causes a report of a criminal offense or an emergency to be made to a peace officer, law enforcement agency, 9-1-1 service, official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies, or any other governmental employee or contractor who is authorized to receive reports of a criminal offense or emergency when (1) the person knows the report is false and (2) the report causes an emergency response from a law enforcement agency or other emergency responder.

**Firearm** is defined by federal law (18 U.S.C. § 921(a)) as:

- Any weapon (including a starter gun) that will, is designed to, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive;
- The frame or receiver of any such weapon;
- Any firearm muffler or firearm weapon; or
- Any destructive device, such as any explosive, incendiary or poison gas bomb, or grenade.

Such term does not include an antique firearm.

**Firearm silencer or suppressor** means any device designed, made, or adapted to muffle the report of a firearm.

**Graffiti** means making marks with paint, an indelible pen or marker, or an etching or engraving device on tangible property without the effective consent of the owner. The markings may include inscriptions, slogans, drawings, or paintings.

**Handgun** is defined by Texas Penal Code § 46.01 as any firearm that is designed, made, or adapted to be fired with one hand.

**Harassment** is:

- Conduct that meets the definition of harassment set in Board policy and/or the Handbook;

- Conduct that threatens to cause harm or bodily injury to another student, is sexually intimidating or obscene, causes physical damage to the property of another student, subjects another student to physical confinement or restraint, or maliciously and substantially harms another student's physical or emotional health or safety; or
- Conduct including the elements of (1) initiating a communication and in the course of the communication making a comment, request, suggest, or proposal that is obscene; (2) threatening, in a manner reasonably likely to alarm the person receiving the threat, to inflict bodily injury on the person or to commit a felony against the person, a member of the person's family or household, or the person's property; (3) conveying a false report that another person has suffered death or serious bodily injury; (4) causing the telephone of another to ring repeatedly or making repeated telephone communications anonymously or in a manner reasonably likely to harass, annoy, alarm abuse, torment, embarrass, or offend another; (5) making a telephone call and intentionally failing to hang up or disengage the connection; (6) knowingly permitting a telephone under the person's control to be used by another to engage in harassment; or (7) publishing on an Internet website, including a social media platform, repeated electronic communications in a manner reasonably likely to cause emotional distress, abuse, or torment to another person, unless the communications are made in connection with a matter of public concern.

**Hazing** is an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, that is directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization, if the act involves situations outlined in Texas Education Code § 37.151.

**Hit list** is a list of people targeted to be harmed, using a firearm, a knife, or any other object to be used with intent to cause bodily harm.

**Improvised explosive device** is defined by Texas Penal Code § 46.01 as a completed and operational bomb designed to cause serious bodily injury, death, or

substantial property damage that is fabricated in an improvised manner using nonmilitary components.

**Indecent Exposure** means exposing one's anus or genitals with intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person while being reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Intimate Visual Material** means visual material that depicts a person (a) with the person's intimate parts exposed; or (b) engaged in sexual conduct.

**Knuckles** means any instrument consisting of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance and designed or adapted for inflicting serious bodily injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles.

**Location-Restricted Knife** means a knife with a blade over five and one-half inches.

**Look-alike weapon** means an item that resembles a weapon but is not intended to be used to cause serious bodily injury.

**Machine gun** is any firearm that is capable of shooting more than two shots automatically, without manual reloading, by a single function of the trigger.

**Mandatory** means that something is obligatory or required because of an authority.

**Online Impersonation** occurs when a person, without obtaining the consent of another person and with the intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten any persons, uses the name or persona of another person to:

- Create a web page on a commercial social networking site or other Internet website; or
- Post or send one or more messages on or through a commercial social networking site or other Internet website, other than on or through an electronic mail program or message board program.

Online impersonation also occurs when a person sends an electronic mail, instant message, text message, or similar communication that reference a name, domain address, phone number, or other item of identifying information belonging to any person:

- Without obtaining the other person's consent;

- With the intent to cause a recipient of the communication to reasonably believe that the other person authorized or transmitted the communication; and
- With the intent to harm or defraud any person.

**Paraphernalia** are devices that can be used for inhaling, ingesting, injecting, or otherwise introducing a controlled substance into a human body. It also includes equipment, products, or materials used or intended for use in planting, propagating, cultivating, growing, harvesting, manufacturing, compounding, converting, producing, processing, preparing, testing, analyzing, packaging, repackaging, storing, containing, or concealing a controlled substance.

**Possession** means to have an item on one's person or in one's personal property, including but not limited to clothing, purse, or backpack; a private vehicle used for transportation to or from school or school-related activities, including, but not limited, to an automobile, truck, motorcycle, or bicycle; or any other school property used by the student, including, but not limited to, a locker or desk.

**Prohibited Weapon** means an explosive weapon; a machine gun; a short-barrel firearm; armor-piercing ammunition; a chemical dispensing device; a zip gun; a tire deflation device; or an improvised explosive device.

**Public school fraternity, sorority, secret society, or gang** means an organization composed wholly or in part of students that seeks to perpetuate itself by taking additional members from the students enrolled in school based on a decision of its membership rather than on the free choice of a qualified student.

**Public lewdness** occurs when a person knowingly engages in an act of sexual intercourse, deviate sexual intercourse, or sexual contact in a public place or, if not in a public place, is reckless about whether another is present who will be offended or alarmed by the act.

**Reasonable belief** is a determination made by the superintendent or designee using all available information, including the information furnished under Article 15.27 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

**Self-defense** is the use of force against another to the degree a person reasonably believes the force is immediately necessary to protect himself or herself.



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

**Switchblade Knife** is any knife with a blade that folds, closes, or retracts into the handle or sheath and that opens automatically by pressing a button or by the force of gravity or by the application of centrifugal force. The term does not include a knife that has a spring, detent, or other mechanism designed to create a bias toward closure and that requires exertion applied to the blade by hand, wrist, or arm to overcome the bias toward closure and open the knife.

**Terroristic threat** is a threat of violence to any person or property with intent to:

- Cause a reaction of any type by an official or volunteer agency organized to deal with emergencies;
- Place any person in fear of imminent serious bodily injury;
- Prevent or interrupt the occupation or use of a building; room, place of assembly, or place to which the public has access; place of employment or occupation; aircraft, automobile, or other form of conveyance; or other public place;
- Cause impairment or interruption of public communications, public transportation, public water, gas, or power supply or other public service;
- Place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of serious bodily injury; or
- Influence the conduct or activities of a branch or agency of the federal government, the state, or a political subdivision of the state, or a public charter school (including SST).

**Tire deflation device** means a device, including a caltrop or spike strip, that, when driven over, impedes or stops the movement of a wheeled vehicle by puncturing one or more of the vehicle's tires.

**Title 5 offenses** are those that involve injury to a person and include murder; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; trafficking in persons; unlawful transport; kidnapping; assault (on a public servant); aggravated assault; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; unlawful restraint; indecency with a child; injury to a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person; abandoning or endangering a child; deadly conduct; terroristic threat; aiding a person to commit suicide; harassment of a public servant; improper photography; smuggling persons; and tampering with a consumer product.

**Trespassing** means entering or remaining on the property of another (including SST) without effective consent of the owner, and the person (1) had notice that the entry was forbidden; or (2) received notice to depart but failed to do so. Trespassing may also include presence on SST campus if expelled or suspended.

**Under the influence** means lacking the normal use of mental or physical faculties. Impairment of a person's physical or mental faculties may be evidenced by a pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, the presence of physical symptoms of drug or alcohol use, or by admission. A student "under the influence" need not be legally intoxicated to trigger disciplinary action.

**Use** means voluntarily introducing into one's body, by any means, a prohibited substance.

**Vapor product** means electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or any other device that uses a mechanical heating element, battery, or electronic circuit to deliver vapor that may include nicotine to the individual inhaling from the device, or any substance used to fill or refill the device.

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

## SECTION V: FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

### SST Enrichment Programs

Participation in school activities and student engagement programs provides an opportunity for youth and peers to form a positive connection with the school, its faculty, and values that may be otherwise unavailable. Involving students in extracurricular activities may enhance their connectedness with school, which may lead to positive academic and psychosocial outcomes. School engagement also takes time away from risky opportunities, provides learning in constructive activities, and increases the possibility of establishing positive social networks.

Extracurricular activities are school-sponsored or non-school-sponsored, such as UIL and 4H. These activities may or may not be an extension of the classroom curriculum but must meet the stated criteria developed to meet the SST Philosophy and Mission Statement.

All extracurricular activities are centered on the goal of developing the character of each student involved. Each sponsor/coach orients students and parents about their particular activity. The sponsor/coach provides each participant with a permission slip and a participation agreement to be signed by both student and parent.

#### Clubs

After-school clubs are a great way to develop students in different areas. Depending on the club that is created, students can grow in the area of the club such as science, math, history, or the like. These after-school club ideas are sure to help students develop socially as well as help them learn to work as a team and move ideas forward which will serve them well throughout their lives.

