



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DIVISION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

# Student & Parent Handbook



**2023-2024  
Academic  
School Year**

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**Revisions to the Student and Parent Handbook are subject to change due to updates from the Texas Legislative session. Updates will be added as received in an addendum format to the 2023-2024 Student and Parent Handbook.**

Each year, your child’s school will require that you provide contact information, such as your current phone number and email address, for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child’s school, or the district. The district or school may generate automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are specifically related to your child. Denton ISD will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents for a variety of reasons such as; an emergency situation, health and wellbeing, academic progress, offer needed support or resources, and in the event of remote learning, contact information may be used to support student learning. For these reasons prompt notification of any change in contact information is crucial to your child’s campus maintaining timely communication with you. If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, please contact your child’s principal.

## SECTION I: PARENTAL RIGHTS

This section includes information related to certain rights of parents as specified in state or federal law.

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

#### CONSENT TO CONDUCT A PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Unless required under state or federal law, a district employee will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment, without obtaining prior written parental consent.

#### CONSENT TO HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTRUCTION

As a part of the district's instructional resources, students receive instruction related to human growth and development. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) is involved with the selection of course materials for such instruction.

#### CONSENT TO INSTRUCTION ON PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE, FAMILY VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Before a student receives instruction on the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence and human trafficking, the district must obtain written consent from the student's parent. Parents will be sent a request for written consent at least 14 days before the instruction will begin.

Students in middle school and high school receive instruction related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and human trafficking. The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) makes recommendations for instructional resources, and the school board adopts the materials and determines the specific content of the instruction.

In accordance with state law, a parent may:

- Review, receive a copy of, or purchase a copy of instructional materials depending on the copyright of the materials. As required by law, any instructional materials in the public domain used in this instruction will be posted on the district's website at the location indicated above,
- Remove his or her child from any part of this instruction without academic, disciplinary, or other penalties,
- Become involved in the development of this curriculum by becoming a member of the district's SHAC or attending SHAC meetings (See the campus principal for details).

Use the district's grievance procedure concerning a complaint. See **Complaints and Concerns** and FNG for information on the grievance and appeals process.

#### CONSENT TO PROVIDE A MENTAL-HEALTH CARE SERVICE

The district will not provide a mental health care service to a student or conduct a medical screening of a student as part of the district's intervention procedures except as permitted by law.

The district 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 district's mental health liaison 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.

Campus staff are trained on the Denton Multi-Tiered System of Supports (DMTSS) referral process. Through the DMTSS process students with early warning signs of mental health concerns are identified. The DMTSS committee works collaboratively with parents and staff to develop appropriate interventions to remove barriers to academic and mental health success.

The district has also established procedures for staff to notify the mental health liaison regarding a student who may need intervention. The mental health liaison can be reached at: [rdepeochristner@dentonisd.org](mailto:rdepeochristner@dentonisd.org) or 940-369-0610.

The mental health liaison can provide further information regarding these procedures as well as instructional resources on identifying risk factors, accessing resources for treatment or support on and off campus, and accessing available student accommodations provided on campus. For further information, see **Mental Health Support**.

#### CONSENT TO DISPLAY A STUDENT'S ORIGINAL WORKS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

Teachers may display student's work in classrooms or elsewhere on campus as recognition of student achievement without seeking prior parental consent. These displays may include personally identifiable student information. Student work includes artwork, special projects, photographs, original videos or voice recordings, and other original works. However, the district will seek parental consent before displaying a student's work on the district's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the district (such as a campus or classroom website), or in district publications, which may include printed materials, videos, or other methods of mass communication.

#### CONSENT TO RECORD A STUDENT WHEN NOT OTHERWISE PERMITTED BY LAW (INCLUDES VIDEO & AUDIO)

State law permits the school to make a video or voice recording without parental permission when it:

- Is to be used for school safety,
- Relates to classroom instruction or a cocurricular or extracurricular activity,
- Relates to media coverage of the school, or
- Relates to the promotion of student safety as provided by law for a student receiving special education services in certain settings.

In other circumstances, the district will seek written parental consent before making a video or voice recording of a student.

Please note that parents and visitors to a classroom, both virtual and in person, may not record video or audio or take photographs or other still images without permission from the teacher or other school official.

#### LIMITING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS BY DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

The district permits teachers and other approved employees to use electronic communications with students within the scope of professional responsibilities, as described by district guidelines.

For example, teachers may set up social networking pages for their classes that have information related to class work, homework, and tests. As a parent, you are welcome to join or become a member of such a page.

However, text messages sent to an individual student are only allowed if a district employee with responsibility for an extracurricular activity needs to communicate with a student participating in the extracurricular activity.

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

A parent who does not want his or her child to receive one-to-one electronic communications from a district employee should contact the campus principal (DH Local).

## OBJECTING TO THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, permits the district to disclose appropriately designated “directory information” from a child’s education records without written consent.

Directory information is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Examples include:

- A student’s photograph (for publication in the school yearbook);
- A student’s name and grade level (for communicating class and teacher assignments);
- The name, weight, and height of an athlete (for publication in a school athletic program);
- A list of student birthdays (for generating schoolwide or classroom recognition),
- A student’s name and photograph (posted on a district-approved and managed social media platform); and
- The names and grade levels of students submitted by the district to a local newspaper or other community publication (to recognize the A/B honor roll for a specific grading period).

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

The district requests that families living in a shelter for survivors of family violence or trafficking notify district personnel that the student currently resides in such a shelter. Families may want to opt out of the release of directory information so that the district does not release any information that might reveal the location of such a shelter.

As allowed by state law, the district has identified two directory information lists—one for school-sponsored purposes and a second for all other requests. For district publications and announcements, the district has designated the following as directory information: student name, address, telephone listing, electronic mail address, photograph, date of birth, major field of study, honors and awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent educational institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight, and height of members of athletic teams, and enrollment status.

If a parent does not object to the use of his or her child’s information for these school-sponsored purposes, the school will not ask permission each time the district wants to use the information for these purposes.

For all other purposes, the district has identified the following as directory information: student name. If a parent does not object to the use of the student’s information for these purposes, the school must release this information when requested by an outside entity or individual

**Note:** Review the information at **Authorized Inspection and Use of Student Records**.

## OBJECTING TO THE RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION TO MILITARY RECRUITERS AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

Unless a parent has advised the district not to release his or her student’s information, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the district to comply with requests by military recruiters or institutions of higher education for the student’s:

- Name,

- Address, and
- Telephone listing

Military recruiters may also have access to a student's district-provided email address, unless a parent has advised the district not to release this information.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THIRD-PARTY SURVEYS**

### ***CONSENT REQUIRED BEFORE STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN A FEDERALLY FUNDED SURVEY***

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) provides parents certain rights regarding participation in surveys, the collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. A parent has the right to consent before a student is required to submit to a survey funded by the U.S. Department of Education that concerns any of the following protected areas:

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

A parent can inspect the survey or other instrument and any corresponding instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For more information, see policy EF(LEGAL).]

### ***“OPTING OUT” OF PARTICIPATION IN OTHER TYPES OF SURVEYS OR SCREENINGS AND THE DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION***

The PPRA gives parents the right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of:

- Activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from the child for the purpose of marketing, selling, or otherwise disclosing that information to others.
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student.

Exceptions are hearing, vision, or spinal screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA for more information.]

As a parent, you may inspect:

- A survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.
- Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
- Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- Instructional materials used as part of educational resources.

The US Department Of Education provides extensive information about the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, including a PPRA Complaint Form <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra-general-guidance>.

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

### **RECITING A PORTION OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN GRADES 3–12**

State law designates the week of September 17 as Celebrate Freedom Week and requires all social studies classes provide:

- Instruction concerning the intent, meaning, and importance of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, and
- A specific recitation from the Declaration of Independence for students in grades 3–12.

Per state law, a student may be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence if:

- A parent provides a written statement requesting that his or her child be excused,
- The district determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or
- A parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the U.S. government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK(LEGAL).]

### **RECITING THE PLEDGES TO THE U.S. AND TEXAS FLAGS**

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

### **RELIGIOUS OR MORAL BELIEFS**

A parent may remove his or her child temporarily from the classroom if a scheduled instructional activity conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs. The removal may not be used to avoid a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, the student must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by state law.

### **SAFETY EDUCATION**

The Community Safety Education Act (TAC, §74.39) requires school districts and charter schools to provide instruction to students in grades 9-12 on proper interaction with peace officers during traffic stops and other in-person encounters. In Denton ISD, this instruction will be provided in the student's sophomore year through their World History class.

### **TUTORING OR TEST PREPARATION**

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

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

### **INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used for the classroom, and to examine tests that have been administered, whether instruction is delivered in-person, virtually or remotely. A parent is also entitled to request that the school allow the student to take home instructional materials the student uses. The school may ask the student to return the materials at the beginning of the next school day. A parent must contact the school principal if the student does not have reliable access to technology at home.

### **NOTICES OF CERTAIN STUDENT MISCONDUCT TO NONCUSTODIAL PARENT**

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

### **STUDENT RECORDS**

#### ***ACCESSING STUDENT RECORDS***

A parent may review their child's student records. These records include:

- Attendance records,
- Test scores,
- Grades,
- Disciplinary records,
- Counseling records,
- Psychological records,
- Applications for admission,
- Health and immunization information,
- Other medical records,
- Teacher and school counselor evaluations,
- Reports of behavioral patterns,
- Records relating to assistance provided for learning difficulties, including information collected during any intervention strategies used with your child, as the term intervention strategy is defined by law,
- State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child,
- Teaching materials and tests used in your child's classroom.

#### ***AUTHORIZED INSPECTION AND USE OF STUDENT RECORDS***

A federal law, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA, affords parents and eligible students certain rights with respect to the student's education records. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older or who is attending an institution of postsecondary education. These rights, as discussed in this section as well as at OBJECTING TO THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION, are:

- The right to inspect and review student records within 45 days after the day the school receives a request for access.

- The right to request an amendment to a student record the parent or eligible student believes is inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of FERPA.
- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning failures by the school to comply with FERPA requirements.

For more information about how to file a complaint, see <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/file-a-complaint>.

Both FERPA and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy.

Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information.

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

Inspection and release of student records is primarily restricted to an eligible student or a student's parents unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records. A parent's rights regarding access to student records are not affected by the parent's marital status.

Federal law requires that control of the records goes to the student as soon as the student:

- Reaches the age of 18,
- Is emancipated by a court, or
- Enrolls in a postsecondary educational institution.

However, the parent may continue to have access to the records if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and, under limited circumstances, when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

FERPA permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records without written consent of the parent or eligible student when school officials have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records.

Legitimate educational interest may include:

- Working with the student;
- Considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student's case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities;
- Compiling statistical data;
- Reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official's professional responsibility; or
- Investigating or evaluating programs.

School officials may include:

- Board members and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals;
- Teachers, school counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff (including district health or medical staff);
- A person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a specific institutional service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, third-party vendor that offers



online programs or software, auditor, medical consultant, therapist, student resource officer, or volunteer);

- A person appointed to serve on a team to support the district's safe and supportive school program;
- A parent or student serving on a school committee; or
- A parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties.

FERPA also permits the disclosure of personally identifiable information without written consent:

- To authorized representatives of various governmental agencies, including juvenile service providers, the U.S. Comptroller General's office, the U.S. Attorney General's office, the U.S. Secretary of Education, the Texas Education Agency, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture's office, and Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworkers or, in certain cases, other child welfare representatives.
- To individuals or entities granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.
- To another school, school district/system, or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.
- In connection with financial aid for which a student has applied or which the student has received.
- To accrediting organizations to carry out accrediting functions.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction.
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency.
- When the district discloses directory information-designated details [see OBJECTING TO THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION for opportunities to prohibit this disclosure].

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

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

A parent or eligible student who wishes to inspect the student's records should submit a written request to the records custodian identifying the records he or she wishes to inspect.

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address for each campus principal is at <https://www.dentonisd.org/>.

A parent or eligible student may inspect the student's records and request a correction or amendment if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights.

A request to correct a student's record should be submitted to the appropriate records custodian. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended because of the

hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record.

Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course or on an examination is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG(LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district's grading policy.

[See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG (LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences**, and **Complaints and Concerns** for an overview of the process.]

The district's policy regarding student records found at policy FL is available from the district's website at [www.dentonisd.org/trustees](http://www.dentonisd.org/trustees)

**Note:** The parent's or eligible student's right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher's personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

## TEACHER AND STAFF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

A parent may request information regarding the professional qualifications of his or her child's teachers, including whether the teacher:

- Has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction,
- Has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived, and
- Is currently teaching in the field of discipline of his or her certification.

A parent has the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to the child.

## STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES OR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

### CHILDREN OF MILITARY FAMILIES

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

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

The district will excuse absences related to a student visiting a parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who is:

- Called to active duty,
- On leave, or
- Returning from a deployment of at least four months.

The district will permit **no more than five** excused absences per year for this purpose. For the absence to be excused, the absence must occur no earlier than the 60th day before deployment or no later than the 30th day after the parent's return from deployment.

Additional information may be found at [Military Family Resources at the Texas Education Agency](#).

## PARENTAL ROLE IN CERTAIN CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS

### ***MULTIPLE BIRTH SIBLINGS***

State law permits a parent of multiple-birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets) assigned to the same grade and campus to request in writing that the children be placed in either the same classroom or separate classrooms.

Written requests must be submitted by the 14th day after the students' enrollment. [See policy FDB(LEGAL).]

### ***SAFETY TRANSFERS/ASSIGNMENTS***

As a parent, you may:

- Request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the district to have been a victim of bullying, which includes cyberbullying, as the term is defined by Education Code 37.0832. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See your campus principal for information.
- Consult with district administrators if your child has been determined by the district to have engaged in bullying and the board decides to transfer your child to another classroom or campus. The board will consult with the parent of a child who has engaged in bullying before deciding to transfer the child to another campus. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the principal for more information. [See **Bullying**, policy FDB, and policy FFI.]
- Request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDE.]
- Request the transfer of your child to another district campus if your child has been the victim of an assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether the assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. If the victim does not wish to transfer, the district will transfer the assailant in accordance with policy FDE.

## SERVICE/ASSISTANCE ANIMAL USE BY STUDENTS

A parent of a student who uses a service/assistance animal because of the student's disability must submit a written request to the principal before bringing the service/assistance animal on campus. The district will try to accommodate a request as soon as possible but will do so within ten district business days.

## STUDENTS IN FOSTER CARE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

A student in the conservatorship (custody) of the state who enrolls in the district after the beginning of the school year will be allowed credit-by examination opportunities at any point during the year.

The district will assess the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district.

The district will award partial course credit when the student only passes one half of a two-half course.

To provide educational stability, the district will assist any student who is currently placed or newly placed in foster care (temporary or permanent custody of the state) with the enrollment and registration process, as well as other educational services throughout the student's enrollment in the district.

A student in the conservatorship of the state who is moved outside the district's or school's attendance boundaries—or who is initially placed in the conservatorship of the state and moved outside the district's or school's boundaries—is entitled to remain at the school the student was attending prior to the placement or move until the student reaches the highest grade level at that particular school.

If a student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, the student can request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets its graduation criteria.

For a student in the conservatorship of the state who is eligible for a tuition and fee exemption under state law and likely to be in care on the day preceding the student's 18th birthday, the district will:

- Assist the student with the completion of applications for admission or financial aid;
- Arrange and accompany the student on campus visits;
- Assist in researching and applying for private or institution- sponsored scholarships;
- Identify whether the student is a candidate for appointment to a military academy;
- Assist the student in registering and preparing for college entrance examinations, including (subject to the availability of funds) arranging for the payment of examination fees by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); and
- Coordinate contact between the student and a liaison officer for students formerly in the conservatorship of the state.

Please contact the district's foster care liaison, at (940) 369-0599 with any questions.

[See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration and Students in Foster Care**]

## HOMELESS STUDENTS

Parents are encouraged to inform the district if you or your child are experiencing homelessness. District staff can share resources with you that may be able to assist you and your family. For more information on services for homeless students, contact the campus principal.

Children who are homeless will be provided flexibility regarding certain district provisions, including:

- Proof of residency requirements;
- Immunization requirements;
- Educational program placement (if the student is unable to provide previous academic records or misses an application deadline during a period of homelessness);
- Credit-by-examination opportunities at any point during the year (if the student enrolled in the district after the beginning of the school year), per State Board of Education (SBOE) rules;
- Assessment of the student's available records to determine transfer of credit for subjects and courses taken before the student's enrollment in the district;
- Awarding partial credit when a student passes only one semester of a two-semester course;
- Eligibility requirements for participation in extracurricular activities;
- Graduation requirements.

Federal law allows a homeless student to remain enrolled in the "school of origin" or to enroll in a new school in the attendance area where the student is currently residing.

If a homeless student in grade 11 or 12 transfers to another district but does not meet the graduation requirements of the receiving district, state law allows the student to request a diploma from the previous district if the student meets the criteria to graduate from the previous district.

A student or parent who is dissatisfied by the district's eligibility, school selection, or enrollment decision may appeal through policy FNG(LOCAL). The district will expedite local timelines, when possible, for prompt dispute resolution. Please contact the district's Homeless Liaison, at (940) 369-0599 with any questions. [See **Credit by Examination for Advancement/Acceleration and Homeless Students**]

## STUDENTS WHO HAVE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES OR WHO NEED SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES OR SECTION 504 SERVICES

For those students who are having difficulty in the regular classroom, all school districts must consider tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). The implementation of MTSS has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

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 whether the student needs specific aids, accommodations, or services. A parent may request an evaluation for special education or Section 504 services at any time.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as IDEA, is a federal law that gives eligible students with disabilities the right to receive special education services and assistance in school. To be eligible for special education services, a student with a disability must need instruction that is specially designed to meet the student's unique needs based on that disability. For more information, please click on the following link: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/101971>.

### ***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 to a district administrative employee of the school district, the district must respond no later than **15 school days** after receiving the request. At that time, the district must give the parent prior written notice of whether it agrees or refuses to evaluate the student, along with a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards. If the district agrees to evaluate the student, it must also give the parent the opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation.

**Note:** A request for a special education evaluation may be made verbally; it does not need to be made in writing. Districts must still comply with all federal prior written notices and procedural safeguard requirements as well as the requirements for identifying, locating, and evaluating children who are suspected of having a disability and in need of special education. However, a verbal request does not require the district to respond within the 15 school-day timeline.

If the district 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. 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 the district 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 30 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 must give the parent a copy of the evaluation report at no cost.

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

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

For questions regarding post-secondary transitions, including the transition from education to employment, for students receiving special education services, contact the district's special education Transition and Employment designee at 940-369-4096.

#### **504 REFERRALS**

Each school district must have standards and procedures in place for the evaluation and placement of students in the district's Section 504 program. Districts 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 the district Coordinator of Intervention Services at 940-369-0443. [See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504.**]

Visit these websites for information regarding students with disabilities and the family:

- [Legal Framework for the Child-Centered Special Education Process](#)
- [Partners Resource Network](#)
- [Special Education Information Center](#)
- [Texas Project First](#)
- [Special Education – Texas Education Agency](#)

#### **NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING DIFFICULTIES PROVIDED TO STUDENTS IN GENERAL EDUCATION**

In accordance with state law, the district will annually notify parents if their child receives assistance for learning difficulties. Details of such assistance can include intervention strategies. This notice is not intended for those students already enrolled in a special education program.