Please refer to the SST Extracurricular Programs Guidebook for a comprehensive list of all major rules and regulations that clubs and club leaders are expected to abide by.

#### Athletics

The value of athletics in schools is significant and cannot be overlooked. It has a profound impact on

individuals, schools, and communities. Athletics is powerful because it can bridge gaps, bring people who otherwise might not interact together, and provide opportunities not available elsewhere. You will find lots of benefits of having an established and successful athletics program at SST. Please refer to the SST Extracurricular Programs Guidebook for more information.

*Meador, Derrick. (2020, February 11). The Increasingly Important Role of Athletics in Schools. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/important-role-of-athletics-in-schools-3194429>*

#### Student Mentoring Programs

Mentoring, in the center, ensures the young generation that they are not alone, gives them the confidence to deal with obstacles, empowers them in that matter. It is proven that this helps create a connection that has beneficial outcomes for young people.

Some of the mentoring programs that SST Schools offer:

- National Junior Honor Society (NJHS)
- National Honor Society (NHS)
- National Student Council (Nat Stu Co)
- HOSA

#### **SST Home Visit Program**

To ensure our students received the wrap-around support needed for their success, SST Public Schools launched its Home Visit Program nearly a decade ago. The program is designed to build unity and trust between families and SST staff, giving teachers and parents the insight into student development needed to provide students with educational support. Building a relationship is the main purpose of the Home Visit Program in our College, Career and Support Programs. Our staff focuses on a student's interests, needs, and his/her hopes, and dreams, as well as their academic and social progress and needs during a first visit. Also, we visit to inform parents and give them a big picture of their children that shows where the children are and where they should be academically and socially. According to research on teachers' perspectives on home visits;

- 84% said home visits positively affected their relationship with their parents
- 84% said home visits positively affected their relationship with the students
- 75% reported improvement in student's classroom behavior after home visits
- 76% reported improved student work habits as a result of home visits
- 78% reported improved student academic achievement as a result of home visits\*

\* Survey by Ranae Stetson, Elton Stetson, Becky Sinclair, & Karen Nix

### **SST Family Engagement Program**

Education is at its best when all stakeholders involved share a common vision and passion to see students thrive in and out of the classroom. Families, teachers, and school staff all play vital roles in ensuring excellence in education within the SST Public Schools system. SST believes creating partnerships between school, home, and community to increase student success is essential to the whole-child education approach. Parental involvement helps;

- motivate students to more positive behavior, and better academic performance
- decrease discipline problems, decrease parenting stress,
- increase social support, self-efficacy, child oral health practices, and healthy feeding practices in preschool and elementary levels.
- increase student attendance and parents to become a part of the school environment.
- parents become more involved and informed.

- Leung, Tsang, & Heung, 2015; Stetson, Stetson, Sinclair, & Nix, 2012

### **SST Parent Academy**

SST Parent Academy is an important initiative designed to strengthen school, home, and community partnerships that equip families with the necessary tools to be strong advocates at home and in their communities. Families have the opportunity to learn about various tools and skills they need in order to support their families and students on the road to college and beyond. Through a series of workshops and videos designated to refine specific

student support skillsets, SST Parent Academy participants will acquire knowledge to enhance their role as student advocates within the learning community. For more information, please contact your campus empowerment and enrichment coordinator.

### **Parent Activities**

Parent engagement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development, and health of children and adolescents. We believe parents play a significant role in supporting their children's education, guiding their children successfully through school processes, and advocating for their children and for the effectiveness of schools.

SST Public Schools organizes events to make a positive connection with parents and provides a variety of activities and frequent opportunities to fully engage parents including school picnics, back-to-school BBQs, parenting workshops, academic nights, family science fairs, in and out-of-state trips, coffee with the principal, muffins with moms, donuts with dads, cookies with grandparents, family board game nights, SST Parent Academy, monthly learning night, career days, talent shows and many more.

### **Expedition & Exploration Programs**

#### Educational Field Trips

Field trips offer exciting ways to learn. Students will have the opportunity to go on field trips at various times during the school year.

The following rules apply to all field trips:

- Students must return a Field Trip Permission Slip signed by his or her parent(s) by the specified date. Phone calls will not be accepted as permission.
- Students must wear their school uniforms unless otherwise specified.
- Students will abide by the Student Code of Conduct while on the field trip.
- Students will be responsible for making up any missed assignments.
- The group will leave within five minutes of the scheduled departure time. After a group returns from a field trip, the school is not responsible for students who are not picked up at the designated time.

The following rules apply to educational trips:

- ❑ All school rules are in effect during educational trips. Misconduct will be handled through the school's regular disciplinary process.
- ❑ The school administration will determine the number of sponsors necessary.
- ❑ A student must have written permission from the parent/guardian to participate.
- ❑ Clothing worn is at the discretion of the school administration.
- ❑ Students must wear modest swimwear on all trips that involve water activities. For example, boys are expected to wear knee-length, properly fitting swim trunks, and girls are expected to wear one-piece bathing suits.
- ❑ It is the student's responsibility to obtain and complete all assignments before the trip commences.
- ❑ Students with excessive absences and academic or behavioral problems may be required to remain on campus.
- ❑ For transportation, please refer to the "General Information" section of this handbook.
- ❑ For field trips, please refer to the "General Information" section of this handbook.

### International Trips

With SST Schools' International Trip Program, students have the incredible opportunity to see the world and increase their global awareness. Traveling abroad can have beneficial outcomes for students who get the privilege. It gives them a different perspective and a better understanding of history. It shows diversity, and differences in languages and gives people an insight into the rest of the world around them. SST Schools facilitates International Trips operated by the third-party organizations, however, supervised by SST faculty.

### Trip Cancellation Policy

This trip policy applies to all trips, trips for athletics and artistic competitions, leadership trips, etc. Once parents have signed up their children for the educational trip, the parents assume full responsibility for all payments due on the trip, including timely payment of deposit and installments.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the trip sponsor and/or the campus in writing if the student is being removed from the trip or is unable to attend the trip for any reason. Because the school will have already secured group travel arrangements based on the parents' commitment, the parents will forfeit all funds paid to date for the trip.

Further, all unpaid funds will be due from the parent unless another student is able to be substituted. In the event of the entire trip cancellation, the SST Board policy will be followed.

### **Performing Arts**

The performing arts program helps to enrich students' performing arts skills, their understanding, and celebration of diversity and the community they are a part of. SST Public Schools offers folk dance, singing, and glee clubs for students. Students can engage in their chosen field. These activities or clubs are very important for students' long-term social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Students enrolled in the dance and music clubs have the opportunities to join the stage performances and competitions on SST campuses, and at national and international festivals.

### **College and Career Success (CCS) Program**

CCS program's mission is to build a strong and sustainable college and career-bound atmosphere throughout our schools by connecting SST seniors with SST alumni and increasing their career, leadership, social and emotional readiness for their college and career. The program's vision is to raise responsible, caring, and productive citizens who are college, career, and life ready.

College and Career Success program goals are:

- ❑ To build a sustainable college-bound school culture that promotes the importance of higher education by linking seniors with successful alumni college-goers.
- ❑ To create a smooth transition from high school to college for seniors by providing engagement and networking opportunities with campus alumni.

- To help and support alumni to increase campus college enrollment and completion rates.
- To foster a network of successful alumni whom future alumni and students will be able to access and depend on.

Major program areas:

- College Transition
- Curriculum
- Mentoring
- Scholarships

### **College Transition Programs**

The College Transition Program is designed to link graduating SST seniors to current college attendees, bridging the educational achievement gap among underserved communities statewide.

Major programs and their yearly timeline are as follows:

#### **Seniors-Alumni College Networking Event (Dec-Jan)**

Senior-Alumni college networking events are great opportunities for seniors to receive information about the college experience and build lifelong relationships with current alumni college students.

#### **Senior College Transition Events (Jan-May)**

These events are offered to all seniors during the month of April and May in their senior year to help finalize their college decisions and meet with other SST seniors who are most likely going to be their college classmates as additional support.

- Individual college transition advising
- Pre-college orientation by SST Alumni Student Organizations (SASO)
- Senior-Alumni college networking event College transition events, workshops, and seminars for seniors
- College panel

#### **Summer Melt Prevention (Jun-Aug)**

Summer Melt refers to the difference between the number of college-intending high school graduates and the number of students who enroll in any post-secondary educational program the fall following graduation. SST implements the following strategies

suggested by Harvard University.

- Continuing college advising to seniors over the summer
- Sending reminders through social media and text messaging
- Connecting seniors with alumni opportunities
- Organizing summer bridge programs
- Following a college enrollment checklist with seniors

#### **Fall College Check-Ins (Sep-Oct right after SST graduation)**

The purpose of college check-ins is to visit recent high school graduates on college campuses to check how they are transitioning and adjusting to their colleges.