#### **A STUDENT WHO RECEIVES SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES WITH OTHER SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN IN THE HOME**

If a student is receiving special education services at a campus outside his or her attendance zone, state law permits the parent or guardian to request that other students residing in the household be transferred to the same campus if the grade level for the transferring student is offered on that campus. Requests will be considered based on available capacity at the grade level.

The student receiving special education services would be entitled to transportation; however, the district is not required to provide transportation to other children in the household.

The parent or guardian should contact the school principal regarding transportation needs prior to requesting a transfer for other children in the home. [See policy FDB(LOCAL).]

#### STUDENTS WHO SPEAK A PRIMARY LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH

A student may be eligible to receive specialized language support if his or her primary language is not English, and the student is identified as an emergent bilingual formerly known as English Language Learner.

If the student meets eligibility criteria, the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will determine the types of services the student needs, including language accommodations related to classroom instruction, state and local assessments, placement in Dual Language, English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and/or ESL core content classes.

[See **Emergent Bilinguals**.]

#### STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IMPAIRMENTS PROTECTED UNDER SECTION 504

A student determined to have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, as defined by law, and who does not otherwise qualify for special education services, may qualify for protections under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 504 is a federal law designed to prohibit discrimination against individuals with disabilities. When an evaluation is requested, a committee will be formed to determine if the child needs services and supports under Section 504 to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), as this defined in federal law.

The designated person to contact regarding a referral for evaluation applicable to Section 504 is the Coordinator of Intervention Services at 940-369-0443. [Also see policy FB.]

[See **A Student Who Has Learning Difficulties or Who Needs Special Education or Section 504 Services** and policy FB for more information.]

#### TRANSFERS

The District provides opportunities for students to transfer from one school to another if space is available and/or an extenuating or special circumstance exists. Please view this information on the district's transfer information website: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Domain/12751>.

UIL eligibility rules apply. Parents can see these rules on the UIL website: <https://www.uil texas.org/policy/constitution/general/eligibility>.

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

This section contains important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. It is organized alphabetically to serve as a quick-reference guide. Where applicable, the topics are further organized by grade level. Parents and students should take a moment together to become familiar with the issues addressed in this section. For guidance on a particular topic, please contact your campus administrator.

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## **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's education. The student and parent should avoid unnecessary absences.

Two important state laws—one dealing with compulsory attendance and the other with how attendance affects the award of a student's final grade or course credit—are discussed below.

### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE Required State Law**

#### ***PREKINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN***

Students who voluntarily enroll in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school and are subject to the compulsory attendance requirements if they remain enrolled.

#### ***AGE 6 – 18***

State law 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.

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

[See policies FEA(LEGAL) and FED(LEGAL) for more information.]

#### ***AGE 19 AND OLDER***

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 19th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. If the student incurs more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See policy FEA for more information.]

### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE EXEMPTIONS**

#### ***ALL GRADE LEVELS***

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for the following activities and events, if the student makes up all work:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining U.S. citizenship;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders, **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; and
- Absences resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, with certification by a physician.

For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,

- An activity required under a court-ordered service plan; or
- Any other court-ordered activity provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.



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

### ***SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS***

The district will allow a student who is 15 years of age or older to be absent for one day to obtain a learner license and one day to obtain a driver's license. The student will be required to provide documentation of their visit to the driver's license office for each absence and must make up any missed work.

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

An absence will also be considered an exemption if a student 17 years of age or older is pursuing enlistment in a branch of the U.S. armed services or Texas National Guard, provided the absence does not exceed four days and the student provides verification to the district of these activities.

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

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

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

### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE FAILURE TO COMPLY**

#### ***ALL GRADE LEVELS***

**School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law.**

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

**Denton ISD will enforce the Texas Compulsory Attendance Laws as follows:**

- Automated phone calls and emails will be sent to parents or guardians notifying them when a student has been marked as absent. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to ensure that he/she provides current and up to date contact information to the school.
- All students will be issued a warning letter and request for conference when attendance records reflect that the student has absences without an excuse on three days or parts of days in a four-week period.
- After a student has been issued a warning notice and his/her verified attendance record reflects that he/she has three unexcused absences within a four-week period, the campus will begin implementation of Truancy Prevention Measures for the student.
- If a student fails to attend school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year and those absences have been verified by the campus as unexcused, students 12 and older may be referred to the prosecutor of the truancy court of the county in which the

school is located. At this point, the court could also file a criminal complaint against parents who contribute to the nonattendance of their child, regardless of their child's age.

- Each campus will provide truancy prevention measures for students who exhibit attendance issues to develop a plan to improve the student's overall attendance.
- Since the law addresses absences for "all or part" of a school day, chronic tardies or Parts of Day Absences (POD) may be referred to the appropriate authorities as unexcused absences.

### ***STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES***

If a student with a disability is experiencing attendance issues, the student's ARD committee or Section 504 committee will be notified, and the 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.

### ***AGES 6-18***

When a student ages 6–18 incurs three or more unexcused absences within a four-week period, the law requires the school to send notice to the parent. The notice will:

- Remind the parent of his or her duty to monitor the student's attendance and require the student to attend school;
- Request a conference between school administrators and the parent; and
- Inform the parent that the district will initiate truancy prevention measures, which may include a behavior improvement plan, school-based community service, referrals to counseling or other social services, or other appropriate measures.

For any questions about student absences, parents should contact the campus attendance clerk/liaison or any other campus administrator. You may also contact Student Support Services at 940-369-0431 with questions about student absences you may also review the district's [Attendance Matters](#) website.

A court of law may impose penalties against the parent if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. The district 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.

If a student aged 12–18 incurs ten or more unexcused absences within a six-month period in the same school year, the district, in most circumstances, will refer the student to truancy court.

### ***AGE 19 AND OLDER***

After a student aged 19 or older incurs a third unexcused absence, the district is required by law to send the student a letter explaining that the district may revoke the student's enrollment for the remainder of the school year if/when the student accumulates more than five unexcused absences in a semester. As an alternative to revoking a student's enrollment, the district may implement a behavior improvement plan.

### ***ADDITIONAL ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES***

According to TEC 25.086, a child is exempt from compulsory school attendance if the child:

- Attends a private or parochial school
- Is eligible for Special Education services but cannot be properly served by the district
- Has temporary physical or mental condition certified by a physician making the child's attendance infeasible
- Is legally expelled and mandatory JJAEP attendance is not required
- Is at least 17 years of age and:

- Is attending GED classes with parent permission, court order, is residing separate and apart from the parent, or is homeless.
- Has received a high school diploma or GED.
- Is at least 16 years of age and is attending GED classes if:
  - The child is recommended by a public agency with supervision or court order.
  - Is enrolled in Job Corps.

#### ATTENDANCE FOR CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

In **high school** classes that are blocked and meet every other day, **a student with more than 4 absences in the fall semester or 5 absences in the spring semester may lose credit in that class.** Students in **unblocked high school, or middle school and elementary school classes** that meet every day, **may lose credit if they have more than 8 absences in the fall semester or 9 absences in the spring semester.**

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

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

Except for absences due to serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment, **all absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days.** In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance review committee will use the following guidelines:

- If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance** will be considered extenuating circumstances for purposes of attendance for credit or the award of a final grade.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district.
- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will review absences incurred based on the student's participation in board-approved extracurricular activities. These absences will be considered by the attendance committee as extenuating circumstances in accordance with the absences allowed under FM(LOCAL) if the student made up the work missed in each class.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board by following policy FNG(LOCAL).

The actual number of days a student must be in attendance to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

#### OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE TAKING TIME (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district will take official attendance for traditional in-person instruction every day at 9:30 am (elementary) 10:30 am (secondary).

A student absent for any portion of the day should follow the procedures below to provide documentation of the absence.

#### DOCUMENTATION AFTER AN ABSENCE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

When a student is absent from school, the reason for that absence must be provided in writing to the school, **within 3 days of the students' return to school**. Documentation for a student's absence can be uploaded at: <https://forms.dentonisd.org/Forms/absence-note>

Phone calls will not be accepted as documentation. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older or is an emancipated minor under state law.

The campus will document in its attendance records for the student whether the absence is considered by the district to be excused or unexcused.

**Note:** The district is not required to excuse any absence, even if the parent provides a note explaining the absence, unless the absence is an exemption under compulsory attendance laws.

#### *UNEXCUSED/UNVERIFIED ABSENCES*

**Unexcused or Unverified absences can be defined by, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Being absent without parental consent or knowledge
- Leaving campus during class or a lunch period without permission from the campus administration
- Being in an unauthorized area of the school or campus without permission
- Willfully failing or refusing to attend school
- Being absent without written notification from a parent or legal guardian
- Religious festivals, ceremonies or other events not recognized as a Religious Holy Day
- Parts of Day Absence (POD) without an accompanying note from a health care provider (this includes arriving late or leaving early)
- Weddings
- Graduations
- Vacations/Trips
- Any other absence that is not covered under district policy or state law.

#### DOCTOR'S NOTE AFTER AN ABSENCE FOR ILLNESS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Upon return to school, **a student absent for five or more consecutive days because of a personal illness must provide a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school**. Otherwise, the student's absence may be considered unexcused and, if so, would be in violation of compulsory attendance laws. A doctor's note must have an actual return-to-school date. Doctor's notes that indicate a student may return to school 'when symptoms are no longer present' will cover 4 days of absences.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance review committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that

caused the student's absence from school to determine whether the absence or absences will be excused or unexcused. [See policy FEC(LOCAL).]