- Visit incoming freshmen in college to ensure enrollment
- Connect incoming freshmen with SST alumni in their college
- Frequent involvement with SST alumni college student organizations to increase their self- efficacy and motivation.

As our students said: “We leave SST, but SST never leaves you.”

### **CCS Curriculum**

All students deserve academic and social support to help prepare them for the challenges they must face after high school graduation. The College and Career Success course is designed to help students focus on developing the habits and skills that are expected in college study and the workforce and continue to develop social/emotional, personal/interpersonal, and cognitive skills that are essential to productivity in both the collegiate and business worlds.

### **CCS Mentoring Programs**

The SST mentoring program aims to pair SST seniors with SST alumni mentors from similar backgrounds who will help them navigate the college application, admission, and transition, and teach real-life skills on how to succeed in college.

## Scholarships

SST Public School believes that our role in a student's life doesn't end upon high school graduation. It is our hope that we can continue assisting them through college and life through appropriate resources and support. There are two scholarships available

- SST Student Trust Fund Scholarship
- Multi-Level Scholarships by SST Alumni Association

For more information, students and parents can visit <https://www.sstschools.org/apps/pages/sstaa>

### Accommodations for Children of Military Families

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

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

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by SST. The school will permit no more than five excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

### Communication between Home and School

Communication between parents and school staff is a key component of student success. Parents are responsible for notifying the school of any change of address, telephone number, or e-mail address.

Parents may contact school staff by using several methods, including

- Calling a teacher's extension during school hours (8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.). Teacher phone extensions are available at the front desk. If the teacher is conducting class, please leave a voice message. The teacher will respond as soon as possible.
- Sending an email to teachers. Teacher e-mail addresses are available at the front desk.
- Checking a student's progress and conduct online by viewing the school website and logging into your child's database account.
- Checking the weekly mail envelope, signing and returning included documents, and

having your student timely return them to their homeroom teacher.

- Checking the "Letters and Messages to Parents" board in the front office.
- Checking the school marquee in front of the school, if available.

### Classroom Visit or Observation

To meet with school personnel, please make an appointment ahead of time by contacting the staff member directly. Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with the approval of the principal and teacher, and such visits are not permitted if the duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment. Observers in classrooms are limited to no more than one hour unless the principal approves an extended classroom observation. All visitors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of courtesy and conduct; disruptive behavior will not be permitted. Trespassing on school premises is strictly prohibited in accordance with Section 37.107 of the Texas Education Code.

### Consent to Human Sexuality Instruction

As part of SST's curriculum, students in certain grade levels receive instruction related to human sexuality. In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the school's health advisory committee or attending committee meetings.
- Use SST's grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

State law also requires that instruction related to human sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, or

human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS):

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

Before a student receives human sexuality instruction, SST must obtain written consent from the student's parent.

### **Consent to Instruction on Prevention of Child Abuse, Family Violence, Dating Violence, and Sex Trafficking**

Students in middle school and high school receive instruction related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking. In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of curriculum materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any curriculum materials in the public domain used in the instruction will be posted on the district's website.
- Remove his or her child from any part of the human sexuality instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties.
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the school's health advisory committee or attending committee meetings.

- Use SST's grievance procedure concerning a complaint.

### **Consent to Provide a Mental-Health Care Service**

SST will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the school's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

SST has established procedures for recommending to a parent an intervention for a student with early warning signs of mental health concerns, substance abuse, or suicide risk. The Dean of Students will notify the student's parent within a reasonable amount of time after the liaison learns that a student has displayed early warning signs and provide information about available counseling options.

SST has also established procedures for staff to notify the Dean of Student's regarding a student who may need intervention.

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as curriculum materials on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus.

### **Notification of Teacher Qualification**

SST will provide parents with the qualifications of each teacher employed by the school. Parents may also request, and SST will provide in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of their student's classroom teachers. Information provided in response to a parent request will include, at a minimum:

- 1) Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- 2) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or another provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived;
- 3) Is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher; and
- 4) Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.



Additionally, SST will provide timely notice that a student has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable state certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

### **Notice of Threat Assessment**

Before SST's safe and supportive school team conducts a threat assessment of a student, the team must notify the parent of the student regarding the assessment. In conducting the assessment, the team shall provide an opportunity for the parent to:

1. Participate in the assessment, either in person or remotely; and
2. Submit to the team information regarding the student.

After completing a threat assessment of a student, the team shall provide to the parent of the student the team's findings and conclusions regarding the student.

### **Parental Consent Required for Use of Certain Library Materials**

SST will not allow a student to reserve, check out, or otherwise use outside the school library, material that has been identified as "sexually relevant material" under the Texas Education Code unless SST first obtains written consent from the student's parent.

### **Parent and Student Complaints and Concerns**

SST values the opinions of its students and parents, and the public it serves. Parents and students have the right to express their views through appropriate informal and formal processes. The purpose of this complaint and/or grievance policy is to resolve conflicts in an efficient, expeditious, and just manner.

The Board of Directors encourages parents and the public to discuss their complaints and grievances through informal meetings with the principal or designee. Complaints and grievances should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible administrative level.

Neither the Board of Directors nor any SST employee shall unlawfully retaliate against a parent or student for voicing a complaint and/or grievance.

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that SST's complaint and grievance procedures are provided to all parents and students. The formal complaint and

grievance procedure shall provide for any complaint and grievance to ultimately be considered or heard by the Board of Directors in accordance with Commissioner of Education rules.

For purposes of this policy, "days" shall mean school days, and announcement of a decision in the student's or parent's presence shall constitute communication of the decision.

#### Informal Conferences

A parent or student may request an informal conference with the principal or designee, teacher, or other campus administrator within seven school days of the time the parent or student knew or should have known of the event(s) giving rise to the complaint and/or grievance. If the parent or student is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, he or she may submit a written complaint and/or grievance form to the principal or designee. Complaint and grievance forms may be obtained from the principal's office.

#### Formal Process

The formal complaint process provides parents and students an opportunity to be heard up to the highest level of management. Once all administrative procedures are exhausted, parents and students can bring concerns or complaints to the Board, as outlined below.

A complaint and/or grievance must specify the harm alleged by the parent and/or student, and the remedy sought. A parent or student should not submit separate or serial complaints and/or grievances regarding the same event or action. Multiple complaints and/or grievances may be consolidated at the school's discretion. All time limits shall be strictly complied with; however, if an administrator determines that additional time is needed to complete a thorough investigation of the complaint and/or grievance and/or to issue a response, the administrator shall inform the parent or student in writing of the need to extend the response time and provide a specific date by which the response will be issued. Costs of any complaint and/or grievance shall be paid by the complainant and/or grievant.

#### Level One Complaint – Principal Review

The student or parent shall submit a written Level One Complaint or Grievance Form to the Campus Principal or designee within the later of (1) five days from the

time the event(s) causing the complaint was or should have been known, or (2) within five days after the date a letter is mailed or e-mailed to the parent or student after completion of the informal grievance process notifying the parent or student of the formal complaint process. The Campus Principal or designee will schedule a conference with the complaining parent or student within ten days after receiving the Level One complaint. Following this conference, the Campus Principal shall have ten days to issue a Level One decision and to provide written notice of that decision to the student or parent complaining. SST reserves the right to require the complainant to begin the complaint process at Level Two.

#### Level Two Complaint – Regional Executive Director Review

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level One decision, or if no decision is provided, the student or parent may submit a written appeal to the Regional Executive Director or designee. The request must include a signed statement of the complaint, any evidence supporting the complaint, and the date and results of the Level One complaint, including a copy of the Level One Decision if issued. The appeal must be filed within ten school days of the Level One decision or the response deadline if no decision is made.

The Regional Executive Director or designee shall hold a conference within ten school days of the request. The Regional Executive Director or designee shall have ten school days following the conference to issue a Level Two decision and to provide written notice of that decision to the student or parent complaining.

#### Level Three Complaint – Superintendent Review

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Two decision, or if no decision is provided, the student or parent may submit a written appeal to the Superintendent of Schools or designee. The request must include the documentation submitted at Level One and Level Two, including a copy of the Level One and Level Two decisions, if issued. The appeal must be filed within ten days of the Level Two decision or the response deadline if no decision is made.

The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall hold a conference within ten days of the request. The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall have ten days following the conference to issue a Level Three decision and to provide written notice of that decision to the student or parent complaining.

#### Level Four Complaint – Board of Directors Review

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Three decision, or if no timely decision is provided, the student or parent may submit to the Superintendent of Schools or designee in writing a request for a written appeal to the Board of Directors. The appeal must be filed within ten days of the Level Three decision or the response deadline if no decision is made. The student or parent shall be informed of the Board meeting at which the complaint and/or grievance will be placed on the agenda for consideration by the Board.

The Board of Directors will consider the appeal, and may allow a presentation by the parent or student and the school administration. The appeal will be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level Three, except that if the administration intends to rely on evidence not included in the complaint and/or grievance record, the administration shall provide the student or parent notice of the nature of the evidence at least three days before the Board meeting.