#### ***CERTIFICATION OF ABSENCE DUE TO SEVERE ILLNESS OR TREATMENT***

If a student is absent because of a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes a student's attendance infeasible, a parent must provide certification from a physician licensed to practice in Texas specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of absence related to the illness or treatment.

#### **DRIVER LICENSE ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)**

A currently enrolled student seeking a driver's license shall submit the Texas Department of Public Safety Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Form (VOE), signed by the parent, to the campus central office at least 10 days before it is needed. The district will issue a VOE only if the student meets class credit or attendance requirements. The VOE form is available at:

[Texas Verification Of Enrollment Form](#). Further information may be found on the Texas Department of Public Safety website: [Texas Department of Public Safety](#).

The VOE form verifies the student's enrollment and 90% or greater attendance in the most recently completed semester of school. Students with an attendance record of less than 90% may not be issued a VOE form and may not be able to obtain a Texas driver license.

See **Compulsory Attendance-Exemptions for Secondary Grade Levels** for information on excused absences for obtaining a learner or driver's license.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

- The Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for the district, compiled by TEA, the state agency that oversees public education, based on academic factors and ratings;
- A School Report Card (SRC) for each campus in the district compiled by TEA based on academic factors and ratings;
- The district's financial management report, which will include the financial accountability rating assigned to the district by TEA; and
- Information compiled by TEA for the submission of a federal report card that is required by federal law.
- Information about these can be found on the district's website at <https://www.dentonisd.org/> and copies of these reports are available upon request in each principal's office.

TEA also maintains additional accountability and accreditation information at [TEA Performance Reporting Division](#).

#### **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 test and consult with a military recruiter. Please contact the campus career counselor for information about this opportunity.

## **BULLYING (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The district strives to prevent bullying, in accordance with the district's policies, by promoting a respectful school climate; encouraging reporting of bullying incidents, including anonymous reporting; and investigating and addressing reported bullying incidents.

Bullying is defined in Section 37.0832 of the Education Code 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 fear of 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;
- Materially and substantially disrupts the educational process or the orderly operation of a classroom or school; or
- Infringes on the rights of the victim at school.

Bullying includes cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined in state law as bullying that is done using any electronic communication device, including using:

- A cellular or other type of telephone
- A computer
- A camera
- Electronic mail
- Instant messaging
- Text messaging
- A social media application
- An internet website
- Any other internet-based communication tool.
- Bullying is prohibited by the district and could include:
- Hazing
- Threats
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Confinement
- Assault
- Demands for money
- Destruction of property
- Theft of valued possessions
- name-calling
- Rumor-spreading
- Ostracism.

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

any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct. The district will also provide notice to the parent of the alleged victim and the parent of the student alleged to have engaged in bullying. Any student may anonymously report an alleged incident of bullying through the STOPit App. Each campus has its own access code. For more information, review the campus website or contact the campus principal.

If the results of an investigation indicate that bullying has 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.

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

Upon the recommendation of the administration, the board may, in response to an identified case of bullying, decide to transfer a student found to have engaged in bullying to another classroom at the campus. In consultation with the student's parent, the student may also be transferred to another campus in the district.

The parent of a student who has been determined by the district to be a victim of bullying may request that his or her child be transferred to another classroom or campus within the district. [See **Safety Transfers/Assignments**]

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

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

[See **Safety Transfers/Assignments, Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation, Hazing**, policy FFI, and the district improvement plan, a copy of which can be viewed in the campus office.]

## **CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAMS (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)**

The district offers career and technical education programs in the following career clusters:

Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources, Architecture & Construction, Arts, A/V Technology, & Communications, Business, Marketing, & Finance, Education & Training, Health Science, Hospitality & Tourism, Human Services, Information Technology, Law & Public Service, Manufacturing, Science, Technology, Engineering & Math, Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics.

Admission to these programs is based on completion of required prerequisites, student interest and aptitude, age appropriateness and class space availability.

District policy prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap in its vocational programs, services, or activities, 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.

District policy also prohibits discrimination based on 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.

The district will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

[See **Nondiscrimination Statement** for the name and contact information for the Title IX coordinator and ADA/Section 504 coordinator, who will address certain allegations of discrimination.]

## **CELEBRATIONS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

Although a parent or grandparent is not prohibited from providing food for a school-designated function or for children in the child's or grandchild's classroom for the child's birthday, please be aware that children in the school may have severe allergies to certain food products. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss this with the child's teacher prior to bringing any food in this circumstance. Occasionally, the school or a class may host certain functions or celebrations tied to learning that will involve food. The school or teacher will notify students and parents of any known food allergies when soliciting potential volunteers for bringing food products.

## **CHILD FIND PROCEDURES**

Denton ISD is required to implement a comprehensive Child Find Process in which district personnel actively search for all individuals, birth through 21 years of age with disabilities [32 CFR §300.111(a-c), and §300.131(b); 300§534]; [19 TAC §89.1011].

The Child Find process is to identify, locate and evaluate all children with disabilities who need special education and related services who reside within the school district's boundaries.

Denton ISD offers a comprehensive system of "Child Find" for identifying, locating, and evaluating all individuals ages birth through 21. The Denton ISD Child Find process seeks to identify all individuals who fall within the district's jurisdiction regardless of whether they may or may not be in school and severity of the disability. As is required by law, Child Find activities apply to high mobility children with disabilities, such as children who are migrant or homeless, and to children who are suspected of having a disability although they are advancing from grade to grade.

Denton ISD promotes "Child Find" through public awareness activities and through ongoing contact with childcare facilities, preschools, private schools, parochial schools, and home schools when applicable. These activities are comparable to the "Child Find" activities utilized to identify children with disabilities who are in public school. Denton ISD consults with representatives from private schools and other agencies to determine how to best carry out these activities.

If you determine that you are knowledgeable about an individual who may need special education or related services and that individual is between the ages of birth and 21 years, please contact Denton ISD special education services at 940-369-4075, or the school campus most near you.

## **CHILD ABUSE, TRAFFICKING, AND OTHER MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The district has established a plan for addressing child abuse, trafficking, and other maltreatment of children, which may be accessed at <https://www.dentonisd.org/>. Trafficking includes both sex and labor trafficking.

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent this conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in this conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.



## WARNING SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse in the Texas Family Code is defined as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as a failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent this conduct with a child. A person who compels or encourages a child to engage in this conduct commits abuse. It is illegal to make or possess child pornography or to display such material to a child.

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

A child who has been or is being sexually abused may exhibit physical, behavioral, or emotional warning signs, including:

- Difficulty sitting or walking, pain in the genital areas, and claims of stomachaches and headaches;
- 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; or
- Withdrawal, depression, sleeping and eating disorders, and problems in school.

Be aware that children and adolescents who have experienced dating violence may show similar physical, behavioral, and emotional warning signs. [See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation**]

## WARNING SIGNS OF TRAFFICKING

Child trafficking of any sort is prohibited by the Penal Code. 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 are often trusted members of a child's community, such as friends, romantic partners, family members, mentors, and coaches, although traffickers frequently contact victims online.

Possible warning signs of human trafficking in children include:

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

Additional warning signs of labor trafficking in children include:

- Being unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips;
- Being employed but not having a school-authorized work permit;
- Being employed and having a work permit but clearly working outside the permitted hours for students;
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours;
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss;

- Not being in control of his or her own money;
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student's caregiver; and
- A desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so.

## REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO CHILD 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, to report the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services (CPS).

A child who has experienced any type of abuse or neglect should be encouraged to seek out a trusted adult. Children may be more reluctant to disclose sexual abuse than physical abuse and neglect and may only disclose this abuse indirectly. As a parent or trusted adult, 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.

If your child is a victim of abuse, trafficking, or other maltreatment, the school counselor or principal will provide information on counseling options for you and your child available in your area. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (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 the CPS division of the DFPS at 1-800-252-5400 or on the web at [Texas Abuse Hotline Website](#).

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

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

## CLASS RANK / HIGHEST RANKING STUDENT

All the eligible students with a 5.0 GPA shall be recognized as valedictorians. All eligible students with the next highest GPA shall be recognized as salutatorians. To be eligible for such recognition, a student must:

1. Have been continuously enrolled in the same high school in the District for his or her entire senior year immediately preceding graduation;
2. Have completed the Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program or the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation program with endorsements;
3. Be graduating after exactly eight semesters of enrollment in high school; however, students who will not be classified as seniors during both the fall and spring semesters of the graduating and awarding year may become eligible for the honor by filing a written declaration of intent to graduate with the building principal on or before the tenth day of school; and
4. Have carried at least six classes each semester; however, exceptions must be approved by the administration, (e.g., students on homebound instruction or students concurrently enrolled in a university).

The local eligibility criteria for recognition as the valedictorian shall not affect recognition of the highest ranking graduate for purposes of receiving the scholarship certificate from the state of Texas.

In case of a tie for the highest-ranking student, the District shall compute the weighted numerical grade average to a sufficient number of decimal places until the tie is broken.

## **CLASS RANK/ADDITIONAL TOPICS**

Additional policies, practices, and guidelines related to class rank, GPA calculation, the grade points system are found in the Denton ISD Course Planning Guide which is updated annually and approved by the Board of Trustees to align with the course planning timeline: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/46084>

## **CLASS SCHEDULES (SECONDARY ONLY)**

Policies, practices, and guidelines related to class schedules and dismissals are found in the Denton ISD Course Planning Guide which is updated annually and approved by the Board of Trustees to align with the course planning timeline: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/46084>

## **COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS**

Upon a student's registration for his or her first course that is required for high school graduation, the district will provide written notice concerning automatic college admission, the curriculum requirements for financial aid, and the benefits of completing the requirements for automatic admission and financial aid.

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

- Completes the distinguished level of achievement under the foundation graduation program (a student must graduate with at least one endorsement and must have taken Algebra II as one of the four required math courses); or
- Satisfies the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks.