SST will determine whether the appeal will be presented in open or closed session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and other applicable law.

The presiding officer may set reasonable time limits and guidelines for any presentation of evidence, including an opportunity for the student or parent and administration to each make a presentation and provide rebuttal and an opportunity for questioning by the Board of Directors. The Board shall hear the complaint and/or grievance and may request that the administration provide an explanation for the decisions at the preceding levels.

The Board of Directors shall communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the decision being appealed shall be upheld. The Board of Directors may not delegate its authority to issue a decision, and any decision by the Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed.

#### Additional Complaint Procedures

This Parent and Student Complains and Concerns Process does not apply to all complaints:

1. Complaints alleging Prohibited Conduct (discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and

similar matters) shall be submitted as described in “Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation” in this Handbook.

2. Complaints concerning decisions of an accelerated learning committee and/or SST’s implementation of a student’s accelerated learning plan shall be submitted as described in “Accelerated Instruction” in this Handbook.
3. Formal complaints alleging sexual harassment shall be submitted as described in “Freedom from Sexual Harassment” in this Handbook.
4. Complaints concerning bullying or retaliation related to bullying shall be submitted as described in “Freedom from Bullying” in this Handbook.
5. Complaints and grievances concerning loss of credit on the basis of attendance shall be submitted as described in “Attendance for Credit or Final Grade” in this Handbook.
6. Complaints and grievances concerning disciplinary long-term suspensions and/or expulsions. Shall be submitted as described in “Conferences, Hearings, and Appeals” as described in the Student Code of Conduct.
7. Complaints concerning the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted as described in “Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns” above, except that the deadline for filing an initial Level One complaint and/or grievance shall be 30 calendar days and the procedural safeguards handbook.
8. Complaints concerning the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall be submitted in accordance with applicable Board policy and the procedural safeguards provided to parents of all students referred to special education.
9. Complaints regarding the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the school is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color,

religious creed, sex, political beliefs, age, disability, national origin, or limited English proficiency. (Not all bases apply to all programs.) Reprisal is prohibited based on prior civil rights activity. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which is available online at the following website: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usada.gov](mailto:program.intake@usada.gov). Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339, or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### Surveys and Activities

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (“PPRA”) requires that students may not be required to participate in certain surveys, analyses, or evaluations – funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education – that concern:

1. Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has close family relationship;
2. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior;
3. 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.
4. Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
5. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent(s);
6. Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians and ministers;

7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Sexual behavior or attitudes;
9. Parents may inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

The PPRA also gives parents the right to receive notice of and deny permission for their student’s participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding;
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from their student for the purpose of marketing or selling that information;
3. A non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student (exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam of screening permitted or required under state law.)

**Annual Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student’s education record within 45 days after the day SST receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child’s or their education records should submit to the principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The principal or designee will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

2. The right to request the amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or

eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask SST to amend their child’s or their education records should write the principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If SST decides not to amend the records as requested by the parent or eligible student, SST will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to provide written consent before SST discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student’s education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A “school official” is:

- A person employed by SST as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel);
- A person serving on the Board of Directors;
- A volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by SST, performs an institutional service or function for which SST would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of SST with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, or providers of video conferencing or other virtual learning software apps to hold classes or conduct classroom activities virtually;
- A parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or
- A parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official typically has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education

record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, SST discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by SST to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Student Privacy Policy Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

#### Parent Notice and Directory Information Release

FERPA, a federal law, requires that SST, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, SST may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless a parent or eligible student has advised the school, in writing, to the contrary. If you do not want SST to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify SST in writing by the end of the first ten days of instruction. SST has designated the following information as directory information:

- For school-sponsored purposes – Directory information shall include student name, address, telephone listing, email address, photograph, date and place of birth, honors and awards received, dates of attendance, most recent educational institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.
- For Military recruiters and institutions of higher education – Directory information shall include the name, address, and telephone number of secondary students enrolled in SST.
- For law enforcement officials and authorities – Directory information shall include the

name, address, and telephone listing of students.

- For contractors who assist SST with student waitlist development - Directory information shall include student name, address, and grade level.

#### School Sponsored Purposes:

School-related purposes are those events/activities that SST conducts and/or sponsors to support the school's educational mission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Extracurricular programs or events (e.g., playbills or programs for events such as school plays, concerts, athletic events, graduation ceremony, etc.).
- Honor roll and other student recognition lists.
- Marketing materials of SST (e.g., using directory information for print media, website or social media accounts operated by SST, videos, newspaper articles, etc.).
- Publications (e.g., printing student names and pictures in newsletters and yearbooks, etc.), including sharing directory information with companies who have a contractual relationship with SST and that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks.

#### Military Recruiters and Higher Education (pertains to secondary students):

Two federal laws require SST to provide military recruiters or an institution of higher education, upon request, with access to the name, address, and telephone listing of each secondary student served by SST, unless parents have advised SST that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

#### Law Enforcement Officials and Authorities:

SST has designated the following categories of information as directory information for purposes of responding to requests for general student information made by law enforcement officials and authorities: students name, address, and telephone number.

#### Admissions Waitlist Vendors

SST releases directory information to any person or company with whom the school has contracted to

perform the special task of placing students on the school's waiting list in the available charter school.

#### Disclosure of PII without Consent

FERPA also permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires SST to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures.

SST may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student:

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom SST has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom SST has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U.S. Comptroller General, the U.S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the Texas Education Agency. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as their

authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf, if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a state statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information SST has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student

in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))

- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

## **Student Acceptable Use Policy**

This Student Acceptable Use Policy (“Policy”) sets forth the guidelines governing the use of all SST technology resources by students while on or near school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities on- or off-campus, as well as the use of all SST technology resources via off-campus remote access.

SST reserves the right to modify the terms and conditions of this Policy at any time.

### Introduction

SST is pleased to offer students access to school computers, communications systems,<sup>1</sup> the Internet and a wide array of other technology resources to promote educational excellence and enhance the classroom experience. Technology can expand a student’s access to educational materials, prepare students by providing workforce skills and college readiness, and lead to personal growth. SST recognizes, however, that access to technology must be given with clear guidelines, expectations, and supervision to protect students. This Policy is designed to make parents, teachers and administrators partners to teach students how to be responsible users of technology.

SST will educate all students about appropriate online behavior, including interacting with other individuals on social networking websites and in chat rooms and cyberbullying awareness and response.

SST will hold ALL students responsible for their use of technology, whether school-provided or personal, and they are expected to act in an appropriate manner in accordance with campus procedures, SST policy and procedures, and legal requirements. This applies to

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<sup>1</sup> “Communication Systems” include educational-related communications between and among SST and students by

the use of all SST technology resources by students while on or near school property, in school vehicles and at school-sponsored activities on- or off-campus, as well as the use of all SST technology resources via off-campus remote access.

This Policy shall be used in conjunction with the Student Code of Conduct.

### Using the Internet and Communications Systems

SST provides technology resources to students for the express purposes of conducting research, completing assignments, and communicating to the faculty, staff, and others to complement their educational experience. Just as students must demonstrate proper behavior in a classroom or school hallway, they must also behave appropriately when using any SST computer networks, personal electronic devices, personal device data plans, software or websites sanctioned or used by SST, and any personal technology used in an educational setting. Access to SST’s technology is a privilege, not a right. Students must comply with all standards set forth in this Policy at all times in order to maintain the privilege of using its technology resources.

Students and their parents are advised that any information stored on and/or sent through SST’s technology resources is the property of SST. Accordingly, in connection with ensuring student safety, SST network administrators and/or other appropriate personnel will engage in periodic reviews and searches of stored files and communications stored on SST technology resources to maintain system integrity and ensure that students are complying with this Policy and using technology in a responsible and appropriate manner. Such reviews will include students’ use of school-approved educational websites or software to ensure that they are using it in an appropriate manner consistent with SST’s expectations for such use. Students do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy over any information stored on SST technology.

SST may allow students to bring personal technology devices (i.e., tablets, e-readers, smartphones) for use during the school day for authorized curricular purposes. Students that use personal technology devices will be required to comply with all aspects of

instant messaging, blogging, podcasting, listservs, and/or other emerging technologies.





the Acceptable Use Policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct in the use of such devices at school. A student's personal technology device may be subject to search by campus administrators in connection with determining if a student has committed a violation of this Policy and/or the Student Code of Conduct.

SST remains committed to integrating technology to enhance its curriculum for students, which it believes increases students' educational experience for them and allows for better preparation for job skills and college success. Access to the Internet enables students to use extensive online libraries, databases and websites selected by SST for use in instruction.

Although SST strives to ensure that any Internet access avoids any inappropriate material, students and their families should be aware that some material accessible on the Internet may contain information that is inaccurate, profane, sexually oriented, defamatory and potentially offensive to some. SST does not condone any student accessing, or attempting to access, such material, and it remains deeply committed to safe Internet use. SST takes steps to minimize students' opportunities to access such content, including the implementation of technology prevention measures, such as extensive content-filtering software, to restrict access to inappropriate content such as those that are illegal, obscene, or harmful to minors. Each SST device with Internet access shall have a filtering device or software that blocks access to visual depictions that are obscene, pornographic, inappropriate for students, or harmful to minors, as defined by the federal Children's Internet Protection Act ("CIPA") and/or as determined by the school administration. This software is not fail-safe, however, and while at school, SST strives to ensure that students' Internet use is supervised, it is possible that the software may miss some content, or students may find a way around the software to access inappropriate material. For this reason, this Policy is strictly enforced, and students who misuse any SST technology outside its intended purpose, including the use of school-recommended websites for purposes outside the educational intent, will be in violation of this Policy, which may lead to disciplinary consequences for the student.

With this in mind, SST still believes that the benefits of allowing student access to the Internet to enhance the educational experience outweighs any potential harm to students.

### Proper and Acceptable Use of All Technology Resources

SST requires students to use all technology resources, including any websites or software used in the classroom, in a manner consistent with the following rules. SST will hold students responsible for any intentional misuse of its technology resources, or any other failure to comply with the rules in this Policy. When using SST technology systems outside the school, parents should strive to ensure that students do so in compliance with the rules set forth in this Policy, as SST is unable to supervise students' technology use at home. SST's content-filtering software will not work in a student's home, so parents are encouraged to place content-filtering software on their home computers or take any other steps necessary to monitor students' Internet usage at home.

Students, who unintentionally access inappropriate material in connection with their use of any SST technology, including websites and software used in the classroom, shall immediately stop accessing the material and report it to a supervising adult. SST shall take immediate steps to ensure such material is blocked from further view at school by its content-filtering software.

All SST technology resources, including but not limited to school computers, communications systems and the Internet, including any websites or software used in the classroom, must be used in support of education and academic research and in accordance with the rules set forth in this Policy.

Activities that are permitted and encouraged include the following:

- School work and assignments;
- Original creation and presentation of academic work;
- Research on topics being discussed in classes at school;
- Research for opportunities outside of school related to community service, employment or further education;
- Reporting inappropriate content or harassing conduct to an adult.

Activities that are barred and subject to potential disciplinary action and loss of privileges, whether on a

school-provided or personal electronic device, include the following:

- Attempting unauthorized access, or “hacking,” of SST computers or networks, or any attempts to bypass Internet content- filtering software used by SST.
- Effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication. Security breaches include, but are not limited to, accessing data of which the student is not an intended recipient or logging into a server or account that the student is not expressly authorized to access. For purposes of the section, “disruption” includes, but is not limited to, network sniffing, pinged floods, packet spoofing, denial of service, forged routing information for malicious purpose, and any other form of network monitoring designed to intercept data not intended for the student’s host.
- Engaging in abusive, harassing, insulting, ostracizing, intimidating, or any other online conduct which could be considered bullying and/or damaging to another’s reputation while using any SST technology resource, to include the use of any website or software used by the school.
- Engaging in any conduct potentially constituting “cyberbullying,” which means bullying done through the use of any electronic communication device, including the use of a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool. Examples of cyberbullying include, but are not limited to:
  - Creating a social networking site or web page that masquerades as another person’s personal site and using it to embarrass the other person.
  - Making it appear that a person is posting malicious comments about friend to isolate the person from his or her friends.
  - Posting a person’s personally identifiable information on a site to put the person at greater risk of contact by predators or strangers.
  - Posting abusive comments on someone’s social networking site.
  - Recording and distributing media with the intent to manipulate or embarrass others.
  - Sending abusive comments while playing interactive games.
  - Sending abusive text messages to cell phones, computers, or Internet-connected game consoles.
  - Sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else.
  - Sending, posting, or sharing statements encouraging another person to commit self-harm.
- Engaging in any conduct that damages or modifies, or is intended to damage or modify, any SST equipment, network, stored computer file, or software, to include any conduct that results in a person’s time to take any corrective action.
- Exporting software, technical information, encryption software or technology, in violation of international or regional export control logs.
- Intentional or neglectful transmission or direct placement of computer viruses or other unauthorized programs onto SST equipment, networks, stored computer files, or software.
- Interfering with or denying service to any other use or than the student’s host (for example, denial of service attack).
- Participating in online chat rooms or using instant and/or text messaging without prior approval by a classroom teacher, coach or administrator.
- Port scanning or security scanning.
- Presenting any copyrighted, registered, or trademarked work as that of the student.

- Refusing to submit to a search of a personal electronic device in accordance with the Student Acceptable Use Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- Revealing an account password to others or allowing use of an account(s) by others. This includes family and other household members when work is being done at home.
- Searching, viewing, communicating, publishing, downloading, storing, or retrieving any inappropriate or offensive material, including but not limited to obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic materials, or any material that is not related to the permitted activities set forth above.
- Sharing online any personal information of another student or staff member, including name, home address, or phone number.
- Taking, disseminating, transferring, or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as “sexting.”
- Tampering with, removing components from, or otherwise deliberately interfering with the operation of SST computers, networks, printers, user files, or other associate peripherals.
- Unauthorized copying of copyrighted material including, but not limited to, digitization and distribution of photographs from magazines, books, or other copyrighted sources, copyrighted music, and the installation of any copyrighted software for which SST or the end user does not have an active license.
- Using a website or software program implemented by SST in a manner outside the scope of the use specified by the classroom teacher, coach or administrator.
- Using any programs/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with, or disable, a user’s terminal session, via any means, locally or via the Internet/Intranet.
- Using any SST technology for games, role-playing, multi-user environments, gambling, junk mail, chain mail, jokes or fundraising activities without prior approval by a classroom teacher or administrator.
- Using any SST technology resource to engage in any activity that violates any Board policy, the Student Code of Conduct, campus rule, local, state, and/or federal law.
- Using any SST technology resource to take, disseminate, transfer, or share obscene, sexually oriented, lewd, or otherwise illegal images or other content.
- Using any SST technology resources for any commercial and/or for-profit purpose, to include personal financial gain or fraud.
- Using obscene or profane language on any SST technology resource, to include posting such language on any website or software used by SST.
- Using SST or personal technology during the administration of state standardized testing, End of Course, and or final examinations unless expressly allowed to do so by a teacher.
- Using technology for plagiarism or otherwise representing the work of others as the student’s own.
- Using USB, bootable CD’s, or other devices to alter the function of any SST technology equipment, network or software.
- Violating the rights of any person or company protected by copyright, trade secret, patent or other intellectual property or similar laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, any downloading, installation, or distribution of “pirated” or other software products.

Students shall immediately report any violations of this Policy to a classroom teacher or administrator. If any student or parent has any question about whether any activity may be a violation of this Policy, they should ask a classroom teacher or the Principal or designee.

Personal Electronic Devices

Personal wireless and mobile devices may be provided filtered access to the Internet as well as access to any web-based student applications (e.g., Discovery Education Streaming, Moodle) that would normally be accessible to students from home. SST is not responsible for the loss or theft of any personal

electronic devices, or for damage, or unauthorized access to the device nor the data that resides therein. Students and parents assume any and all risks associated with bringing a personal electronic device to a campus or school-related event. In addition:

- ❑ All students with personal electronic devices being used for instructional or other school business must use SST's wireless network, which is filtered according to federal guidelines for Internet access in public schools.
- ❑ If a student uses a personal electronic device in an inappropriate manner, he or she will lose their privilege of bringing a personal device to school. Additional consequences may be imposed based on the Policy and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any campus-based consequences for violating the usage rules for personal electronic devices.
- ❑ Personal electronic communications such as e-mail, instant messaging, chat, blogs, etc., are prohibited at school unless the teacher and/or administrator has approved the use of an application for educational purposes.
- ❑ Personal electronic devices are never to be plugged into the wired network (i.e., computers, wall jacks, other school equipment, etc.).
- ❑ School officials may power on and search a student's device if there is a reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation and if a student and parent have signed a form authorizing the student to possess the device at school.
- ❑ Sound on personal wireless and mobile devices must be turned off when it is being used as part of a class.
- ❑ Student selection of appropriate, tasteful screensavers and wallpaper is expected.
- ❑ Teachers will establish standards for personal electronic devices used in their respective classrooms; however, it is SST's policy that students are not allowed to access the Internet unless supervised by a teacher or staff member.

- ❑ The student must take full responsibility for configuring and maintaining their personal electronic devices. SST will not provide technical support for these devices.
- ❑ When personal electronic devices are not in the student's possession, the student must secure them. SST will not store, nor will it accept responsibility for storing, any student's personal electronic device on school grounds. Personal electronic devices must go home with students daily.