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

The University of Texas at Austin may limit the number of students automatically admitted to 75 percent of the University's enrollment capacity for incoming resident freshmen. For students who are eligible to enroll in the University of Texas at Austin during the summer or fall 2023 term, the University will be admitting the top 6% of the high school's graduating class who meet the above requirements. Additional applicants will be considered by the University through a holistic review process.

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

Students and parents should contact the school counselor for further information about automatic admissions, the application process, and deadlines. [See also **Class Rank/Highest Ranking Student** for information specifically related to how the district calculates a student's rank in class and **Graduation Requirements** for information associated with the foundation graduation program].

## **COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES (SECONDARY ONLY)**

Policies, practices, and guidelines related to earning college credit courses while in high school are found in the Denton ISD Course Planning Guide which is updated annually and approved by the Board of Trustees to align with the course planning timeline: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/46084>.

## **COMMUNICATIONS – AUTOMATED (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

### **PARENT CONTACT INFORMATION**

A parent is legally required to provide in writing the parent's contact information, including address, phone number, and email address.

A parent must provide the contact information to the district upon enrollment and again within two weeks after the beginning of each following school year while the student is enrolled in the district.

If the parent's contact information changes during the school year, the parent must update the information in writing no more than two weeks after the date the information changes.

A parent may update contact information by contacting the school's registrar.

### **EMERGENCY**

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

[See **Safety** for information regarding contact with parents during an emergency.]

### **NON-EMERGENCY**

Each year, your child's school will require that you provide contact information, such as your current phone number and email address, in order for the school to communicate items specific to your child, your child's school, or the district.

The district or school may generate automated or pre-recorded messages, text messages, or real-time phone or email communications that are specifically related to your child. Denton ISD will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents for a variety of reasons such as; an emergency situation, health and wellbeing, academic progress, offer needed support or resources, and in the event of remote learning, contact information may be used to support student learning. For these reasons prompt notification of any change in contact information is crucial to your child's campus maintaining timely communication with you.

Standard messaging rates of your wireless phone carrier may apply.

If you have specific requests or needs related to how the district contacts you, or if you wish to opt out of text messages, please contact your child's principal.

### **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING INFORMATION**

Each year, parents are asked to complete an emergency release form to provide contact information in the event that the district needs to notify parents of early dismissal, delayed opening, or restricted access to a campus because of severe weather, a security threat, or another emergency cause.

The district will rely on contact information on file with the district to communicate with parents in an emergency, which may include real-time or automated messages. It is crucial to notify your child's school when a phone number changes.

If the campus must close, delay opening, or restrict access to the building because of an emergency, the district will also alert the community in the following ways:

- Post a notice on the district’s website at [www.dentonisd.org](http://www.dentonisd.org);
- Post information on Social Media outlets; and
- Post information on local TV sources.

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS**

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

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

## **COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS**

Communities in Schools of North Texas is administered by the Texas Education Agency and is part of an innovative national approach to dropout prevention. Daytime mentoring and social service support programs through CISNT. CISNT programs offer services through six components: supportive guidance and counseling; health and human services; parental and family involvement; career awareness and employment; enrichment activities and educational enhancement. For more information about Communities in Schools, North Texas visit. [www.cisnt.org](http://www.cisnt.org).

## **CONDUCT – ALL GRADE LEVELS**

### **APPLICABILITY OF SCHOOL RULES**

As required by law, the board has adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior, both on and off campus, during remote and in-person instruction as well as on district vehicles, and the consequences for violation of these standards.

The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules.

During any periods of instruction during the summer months, the Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct in place for the year immediately preceding the summer period shall apply, unless the district amends either or both documents for the purposes of summer instruction.

### **CAMPUS BEHAVIOR COORDINATOR**

By law, each campus has a campus behavior coordinator to apply discipline management techniques and administer consequences for certain student misconduct, as well as provide a point of contact for student misconduct.

Contact your campus principal to find the designated campus behavior coordinator.

## DELIVERIES

Except in emergencies, delivery of messages or packages to students will not be allowed during instructional time. A parent may leave a message or a package, such as a forgotten lunch, for the student to pick up from the front office during a passing period or lunch.

Delivery of foods for students from third party vendors will not be permitted.

## DISRUPTIONS OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS

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

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.

Disruption of classes or other school activities while on district property or on public property that is within 500 feet of district property includes: making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud or profane language or any misconduct.

Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district is also considered a disruption.

## FIGHTING PHYSICAL CONTACT MUTUAL COMBAT

Physical contact with the implied intent to harm will not be tolerated on school property or while attending a school sponsored or school-related event, on or off school property. If an individual is physically confronted by another student, the student should avoid striking back and alert an adult or administrator who can handle the situation. Regardless of who starts a fight, if both students participate, both students will be disciplined according to the student code of conduct. While administrators may consider whether a student acted in self-defense, a claim of self-defense is not a complete defense to avoid disciplinary action unless there is documented evidence that the student could not flee. Any time one person makes physical contact with another with the implied intent to harm, the act, depending on the severity, may be considered physical contact, assault by contact, or assault with bodily injury. However, at the point when the receiver of the physical contact retaliates, the infraction then becomes mutual combat/fighting for both students. School administration may issue consequences according to the student code of conduct for either or both students.

## PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION

To maintain a mature and respectful atmosphere, students are reminded that public displays of affection are considered unsuitable in an educational setting. These displays include, but are not limited to, kissing, embracing, and/or other forms of physical fraternization. Students may be disciplined according to the student code of conduct.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the

same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

Students seeking to bring a guest to a social event should follow the guidelines established by the campus. Anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

If you are interested in serving as a chaperone for a school social event, contact the campus principal after completing a volunteer application.

## **COUNSELING**

The district has a comprehensive school counseling program that includes:

- Guidance resources to help students develop their full educational potential, including the student's interests and career objectives;
- A responsive services component to intervene on behalf of any student whose immediate personal concerns or problems put the student's continued educational, career, personal, or social development at risk;
- An individual planning system to guide a student as the student plans, monitors, and manages the student's own educational, career, personal, and social development;
- Systems to support the efforts of teachers, staff, parents, and other members of the community in promoting the educational, career, personal, and social development of students.

## **ACADEMIC**

### ***ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL***

The school counselor is available to students and parents to talk about the importance of postsecondary education and how best to plan for postsecondary education, including appropriate courses to consider and financial aid availability and requirements.

In either grade 7 or 8, each student will receive instruction related to how the student can best prepare for high school, college, and a career.

### ***HIGH SCHOOL***

High school students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures.

Each year, students in grades 5-12 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and CTE opportunities, as well as information on the importance of postsecondary education.

The school counselor will also provide information each year a student is enrolled in high school regarding:

- The importance of postsecondary education;
- The advantages of earning an endorsement and completing the foundation program with the distinguished level of achievement;
- The disadvantages of pursuing a high school equivalency exam (GED) as opposed to earning a high school diploma;
- Financial aid eligibility and how to apply for financial aid;
- Automatic admission to state-funded Texas colleges and universities;
- Eligibility requirements for the TEXAS Grant;
- Availability of district programs that allow students to earn college credit;

- Availability of tuition and fee assistance for postsecondary education for students in foster care; and
- Availability of college credit awarded by institutions of higher education to veterans and military service members for military experience, education, and training.

Additionally, the school counselor can also provide information about workforce opportunities after graduation or technical and trade school opportunities, including opportunities to earn industry-recognized certificates and licenses.

## **PERSONAL COUNSELING**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, emotional or mental health issues, or substance abuse.

A student who wishes to meet with the school counselor should make an appointment at the campus. As a parent, if you are concerned about your child's mental or emotional health, please speak with the school counselor for a list of resources that may be of assistance.

If your child has experienced trauma, contact the school counselor for more information.

## **COURSE CREDIT (SECONDARY ONLY)**

A student at any grade level enrolled in a high school course will earn credit for the course only if the final grade is 70 or above. For a two-part (two-semester, 1-credit course), the student's grades from both halves (semesters) will be averaged and credit will be awarded if the combined average is 70 or above. If the student's combined average is less than 70, the student will be awarded credit only for the half (semester) with the passing grade.

## **CREDIT BY EXAM: IF A STUDENT HAS TAKEN THE COURSE/SUBJECT**

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit or a final grade for it—may, in circumstances determined by the principal or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam approved by the district's board of trustees on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject.

Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, homeschooling, or coursework by a student transferring from a nonaccredited school. The opportunity to take an examination to earn credit for a course or to be awarded a final grade in a subject after the student has had prior instruction is sometimes referred to as "credit recovery."

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

If a student is granted approval to take an examination for credit, the student must score at least 70 on the examination to receive credit for the course or subject.

[For further information, see the school counselor and policy EHDB(LOCAL).]

## **CREDIT BY EXAM ADVANCEMENT/ACCELERATION: IF A STUDENT HAS NOT TAKEN THE COURSE/SUBJECT**

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course or subject area for which the student has had no prior instruction, i.e., for advancement or to accelerate to the next grade level.



The exams offered by the district are approved by the district's board of trustees, and state law requires the use of certain exams, such as College Board Advanced Placement (AP) and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests, when applicable. The dates on which exams are scheduled during the 2021-2022 school year will be published on the district's Credit by Exam for Acceleration website. The only exceptions to the published dates will be for a request made by a student who is homeless or involved in the foster care system or for exams administered by another entity besides the district. In this case, a student and the district must comply with the testing schedule of the other entity. During each testing window provided by the district, a student may attempt a specific exam only once.

The Exam for Acceleration (EA) provides an opportunity to earn grade level or course credit in which no prior formal instruction was completed. The EA is designed for learners who have both the academic and emotional need to advance a course. The EA is for those who display an extremely advanced level of understanding of the learning objectives assessed. EA is not designed for grade level recovery when a student is retained in a previous grade level.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the school counselor no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. [For further information, see policy EHDC.]

#### **STUDENTS IN GRADES 1–5**

A student in elementary school will be eligible to accelerate to the next grade level if the student scores at least 80 on each exam in the subject areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, a district administrator recommends that the student be accelerated, and the student's parent gives written approval of the grade advancement.

#### **STUDENTS IN GRADES 6–12**

A student in grade 6 or above will earn course credit with a passing score of at least 80 on the exam, a scaled score of 60 or higher on an exam administered through the CLEP, or a score of 3 or higher on an AP exam, as applicable. A student may take an exam to earn high school course credit no more than twice. If a student fails to achieve the designated score on the applicable exam before the beginning of the school year in which the student would need to enroll in the course according to the school's high school course sequence, the student must complete the course.

### **DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, RETALIATION, AND HAZING (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

All students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

Students are expected to treat other students and district employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect.

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, sex gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. A copy of the district's policy is available at <https://www.dentonisd.org/> [See policy FFH.]

#### **DATING VIOLENCE**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. Dating violence also occurs when a person commits these acts against a person in a marriage or dating relationship with the individual who is or was once in a marriage or dating relationship with the person committing

the offense. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to,

- Physical or sexual assaults;
- Name-calling;
- Put-downs;
- Threats to hurt the student, the student's family members, or members of the student's household;
- Destroying property belonging to the student;
- Threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship; Threats to harm a student's current dating partner;
- Attempts to isolate the student from friends and family;
- Stalking; or
- Encouraging others to engage in these behaviors

## DISCRIMINATION

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

## HARASSMENT

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

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation;
- Threatening, intimidating, or humiliating conduct;
- Offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors;
- Physical aggression or assault;
- Graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or
- Other aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

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

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to:

- Touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature;
- Sexual advances;
- Jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and
- Other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible

physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature, such as comforting a child with a hug or taking the child's hand. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Gender-based harassment includes physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct based on a student's gender, the student's expression of characteristics perceived as stereotypical for the student's gender, or the student's failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity.

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.

### ***REPORTING PROCEDURES***

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

Upon receiving a report of prohibited conduct as defined by policy FFH, the district will determine whether the allegations, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct as defined by that policy. If not, the district will refer to policy FFI to determine if the allegations, if proven, would constitute bullying, as defined by law and that policy. If the alleged prohibited conduct, if proven, would constitute prohibited conduct and would also be considered bullying as defined by law and policy FFI, an investigation of bullying will also be conducted.

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

### ***INVESTIGATION OF REPORT***

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

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

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

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

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

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

## RETALIATION

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

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

## HAZING

Hazing is defined as an intentional, knowing, or reckless act, on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student for the purpose of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in a student organization if the act meets the elements in Education Code 37.151, including:

- Any type of physical brutality;
- Any type of physical activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of physical or mental harm, such as sleep deprivation, exposure to the elements, confinement to small spaces, or calisthenics;
- Any activity involving consumption of food, liquids, drugs, or other substances that subjects the student to unreasonable risk of physical or mental harm;
- Any activity that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student, such as ostracism, shame, or humiliation; and
- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to violate the Penal Code.

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

[See **Bullying** and policies FFI and FNCC for more information.]

## DISTANCE LEARNING (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

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 the internet, audio-conferencing, video-conferencing, or other electronic transmission.

The distance learning and correspondence course opportunities that are available to students in Denton ISD are found in the Denton ISD Course Planning Guide which is updated annually and approved by the Board of Trustees to align with the course planning timeline: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/46084>.

## TEXAS VIRTUAL SCHOOL NETWORK (TXVSN) (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS)

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) has been established by the state as one method of distance learning. A student has the option, with certain limitations, to enroll in a course offered through the TxVSN to earn course credit for graduation.

Depending on the TxVSN course in which a student enrolls, the course may be subject to the “no pass, no play” rules. In addition, for a student who enrolls in a TxVSN course for which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is required, the student must still take the corresponding EOC assessment.

If you have questions or wish to make a request that your child be enrolled in a TxVSN course, please contact the school counselor. Unless an exception is made by the principal, a student will not be allowed to enroll in a TxVSN course if the school offers the same or a similar course. A copy of policy EHDE is available for review by all parents at <https://www.dentonisd.org/>

## **DISTRIBUTION OF LITERATURE, PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR OTHER DOCUMENTS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

### **SCHOOL MATERIALS**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with the prior approval of the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, flyers, etc. The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students. All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

### **NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS FROM STUDENTS**

Students must obtain prior approval from the campus principal before selling, posting, circulating, or distributing copies of written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The principal has designated a specific location at each campus for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection by students. [See policy FNAA.]

A student may appeal a decision in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). Any student who sells, posts, circulates, or distributes non-school material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

[See policy FNG(LOCAL) for student complaint procedures.]

### **NON-SCHOOL MATERIALS FROM OTHERS**

No person or group will sell, circulate, distribute, or post on any district premises written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials that is not sponsored by the district or by a district-affiliated school-support organization, except as permitted by policy GKDA.

The principal has designated a specific location at each campus for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing or collection.

Prior review will not be required for:

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

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

## **DRESS CODE**

### **PRINCIPAL AUTHORITY**

The Denton ISD dress code is established to teach hygiene, instill self-discipline, prevent disruptions, promote safety, prepare students for life after high school, minimize safety hazards, and maintain a positive learning climate. When there is a question on the dress or appearance of a student, the building administrator and school staff will use their discretion concerning the dress code.

The principal, in cooperation with the Campus Leadership Team may add detail to the following dress code and the details may be gender specific. Students must honor the decision of the administrator in charge and make any dress and/or grooming change required. If the principal determines that a student's grooming or clothing violates the school's dress code, the student will be given an opportunity to correct the problem and return to the classroom. If the problem cannot be corrected at school, the principal will work with the student and parent to obtain an acceptable change of clothing for the student in a way that minimizes loss of instructional time.

Repeated or severe offenses (persistent misconduct) may result in more serious disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The principal has the final authority to determine the appropriateness of all dress code issues.

### **PARENT AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the parents and students to ensure that attire worn to school meets district requirements. The student and parent may determine the student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided the decision complies with the general district guidelines set out in the student dress code, outlined in the student & parent handbook.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Denton ISD reserves the right to establish rules during the school year regarding new fashions in dress and grooming.

Students shall not wear any clothing, that in the principal's judgment is startling, unusual, disruptive, immodest, brings undue attention to the student and/or interferes with the educational/learning process. Students shall not wear any item that is lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene, or depicts nudity. Students' dress and grooming must be modest, decent, not distract other students and/or staff, and should contribute to a safe, healthy, and positive learning environment. All students are to present a clean, well-groomed appearance at school and all school related activities. All clothing must be sized to fit properly.

The following items have been determined to be unacceptable for wear at school:

- Accessories which create a disruption
- Accessories applied to the facial area, tongue, or body such as safety pins to the eye area, studs, or rings through the nose
- Any headgear other than part of approved school uniform
- Bandanas
- Bare midriffs
- Chains or accessories which can be used as a weapon (such as spiked collars/bracelets)
- Display of undergarments
- Flip-flops (except in high schools, or as determined by administration on all campuses)
- Garments containing offensive or obscene words or phrases, pictures, symbols or images
- Garments which promote or advertise alcohol, tobacco or other prohibited products
- Halter tops or tank tops
- Mesh/net clothing

- Pajamas, slippers or house shoes
- Ragged or intentionally cut-torn clothing as determined inappropriate by the campus principal or designee
- Saggy/baggy pants
- See-through apparel, including leggings
- Shirts open at the sides (excessively large armholes)
- Short shorts/skirts
- Steel-toed shoes (except in identified CTE classes)
- Strapless dresses/blouses
- Sunglasses
- Unnatural cosmetic contact lens colors (considered distracting)
- Inappropriate hairstyles that cause a disruption
- Visible tattoos and body art which promote nudity, obscenity or gang activity are unacceptable and must be covered.

## **DUAL LANGUAGE/ESL FOR EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS**

The district provides dual language and ESL programs for eligible emergent bilinguals to acquire and develop competence in the English language, which will empower students to be successful in their content area courses and post-secondary studies, valuing each student's rich cultural heritage and language background.

Dual Language is the bilingual program offered in the district. In this program we provide the one-way and two-way dual language models. The goals of both dual language models is to develop bilingualism and biliteracy, bolster high academic achievement, and promote cross-cultural competence.

The English as a Second Language program (ESL) is an intensive English language instruction program provided by ESL certified teachers who are trained in effective second language acquisition methods. The goal of ESL programs is for English learners to attain full proficiency in English to participate equitably in school. Denton ISD has the ESL program in grades Pre K-12 at all campuses.

For more information, contact the Director of Bilingual/ESL Programs at 940-369-0590, or visit the [Bilingual/ESL Program website](#).

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

### **POSSESSION AND USE OF PERSONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES, INCLUDING CELL PHONES**

For instructional and safety purposes, the district permits students to possess personal mobile telephones; however, these devices must remain turned off during the instructional day, including during all testing, unless they are being used for approved instructional purposes.

A student must have administrative or teacher approval to possess personal telecommunications devices on campus such as laptops, tablets, or other portable computers.

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

Except when being used for principal or teacher approved purposes, telecommunication and electronic devices shall not be visible, audible, or used during school hours as determined by the principal.

If a student uses a telecommunications device without authorization during the school day, a district employee may confiscate the device. The parent may pick up the confiscated telecommunications device from the principal's office for a fee of \$15.

Confiscated telecommunications devices that are not retrieved by the student or the student's parent will be disposed of after the notice required by law. [See policy FNCE.]