#### Privacy and Security

Students are expected to use SST's technology resources responsibly and in a safe and secure manner, regardless of whether such technology is accessed using a school-issued or personal electronic device. Students shall not share their individual logins, passwords, or access to SST's technology with others without the prior approval of a classroom teacher or administrator. Students shall sign off or log off all SST equipment, software, or Internet sites once they are done with their session in order to protect the integrity of their logins, passwords, or access.

#### Consequences

Violation of SST's policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

1. Any disciplinary consequence, including suspension or expulsion, allowed under the Student Code of Conduct and deemed appropriate by SST.
2. Denial, revocation, or suspension of a user's access to SST's technology resources, with or without cause or notice for lack of use, violation of policy or regulations regarding acceptable network use, or as a result of disciplinary action against the user.
3. Referral to law enforcement authorities.
4. Termination of a system user account.

Violations of law may also result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by SST. SST will cooperate fully with local, state, or federal officials

in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the school's computer systems and networks.

Limitations of Liability

SST makes no warranties of any kind, whether express or implied, for the technology resources it provides to students through SST provided and/or a student's personal electronic device. SST is not responsible for any damages that a student may sustain, including those arising from non-delivery of information, erroneous delivery of information, service interruptions, unauthorized use by a student, loss of data, and any potential exposure to inappropriate

material from the Internet. Use of any information obtained through the Internet is at the student's own risk, as SST makes no representations, and denies responsibility for, the accuracy or quality of the information. In exchange for being allowed to use SST's technology resources, students and their parents hereby release SST, its directors, employees, and representatives from any and all claims for damages that arise from the intentional or neglectful misuse of SST's technology resources by the student.

**SST Public Schools**  
**2024-2025 Student/Parent Handbook**  
**Acknowledgment and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook**  
**and Student Code of Conduct**

My signature below acknowledges that SST has made its Student/Parent Handbook and Student Handbook available to me; that I have been given notice of the rules, responsibilities, and consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct; that I have been informed that when my child is enrolled at the school, all information herein is applicable to me, my child, and all school staff; and that I have expressed intent to review this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct contained within and to abide thereby.

Printed Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Printed Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## FERPA Directory Information Opt-Out Form

“Directory Information” means information contained in an educational record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. FERPA permits SST to designate certain personal information as “directory information,” which may be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting it as proscribed in school policy.

To prohibit SST from releasing your student’s directory information, you must circle NO adjacent to the appropriate statement(s) below, sign the form, and return it to your student’s school. **Completion of this form is optional. However, if you do not circle NO or return this form, directory information about your student may be released** in accordance with SST policy.

If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate for each student.

**PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO**

**For all students:**

YES	NO	I give permission for my student’s directory information to be used for school-related purposes. <i>I recognize that if I select “No,” my child’s photograph, named, and similar information will not be included in the school yearbook.</i>
YES	NO	I give permission for my student’s name, address, and telephone number to be provided upon request by law enforcement officials and authorities.

**For secondary students only:**

YES	NO	I give permission to release my student’s directory information to <b>institutions of higher education.</b>
YES	NO	I give permission to release my student’s directory information to <b>military recruiters.</b>

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Student’s Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student’s Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT Parent/Guardian Full Legal Name  
or Eligible Student Full Legal Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature  
or Eligible Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Use of Student Work in School Publications

Occasionally, SST wishes to display or publish a student's name and photo along with student artwork, photos taken by the student, or other original work on the school's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the school (such as a classroom website), on social media accounts operated by the school, and in school publications. SST agrees to use these student projects in this manner.

**Parents/Guardians: Please circle one of the choices below:**

I, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name), **(do give)** **(do not give)** SST permission to use my child's artwork, photos, or other original work in the manner described above.

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

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



## Photo/Video Release Form

Throughout the school year, there may be times when SST staff, the media, or other organizations (with the approval of the Principal), may take photographs of students, audiotape and/or videotape students, or interview students for school-related stories in a way that would individually identify a specific student. Those photographs, audio recordings, and/or videotaped images or interviews may appear in SST publications; in SST video productions; on the SST website; in SST advertisements, fundraising, and/or recruitment materials; in the news media; or in other nonprofit, education-related organizations' publications.

In order to release student photos, video footage, comments and/or post on the SST website, we need written permission. To give your consent, please complete the form below.

\_\_\_\_\_ I hereby give permission for SST to use my child's voice and/or likeness in its publications for the purposes mentioned above. I authorize the use and reproduction by SST of any and all photographs and/or audio or video recordings taken of my child, without compensation to my child or to me. All photographs and recordings shall be the sole property of SST. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs, audio or video recordings, and/or reproduced materials that may be used in conjunction with them. I understand and agree that SST may use my child's voice and/or likeness in subsequent school years unless I revoke this authorization by notifying the principal in writing, I further grant unto SST permission to permit my child to be photographed, audio/videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or other approved organizations for school-related stories or articles. I release SST and those acting pursuant to its authority from liability for any violation of any personal or proprietary right I may have in connection with the purposes mentioned above.

\_\_\_\_\_ SST may not use my child's voice and/or likeness in its publications for the purposes mentioned above. I further decline permission for SST to permit my child to be photographed, audio/videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or other approved organizations for school-related stories or articles.

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Students 18 years of age or older may sign this release form for themselves \*

## Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form

I have read and agree to abide by SST's Student Acceptable Use Policy. I further understand that any violation of this policy may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my Internet and computer access privileges may be revoked, and disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(If you are under the age of 18 a parent or guardian must also read and sign this Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgement Form.)

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read SST's Student Acceptable Use Policy. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. SST has taken precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible for SST to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold SST responsible for materials transmitted on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form

Electronic communications at school and at school-related functions are subject to regulation by SST.

This Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form grants authority and permission to SST to regulate electronic communication devices when these devices are brought to and/or used while on school property or when attending school-related functions and events. Such communication devices include but are not limited to cellular phones, pagers, PDAs, and pocket computers. These regulations are made necessary in light of the unique opportunities these devices create for violations of law and school policies, and to perpetrate conduct disruptive of an educational environment essential to the school's educational program. These concerns are exacerbated by electronic security protections and the personal size of these devices, which are often concealed in pockets and purses.

Therefore, all students who would possess or use such devices on school property or at school-related activities are required to sign this form together with their parent, guardian or other adult person having the authority of a parent for school purposes.

Each of you, by your signature below, agrees to the following:

- The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, PDAs and other electronic communication devices by a student on school property or at school-related events is subject to regulation by SST.
- If a student possesses such devices on school property or while attending school-related events, SST is authorized and has parent(s)/guardian's full consent to confiscate, power on or off, manipulate and do all things necessary to search student's device and recover or intercept communications (including but not limited to text messaging) when reasonable suspicion exists that such device has been used to transmit or receive communications in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation.
- I further understand, agree and consent that an electronic communication device used or possessed in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation is subject to confiscation and that SST is not liable for any loss of or damage to confiscated devices.

### SIGNATURE LINES AND DATES

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of student)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of student)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of parent/guardian)



# School of Science & Technology

## Grade Acceleration Guidelines

### Kindergarten

#### 2024-2025

SST Public Schools (SST) adopted the following guidelines to address Kindergarten acceleration procedures as noted in SST policy, however, SST strongly encourages all learners to participate in Kindergarten due to the social, developmental, emotional, and academic benefits this grade level provides.

#### Qualifications for Testing

In order to qualify for Kindergarten Acceleration, the student must meet the following qualifications:

- ❖ The student must be 5 years of age on or before September 1st of the academic year.
- ❖ The student must be registered for Kindergarten for the academic year in SST Public Schools.

#### General guidelines for the testing are as follows:

- ❖ If the qualifications above are met, then a parent/guardian is required to complete and return the Application and Parent Checklist for Grade Acceleration to their child's campus Dean of Academics **by the end of the first quarter** to request that his/her child test for grade acceleration. No late applications will be accepted.
- ❖ After the written request is received from the parent/guardian, a committee composed of parent(s), principal's designee, and teacher(s) considers the following criteria to determine if testing for acceleration is the best option for the student.
  1. Scores on readiness tests or achievement tests including but not limited to NWEA MAP and TPRI. (NWEA MAP scores should be above the 90th percentile for both Reading and Mathematics)
  2. Recommendation of the Kindergarten or preschool the student had previously attended.
  3. Chronological age and observed social and emotional development of the student.
  4. Effect of skipping a grade level on the student's overall educational experience.
  5. The academic rigor of first grade.
- ❖ In order to advance to first grade, the student must score at least 90% on ALL four assessments (Mathematics, Language Arts/English, Science, and Social Studies). Each subject area exam requires 3 hours of testing.
- ❖ No retesting will be allowed during the same academic year due to failure.

- ❖ Score reports are generally available 3-4 weeks after testing. Parents will be notified about the acceleration decision.
- ❖ If a kindergarten student is recommended for acceleration, it will be on a probationary basis.
- ❖ Should the school or teacher feel it is in the best interest of the child to be placed back into Kindergarten, the parent will be contacted.
- ❖ Parents may appeal the decision to the campus principal.
- ❖ Tests and scoring are provided by either the University of Texas or Texas Tech University. All study guides and instructional materials are available by visiting:  
[https://highschool.utexas.edu/cbe\\_study\\_guides](https://highschool.utexas.edu/cbe_study_guides)  
<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/k12/cbe/review/>
- ❖ There will be no make-up sessions for any Grade Acceleration Examination. All tests will be administered on campus on the assigned date. If a problem does arise, please contact your campus Dean of Academics immediately.
- ❖ There is no fee for Grade Acceleration Examinations.

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If you have questions or need additional information, please contact your campus Dean of Academics.

# Parent Checklist

## Kindergarten to 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Acceleration

### 2024-2025

Please return the completed nomination form to your child's campus Dean of Academics, along with the application form **by the end of the First Quarter.**

Print legibly and fill in ALL information:

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Child's Name

Campus

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Currently enrolled grade level

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

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Name of Individual Completing the Form

Relationship to Child

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Signature

Date

Instructions for completing the checklist on the following pages:

1. Please complete all four checklists (1) Intellectual Ability; (2) Social/Behavioral; (3) Language Arts; and (4) Mathematics in Section A.
2. On each checklist please place a check in the column to the right of each characteristic which you believe best represents the frequency with which your child demonstrates this characteristic.
3. If you check Regularly or Often for a particular characteristic, please also provide a description, or example, of how your child exhibits this characteristic in the last column.
4. Please fill out the short answer questions in Section B. If you need more space than provided, please feel free to attach additional sheets.

## **Section A:**

Please complete this form for your child. Place a check in the column that best represents how often your child exhibits each characteristic. If you check “regularly” or “often” you must provide a description for that characteristic.

<b>Characteristics of Intellectual Ability</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Comprehends abstract ideas and concepts.					
2. Makes quick and valid generalizations and uses them in new situations					
3. Demonstrates skills in reasoning and evaluating situations					
4. Understands cause and effect					
5. Chooses and enjoys challenging tasks or problems					
6. Generates sophisticated and/or creative and unusual ideas and solutions					
7. Demonstrates the ability to work independently					
8. Demonstrates great curiosity: asks how, why, and what if					

<b>Characteristics of Social/Behavioral</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Holds strong ideas/beliefs/opinions					
2. Questions of authority					
3. Focuses intensely on tasks of Personal interest					
4. A subtle sense of humor: develops original jokes and puns					
5. Is bored with routine					
6. Critical of self and/or others					
7. Self-motivated when topics are of personal interest					
8. Comfortable communicating with adults					
9. Impatient or intolerant when others are moving at a slower pace					



<b>Characteristics of Language Arts</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Uses an extensive vocabulary in both spoken and written language					
2. Provides rich descriptions with elaborate/vivid detail on topics of personal interest					
3. Writes independently even when writing is not a homework assignment (stories, poems, etc.), and exhibits a love of writing and interest in improving his/her writing					
4. Approaches writing tasks from an unusual perspective or point of view					
5. Writing is focused and exhibits good organization and uses appropriate punctuation and capitalization					
6. Uses sophisticated sentence structure and sentence variety					
7. Avidly reads books/selections beyond grade level					
8. Enjoys research and investigation in areas of personal interest and engages in the process for personal satisfaction in addition to assignments					
9. Eloquenty defends and/or expands upon ideas including speaking articulately					
10. Analyzes situations (real and literary) and seeks underlying problems					

<b>Characteristics of Mathematics</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Quickly computes arithmetic problems in the head					
2. Works on logic puzzles or brain-teasers					
3. Classifies things into categories or groups					
4. Quickly picks up patterns in a problem and sees relationships to previous experiences					
5. Tries different strategies when the first strategy does not work					
6. Solves problems involving multiple steps					
7. Models and communicates thinking processes orally or in writing					
8. Produces solutions that are creative and diverse					
9. Extends problems by generating new problems or ideas					
10. Transfers and applies experiences and strategies for new situations					

**Section B:**

Please answer each question below. Please attach additional paper if needed.

1. Describe how your child relates to other children.

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2. List activities in which your child participates.

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3. Reasons I want my child to accelerate a grade level.

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4. Characteristics that your child displays that would make him/her comfortable accelerating a grade level.

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Please feel free to provide any additional information regarding your child's social and academic growth.

# Credit by Examination Kindergarten Acceleration Parent Signature Page

**Section I:** Parent Section. Print legibly and fill in ALL information:

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Child's First Name	Child's Middle Name (if applicable)	Child's Last Name
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Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Campus	Grade Level
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Home Phone#	Parent or Guardian Work Phone#	Parent or Guardian Cell Phone#
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Address (if different than the one on your child's application)

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Street Number	Street Name	Apt # (if applicable)
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City	State	Zip Code
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By signing this form, I attest that I have read the examination procedures and guidelines for grade acceleration and am aware of the time limits for taking the test. I give SST Schools permission to test my child for Kindergarten to First Grade Acceleration.

I have filled out the parent checklist and understand the pros and cons of grade acceleration. I understand that I am responsible for all study materials that are provided for this assessment (if applicable) and know that all materials are to be returned a week after the assessment. I take responsibility to prepare my child for the assessment. I understand that my child is required to attend each Credit by Examination session during the week. I understand the time length of the assessment, dates of administration, and how my child and I will be notified of his/her results.

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The printed name of Parent or Guardian	Signature of Parent or Guardian	Date
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**Section II:** Office use only. To be completed by the Dean of Academics:

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Date received - Signature Page	Date received - Parent Checklist
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Date campus conducted a conference with the parent/guardian	Dean of Academics Signature
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# Grade Acceleration Application Form

## Kindergarten

### 2024-2025

#### **Section I:**

Student Information (To be completed by the parent or legal guardian)  
Print legibly and fill in **ALL** information.

First Name	Middle Name (if applicable)	Last Name
Gender (M/F)	Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Campus Name
Parent/Guardian First Name	Parent/Guardian Last Name	Parent/Guardian Phone #
Street Number	Street Name	Apt # (if applicable)
City	State	Zip Code

#### **Section II: (For Office Use Only)** (To be completed by the campus Dean of Academics)

Currently, enrolled grade level: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level attempting to test out of: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach the following documentation to the application:

- ❖ Parent Checklist for Grade Acceleration
- ❖ A copy of the student's current STAAR Confidential Student Report - if applicable
- ❖ A signed letter from the student's teacher(s) on why the student would benefit academically and emotionally from accelerating a grade level
- ❖ Verification of conference with the parent

Assessment Dates:

All subjects: Should be 4 days within the second week of November: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section III: (For Office Use Only)** (To be completed by the campus Principal)

The information provided on the application and attached documentation has been verified and is accurate. The student meets the eligibility requirements as stated in SST policy and CBE guidelines.

Campus Principal's Full Name	Signature	Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
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(Please return this form to the campus Dean of Academics **by the end of the first quarter**)



# School of Science & Technology

## Grade Acceleration Guidelines

### Elementary and Middle School

#### 2024-2025

Grade Acceleration is for current Kindergarten through Grade 7 students who wish to accelerate by a grade level and it is conducted at the end of the spring semester.

General guidelines for the testing are as follows:

- ❖ Students may not test in any grade in which he/she is currently enrolled.
- ❖ Parents are required to complete and return the Application and Parent Checklist for Grade Acceleration to their child's campus Dean of Academics by **March 24, 2025**. No late applications will be accepted.
- ❖ Elementary and middle school students who want to accelerate by a grade level must earn at least 80% on ALL four assessments (Mathematics, Language Arts/English, Science, and Social Studies). Each subject area exam requires approximately 2-3 hours of testing.
- ❖ All students who request to take exams to accelerate a grade level will be assessed with the Math CBE within the last week of April on campus during school hours. If she/he fails to meet at least 80% on the Math CBE test, the testing will be discontinued.
- ❖ If a student is approved to test, all other tests will be conducted the last week of June on campus during office hours. If the student meets at least 80% on two out of three tests but fails to meet at least 80% on one test, she/he will be given a retest in July for the failed test. The Campus Dean of Academics will contact parents about the testing date.
- ❖ Score reports are generally available 3-4 weeks after testing. Score reports are mailed to parents at the address on the application form.
- ❖ Tests and scoring are provided by either the University of Texas or Texas Tech University. All study guides and instructional materials are available by visiting:  
[https://highschool.utexas.edu/cbe\\_study\\_guides](https://highschool.utexas.edu/cbe_study_guides)  
<https://www.depts.ttu.edu/k12/cbe/review/>
- ❖ There will be no make-up sessions for any Grade Acceleration Examination. All tests will be administered on campus on the assigned date. If a problem does arise, please contact your campus Dean of Academics immediately.
- ❖ There is no fee for Grade Acceleration Examinations.

## Parent Checklist for Grade Acceleration 2024-2025

Please return the complete checklist to your child's campus  
Dean of Academics, along with the application form.