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

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

## POSSESSION AND USE OF OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are not permitted to possess or use personal electronic devices such as video game consoles, cameras, e-readers, or other electronic devices at school, unless prior permission has been obtained. Without such permission, district employees may collect the items and turn them in to the principal's office. The principal will determine whether to return items to students at the end of the day or to contact parents to pick up the items.

In limited circumstances and in accordance with law, a student's personal electronic device may be searched by authorized personnel. [See **Searches** and policy FNF.] Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. The district is not responsible for any damaged, lost, or stolen electronic device.

## INSTRUCTIONAL USE OF PERSONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

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

## ACCEPTABLE USE OF DISTRICT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

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

## UNACCEPTABLE AND INAPPROPRIATE USE OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Students are prohibited from 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 Before You Text" Sexting Prevention Course, a 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 the district's cyber 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.

## **EMERGENT BILINGUALS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

A student who is an emergent bilingual is entitled to receive specialized services from the district. To determine whether the student qualifies for services, a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) will be formed, which will consist of both district personnel and at least one parent representative. The student's parent must consent to any services recommended by the LPAC for an emergent bilingual. However, pending the receipt of parental consent or denial of services, an eligible student will receive the services to which the student is entitled and eligible.

To determine a student's level of proficiency in English, the LPAC will use information from a variety of assessments. If the student qualifies for services, and once a level of proficiency has been established, the LPAC will then designate instructional accommodations or additional special programs that the student will require to eventually become proficient at grade level work in English. Ongoing assessments will be conducted to determine a student's continued eligibility for the program.

The LPAC will also determine whether certain accommodations are necessary for any state-mandated assessments. The STAAR Spanish, as mentioned at **Standardized Testing**, may be administered to an emergent bilingual for a student up to grade 5. In limited circumstances, a student's LPAC may exempt the student from an otherwise required state-mandated assessment or may waive certain graduation requirements related to the English I end-of-course (EOC) assessment. The Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) will also be administered to emergent bilinguals who qualify for services.

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

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

### **SCHOOL SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right. Participation in some of these activities may result in events that occur off-campus. When the district arranges transportation for these events, students are required to use the transportation provided by the district to and from the events. Exceptions to this may only be made with the approval of the activity's coach or sponsor. [Also see **Transportation**.]

Eligibility for initial and continuing participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. If a student is involved in an academic, athletic, or music activity governed by UIL, the student and parent are expected to know and follow all rules of the UIL organization. Students involved in UIL athletic activities and their parents can access the UIL Parent Information Manual at <https://www.uil texas.org/athletics/manuals>; a hard copy can be provided by the coach or sponsor of the activity on request.

To report a complaint of alleged noncompliance with required safety training or an alleged violation of safety rules required by law and the UIL, please contact the curriculum division of TEA at (512) 463-9581 or [curriculum@tea.texas.gov](mailto:curriculum@tea.texas.gov).

[See UIL Texas for additional information on all UIL-governed activities.]

In addition, the following provisions apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or language other than English—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student who receives special education services and who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse but may not participate in any competitive activity.
- An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

A student is allowed in a school year up to 10 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of 4 absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of 2 absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

### **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**

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

To be considered for an elected honor, a student must be regularly enrolled as a student in the school. Students holding positions of honor and who are determined to have engaged in serious misconduct may be removed from the position of honor.

## **FEES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Security deposits.
- Personal physical education, athletic, visual and performing arts equipment, and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance when uniforms are provided by the district.
- Personal apparel used in co-curricular and/or extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.
- Fees associated with the 1:1 device initiative, including usage, repair and replacement of school owned devices.
- Fees for driver training courses, if offered.
- Fees for optional courses offered for credit that require use of facilities not available on district premises.
- Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.
- A fee not to exceed \$50 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit or has not been awarded a final grade because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.
- In some cases, a fee for a course taken through the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN).

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

## **FUNDRAISING**

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fundraising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at the beginning of the semester. [For further information, see policies FJ and GE.]

## **GANG-FREE ZONES**

Certain criminal offenses, including those involving organized criminal activity such as gang-related crimes, will be enhanced to the next highest category of offense if they are committed in a gang-free zone. For purposes of the district, a gang-free zone includes a school bus and a location in, on, or within 1,000 feet of any district-owned or leased property or campus playground.

## GRADE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION

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

Credits Earned	Classification
6	Grade 10 (Sophomore)
12	Grade 11 (Junior)
18	Grade 12 (Senior)
26	Graduate

## GRADING GUIDELINES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Grading guidelines for each grade level or course will be communicated and distributed by the classroom teacher. These guidelines have been reviewed by the district instruction department and approved by the campus principal. They establish how each student's mastery of concepts and achievement will be communicated (i.e., letter grades, numerical averages, checklist of required skills, etc.) and how students may qualify to relearn and reassess over content when their first grade indicates non-mastery of critical course content.

Additional information on practices and guidelines related to grading and assessment are found on the Denton ISD Family Resources site at <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/99575>.

### GRADES PRE-K – 5TH GRADE REPORTING

Standards Based report cards will be sent home electronically every nine weeks.

### GRADES 6TH – 12TH GRADE REPORTING

The purpose of the grading system (including progress reports and report cards) is to provide accurate and timely information regarding students' mastery of course standards so that students may continuously improve their academic performance and their understanding of course content. Teachers' grading practices are designed to provide students with feedback regarding their academic progress so that they will be more aware of what they have learned well and what might require greater effort. Clear feedback helps students identify academic strengths and areas for improvement and promotes students to become more self-directed learners.

During each academic grading period, students will learn new content through a variety of teacher designed experiences. These experiences will include reading, studying and completing assignments as directed by the teacher in class and independently outside of school. Thorough completion of these assignments is expected and is essential for students to be fully prepared to demonstrate their learning on the quizzes, tests, projects, and presentations that are the summative measures of their learning and make up their grades for each course.

Because we know that students learn in different ways and at different rates and because we believe our students strive to do well, our teachers are committed to assisting students who continue to demonstrate improved understanding of difficult course content during a grading period. Students scoring less than 90 on an assessment and have invested the necessary effort to meet deadlines and complete any regularly assigned or additional work in a high-quality manner, may reassess on a summative assignment to demonstrate their improved learning. Specific processes for reassessment and each students' readiness to reassess will be determined by the classroom teacher. Students who do not complete work according to

deadlines established by the teacher will not fully benefit from course instruction and may be subject to academic and behavioral interventions.

In each course, students will be graded on a numerical scale with 100 being the highest grade. A grade of less than 70 is considered failing. There are two grading periods in the fall semester and two in the spring. Report cards are issued each grading period. Students in danger of failing will be issued a progress report at the midpoint of each grading period. Parents are encouraged to access to their student's grades and attendance 24/7 via the Home Access Center available at Home Access Center Parents are also encouraged to request email notifications through the Home Access Center to inform them when their students do not complete an assignment on time or when the grade earned does not meet the minimum passing standard. Instructions for accessing this system will be provided by each campus.

## **GRADUATION (SECONDARY ONLY)**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR A DIPLOMA**

Policies, practices, and guidelines related to graduation requirements are found in the Denton ISD Course Planning Guide which is updated annually and approved by the Board of Trustees to align with the course planning timeline: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/46084>.

### **FOUNDATION GRADUATION PROGRAM**

Every Texas public school student 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 (STEM);
- Business and Industry;
- Public Services;
- Arts and Humanities; and
- Multidisciplinary Studies.

Endorsements earned by a student will be noted on the student's transcript. 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. A Personal Graduation Plan will be completed for each high school student.

State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student's sophomore year, the student and student's parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to the school counselor for the student to graduate without an endorsement. A student who anticipates graduating under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement and who wishes to attend a four-year university or college after graduation must carefully consider whether this 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 acknowledgments” that will be acknowledged on a student's transcript. Performance acknowledgments are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy; in a dual credit course; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT- Aspire, SAT, or ACT exam, which are national exams; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgments are prescribed by state rules, and the school counselor can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

School districts are required to notify parents of the role that Algebra II plays in graduation requirements and the potential consequences to a student of not completing an Algebra II course. In Texas, a student may only earn a “Distinguished Level of Achievement” and be eligible for automatic admission to a Texas public college or university as an undergraduate if the student successfully completes high school Algebra II. To earn an endorsement, students must successfully complete a fourth mathematics course; Algebra II is often the pre-requisite to the fourth math course and may be required specifically by an endorsement. The TEXAS Grant program and the Texas Educational Opportunity Grant program may require the completion of Algebra II as a pathway to earn initial eligibility. Although to graduate under the “Foundation High School Program,” a student is not required to complete an Algebra II course, the Foundation plan is not recommended for most students.

## FAFSA OR TASFA

Before graduating from high school, each student must complete and submit a free application for federal student aid (FAFSA) or a Texas application for state financial aid (TASFA).

Denton ISD counselors will help students and families understand the basics of federal student aid by providing tips, hosting events, group presentations and communicating through social media and email. Counselors will engage with students and parents across all grade levels to provide direct and indirect support as it relates to the college planning process and completing the FAFSA or TASFA.

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

- The student’s parent submits a form provided by the district 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 provided by the district indicating that the student opts out; or
- A school counselor authorizes the student to opt out for good cause.

Please contact the school counselor for more information.

## PERSONAL GRADUATION PLANS

A personal graduation plan will be developed for each high school student. The district encourages all students to pursue a personal graduation plan that includes the completion of at least one endorsement and to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Attainment of the distinguished level of achievement entitles a student to be considered for automatic admission to a public four-year college or university in Texas, depending on his or her rank in class.

The school will review personal graduation plan options with each student entering grade 9 and his or her parent. Before the end of grade 9, a student and his or her parent will be required to sign off on a personal graduation plan that includes a course of study that promotes college and workforce readiness and career placement and advancement, as well as facilitates the transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

The student’s personal graduation plan will denote an appropriate course sequence based on the student’s choice of endorsement.