Print legibly and fill in ALL information:

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Child's Name

Campus

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Currently enrolled grade level

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)

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Name of Individual Completing the Form

Relationship to Child

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Signature

Date

Instructions for completing the checklist on the following pages:

1. Please complete all four checklists (1) Intellectual Ability; (2) Social/Behavioral; (3) Language Arts; and (4) Mathematics in Section A.
2. On each checklist please place a check in the column to the right of each characteristic which you believe best represents the frequency with which your child demonstrates this characteristic.
3. If you check Regularly or Often for a particular characteristic, please also provide a description, or example, of how your child exhibits this characteristic in the last column.
4. Please fill out the short answer questions in Section B. If you need more space than provided, please feel free to attach additional sheets.

## **Section A:**

Please complete this form for your child. Place a check in the column that best represents how often your child exhibits each characteristic. If you check “regularly” or “often” you must provide a description for that characteristic.

<b>Characteristics of Intellectual Ability</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Comprehends abstract ideas and concepts.					
2. Makes quick and valid generalizations and uses them in new situations					
3. Demonstrates skills in reasoning and evaluating situations					
4. Understands cause and effect					
5. Chooses and enjoys challenging tasks or problems					
6. Generates sophisticated and/or creative and unusual ideas and solutions					
7. Demonstrates the ability to work independently					
8. Demonstrates great curiosity: asks how, why, and what if					



<b>Characteristics of Social/Behavioral</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Holds strong ideas/beliefs/opinions					
2. Questions authority					
3. Focuses intensely on tasks of Personal interest					
4. A subtle sense of humor: develops original jokes and puns					
5. Is bored with routine					
6. Critical of self and/or others					
7. Self-motivated when topics are of personal interest					
8. Comfortable communicating with adults					
9. Impatient or intolerant when others are moving at a slower pace					

<b>Characteristics of Language Arts</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Uses an extensive vocabulary in both spoken and written language					
2. Provides rich descriptions with elaborate/vivid detail on topics of personal interest					
3. Writes independently even when writing is not a homework assignment (stories, poems, etc.), and exhibits a love of writing and interest in improving his/her writing					
4. Approaches writing tasks from an unusual perspective or point of view					
5. Writing is focused and exhibits good organization and uses appropriate punctuation and capitalization					
6. Uses sophisticated sentence structure and sentence variety					
7. Avidly reads books/selections beyond grade level					
8. Enjoys research and investigation in areas of personal interest and engages in the process for personal satisfaction in addition to assignments					
9. Eloquenty defends and/or expands upon ideas including speaking articulately					
10. Analyzes situations (real and literary) and seeks underlying problems					

<b>Characteristics of Mathematics</b>	Have not seen evidence (0% of the time)	Rarely: (Less than 25% of the time)	Often: (Between 75% and 25% of the time)	Regularly: (More than 75% of the time)	Description/Example
1. Quickly computes arithmetic problems in the head					
2. Works on logic puzzles or brain-teasers					
3. Classifies things into categories or groups					
4. Quickly picks up patterns in a problem and sees relationships to previous experiences					
5. Tries different strategies when the first strategy does not work					
6. Solves problems involving multiple steps					
7. Models and communicates thinking processes orally or in writing					
8. Produces solutions that are creative and diverse					
9. Extends problems by generating new problems or ideas					
10. Transfers and applies experiences and strategies to new situations					

**Section B:**

Please answer each question below. Please attach additional paper if needed.

1. Describe how your child relates to other children.

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2. List activities in which your child participates.

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3. Reasons I want my child to accelerate a grade level.

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4. Characteristics that your child displays that would make him/her comfortable accelerating a grade level.

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Please feel free to provide any additional information regarding your child's social and academic growth.

## Credit by Examination Grade Acceleration Parent and Student Signature Page

**Section I:** Parent Section. Print legibly and fill in ALL information:

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Child's First Name	Child's Middle Name (if applicable)	Child's Last Name
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Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Campus	Grade Level
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Home Phone#	Parent or Guardian Work Phone#	Parent or Guardian Cell Phone#
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Address (if different than the one on your child's application)

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Street Number	Street Name	Apt # (if applicable)
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City	State	Zip Code
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By signing this form I attest that I have read the examination procedures and guidelines for Credit by Examination for Examination for Acceleration and am aware of the time limits on taking the test, the 80% or above score required for each course for grade acceleration, that the test is administered on the dates specified on the application and reminder email will be sent to the email on record during summer administration, that I will provide transportation to the test site, and that I approve my child's grade acceleration for the course stated on the application.

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Printed name of Parent or Guardian	Signature of Parent or Guardian	Date
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**Section II:** Student Section. Print legibly and fill in ALL information:

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First Name	Middle Name (if applicable)	Last Name
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Campus Name	Grade Level
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I have read over the Credit by Examination guidelines and understand that I am taking this assessment for grade acceleration. I understand that I am responsible for all study materials that are provided for this assessment (if applicable) and know that all materials are to be returned a week after the assessment. I take responsibility to prepare myself for the assessment. I understand that I am required to attend the Credit by Examination session and may not be approved to take future assessments if I am absent from more than 2 consecutive test administrations. I understand the time length of the assessment, dates of administration, and how I will be notified of my results. I understand that I am required to earn at least an 80% on all portions of the assessment for my grade acceleration..

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Printed name of Student	Signature of Student	Date
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# Grade Acceleration Application Form

## 2024-2025

### **Section I:**

Student Information (To be completed by the parent or legal guardian)  
Print legibly and fill in **ALL** information.

First Name	Middle Name (if applicable)	Last Name
Gender (M/F)	Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	Campus Name
Parent/Guardian First Name	Parent/Guardian Last Name	Parent/Guardian Phone #
Street Number	Street Name	Apt # (if applicable)
City	State	Zip Code

### **Section II: (For Office Use Only)** (To be completed by the campus Dean of Academics)

Currently enrolled grade level: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade level attempting to test out of: \_\_\_\_\_

End of year averages for the current school year: Language Arts: \_\_\_\_\_ Science: \_\_\_\_\_

Mathematics: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Studies: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach the following documentation to the application:

- ❖ Parent Checklist for Grade Acceleration
- ❖ A copy of the student's current STAAR Confidential Student Report - if applicable
- ❖ A signed letter from the student's teacher(s) on why the student would benefit academically and emotionally accelerating a grade level
- ❖ Verification of conference with the parent

Assessment Dates:

Math CBE Test: Should be a date within the last week of April: \_\_\_\_\_

All other subjects: Should be 3 days within the last week of June: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section III: (For Office Use Only)** (To be completed by the campus Principal)

The information provided on the application and attached documentation has been verified and is accurate. The student meets the eligibility requirements as stated in SST policy and CBE guidelines.

Campus Principal's Full Name	Signature	Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
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(Please return this form to the campus Dean of Academics by **March 24, 2025**)





## SST Student Handbook Amendment for Grading Practices 2024-2025

Approved by SST Board on 11/15/2024

### PK-8 Grades Make-Up Work

*\*Based on days of absence*

In order to provide the total assessment "picture" of a student's academic progress for a course, any student missing classroom instruction should be given the opportunity to receive the information that was missed. However, after being absent **nine days** in **the same semester**, the student will not be allowed to submit make-up assignments for credit in the grade book without a doctor's note for the rest of the semester. Students will still be allowed to take exams for credit. This will ensure instructional continuity and place importance on consistent attendance and daily study. Please note the following guidelines for make-up work:

- Students are responsible for asking for make-up work upon returning to class, but it can also be offered by the teacher.
- Students should receive credit for satisfactory make-up work if within the allowed absences or if a doctor's note is provided.
- Students may receive a zero until missed work is completed and turned in.
- Exceptions may be granted by the administration in extenuating circumstances.
- Make-up work, including tests, may be an altered version to assess what the student has learned.
- Teachers may assign alternate work to ensure that students who have been absent have sufficient opportunity to master the TEKS or to meet subject or course requirements.

### High School 9-12 Grades Make-Up Work

*\*Based on absences for the same period*

In order to provide the total assessment "picture" of a student's academic progress for a course, any student missing classroom instruction should be given the opportunity to receive the information that was missed. However, after **nine** absences in **the same course**





in **the same semester**, the student **will not** be allowed to submit make-up assignments for credit in the grade book without a doctor's note for the rest of the semester. Students will still be allowed to take exams for credit. This will ensure instructional continuity and place importance on consistent attendance and daily study. Please note the following guidelines for make-up work:

- Students are responsible for asking for make-up work upon returning to class, but it can also be offered by the teacher.
- Students should receive credit for satisfactory make-up work if within the allowed absences or if a doctor's note is provided.
- Students may receive a zero until missed work is completed and turned in.
- Exceptions may be granted by the administration in extenuating circumstances.
- Make-up work, including tests, may be an altered version to assess what the student has learned.
- Teachers may assign alternate work to ensure that students who have been absent have sufficient opportunity to master the TEKS or to meet subject or course requirements.