Please also review [TEA's Graduation Toolkit](#).

A student may, with parental permission, amend his or her personal graduation plan after the initial confirmation.

## AVAILABLE COURSE OPTIONS FOR ALL GRADUATION PROGRAMS

Information regarding available courses offered and required is found in the Denton ISD Course Planning Guide which is updated annually and approved by the Board of Trustees to align with the course planning timeline: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/46084>.

## CERTIFICATES OF COURSEWORK COMPLETION

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

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committees will make instructional and assessment decisions for students with disabilities who receive special education services in accordance with state law.

Upon the recommendation of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) 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.

To earn an endorsement under the foundation 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.

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.

The student may then remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma but will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

[See policy FMH (LEGAL) for more information.]

## GRADUATION ACTIVITIES

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

## GRADUATION SPEAKERS

Certain graduating students will be given an opportunity to have speaking roles at graduation ceremonies.

A student must meet local eligibility criteria, which may include requirements related to student conduct, to have a speaking role. Only those students who are identified by FNA (LOCAL) will be eligible to give these remarks; however, if the student was assigned to disciplinary placement at any time during the spring semester, he or she will not be eligible to speak at graduation. Students eligible for speaking roles will be notified by the principal and given an opportunity to volunteer. In the event there are more eligible students volunteering than there are speaking roles at the graduation ceremony, the names of all eligible students who volunteered shall be randomly drawn. The student whose name is drawn first will give the opening remarks and the student whose name is drawn second will give the closing remarks.

In addition to the opening and closing remarks, the students who have attained special positions of honor based on neutral criteria as identified by FNA (LOCAL) may also have speaking roles at the graduation ceremony.

[See FNA (LOCAL) and the Student Code of Conduct.]

## GRADUATION EXPENSES

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

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the foundation graduation program, may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. Contact the school counselor for information about other scholarships and grants available to students.

## HEALTH: PHYSICAL AND MENTAL

### ASTHMA AND SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS

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

### BACTERIAL MENINGITIS

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

<https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/1006>

### CONTAGIOUS DISEASES/CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If the school nurse suspects that a student may have a contagious disease based on signs or symptoms the student has, the nurse will exclude the student from attendance until all suspicious symptoms are gone, or the child's physician documents that the child may return to school. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should keep the child home, consult with the child's physician, and contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted if a confirmed diagnosis is made.

Denton ISD follows guidelines from the Texas Department of Health Services and all information regarding exclusion from school may be found on the DISD health services webpage.

### DIABETES

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



## EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION

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

## EXAMS AND SCREENINGS (OTHER)

Students are required to undergo a risk assessment for type 2 diabetes at the same time the district screens students for hearing and vision issues, or for abnormal spinal curvatures. [See policy FFAA.]

## FIRST AID/SCHOOL EXCLUSION FOR HEALTH REASONS

In case of serious illness or injury:

- A parent will be called at once. It is critical that school officials have the names and the current home, work, and cell phone numbers for all parents and guardians.
- If neither parent can be reached, an emergency contact will be made. Please make sure the school has the phone number of your doctor and three other names and phone numbers of neighbors or relatives who have agreed to be contacted.
- If neither parent nor emergency contacts can be reached, the student will be taken by ambulance to the emergency room written on the health card. The nurse or someone designated by the principal will stay with the student until a responsible adult arrives to be with the student. The parent is responsible for incurred costs.

A student may not leave school or be taken home by any school personnel unless an adult has been contacted or will be at home to receive the student. Any exception to this policy will be approved by the principal. School nurses cannot provide transportation.

## FOOD ALLERGIES

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

The district has developed and annually reviews a food allergy management plan, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) "Guidelines for the Care of Students with Food Allergies At-Risk for Anaphylaxis" found on the DSHS website at Allergies and Anaphylaxis.

When the district receives information that a student has a food allergy that puts the student at risk for anaphylaxis, individual care plans will be developed to assist the student in safely accessing the school environment. The district's food allergy management plan can be accessed by contacting your campus nurse.

[Also see policy FFAF and **Celebrations.**]

## LICE (ALL LEVELS)

Head lice, although not an illness or a disease, is very common among children and is spread very easily through head-to-head contact during play, sports, or nap time, and when children share things like brushes, combs, hats, and headphones.

If careful observation indicates that a student has head lice, the school nurse will contact the student's parent to determine whether the student will need to be picked up from school and to discuss a plan for treatment with an FDA-approved medicated shampoo or cream rinse that may be purchased from any drug or grocery store. After the student has undergone one treatment, the parent should check in with the school nurse to discuss the treatment used. The nurse can also offer additional recommendations, including subsequent treatments and how best to get rid of lice and how to prevent lice from returning.

Notice will also be provided to parents of elementary school students in an affected classroom. More information on head lice can be obtained from the DSHS website [Managing Head Lice in School Settings and at Home](#).

[See policy FFAA.]

## IMMUNIZATIONS

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized.

For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at [Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunization](#).

The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required include:

- Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis;
- Polio;
- Measles, Mumps, and Rubella;
- Hepatitis B;
- Varicella (Chicken Pox);
- Meningococcal and
- Hepatitis A;

The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by TDSHS. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

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

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

[For further information, see policy FFAB(LEGAL) and the DSHS website: [Texas School & Child Care Facility Immunization Requirements](#).]

## MEDICINE AT SCHOOL (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Medication that must be administered to a student during school hours must be provided by the student's parent. All medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, must be kept in the nurse's office and administered by the nurse or another authorized district employee, unless the student is authorized to possess his or her own medication because of asthma or a severe allergy as described below or as otherwise allowed by law.

The district will not purchase nonprescription medication to give to a student.

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:

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

**Note:** Insect repellant is considered a nonprescription medication.

- Herbal or dietary supplements provided by the parent only if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.

Students may not share medicine with another student under any circumstance. Violations shall be subject to consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and discipline management program.

Students whose schedules provide for regular time spent outdoors, including for recess and physical education classes, should apply sunscreen before coming to school.

For students at the elementary level, the student's teacher or other district personnel will apply sunscreen to a student's exposed skin if the student brings the sunscreen to school and requests assistance with the application of the sunscreen. Nothing prohibits a student at this level from applying his or her own sunscreen if the student can do so.

For students at the secondary level, a student may possess and apply sunscreen when necessary. If the student will need assistance with this application, please address the need for assistance with the school nurse.

Whether a student is at the elementary or secondary level, if sunscreen needs to be administered to treat any type of medical condition, this should be handled through communication with the school nurse so that the district is made aware of any safety and medical issues.

Exceptions to this policy are rare. No exceptions can be made unless a discussion with the student's doctor, parents, and school nurse occurs, the request is made in writing, and it is required by the Individual Education Plan or Section 504 Plan of a student with disabilities.

In our district, the school RN usually administers medication at elementary and middle school levels (See more information below for high school students). There are times at campuses when school employees other than the school nurse may administer medication; in those circumstances the nurse will provide training to school personnel who are assigned to administer medications to ensure safe administration and accurate dosage.

Non-nursing school staff may be assigned to administer medications:

- When the campus nurse is not available or states that he or she is unable to do so safely. [See DG (LEGAL)] or in accordance with the Texas Nurse Practice Act.
- When a student suffers from a life-threatening condition, including, but not limited to, diabetes

(hyperglycemia or hypoglycemia) and/or severe allergies (anaphylaxis).

- When a student is unable to go to the health room for his or her medication without experiencing discomfort or a significant loss of instructional time, provided it is agreed upon by the parent and/or included in the student's individualized health plan (IHP).

In accordance with the Nurse Practice Act, Texas Code, Section 217.11, the school nurse has the responsibility and authority to clarify any order or treatment regimen that the nurse has reason to believe is inaccurate, non-efficacious or contraindicated by consulting with the appropriate licensed practitioner. The school nurse also has the right to refuse to administer medications that, in the nurse's professional judgment, are not in the best interest of the student.

Please review our Medication policy: <https://www.dentonisd.org/Page/92606>

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

If the student has been prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication for use during the school day, the student and parents should discuss this with the school nurse. In accordance with a student's individual health plan for management of diabetes, a student with diabetes will be permitted to possess and use monitoring and treatment supplies and equipment while at school or at a school-related activity. See the school nurse for information. [See policy FFAF (LEGAL).]

## PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS

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

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

## SEIZURES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

To address the care of a student with a seizure disorder while at school or participating in a school activity, a parent may submit a seizure management and treatment plan to the district before the beginning of the school year, upon enrollment of the student, or as soon as practicable following diagnosis of a seizure disorder. Contact the school nurse for more information.

[See **A Student with Physical or Mental Impairments Protected under Section 504**]

## STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY/WELLNESS PLAN (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

Denton ISD is committed to encouraging healthy students and therefore has developed a board-adopted wellness policy at FFA(LOCAL) and corresponding plans and procedures to implement the policy. You

are encouraged to contact the district's coordinator of health services at 940-369-0200 with questions about the content or implementation of the district's wellness policy and plan.

## SPINAL SCREENING PROGRAM

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 the Texas Department of State Health Services criteria will be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. As appropriate, students will be referred for follow-up with their physician.

For information on spinal screening by an outside professional or exemption from spinal screening based on religious beliefs, see policy FFAA(LEGAL) or contact the campus principal.

## STUDENT ILLNESS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

When your child is ill, please contact the school to let us know he or she will not be attending that day.

It is important to remember that schools are required to exclude students with certain illnesses from school for periods of time as identified in state rules. For example, if your child has a fever over 100 degrees, he or she must stay out of school until fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications. In addition, students with diarrheal illnesses must stay home until they are diarrhea-free without diarrhea-suppressing medications for at least 24 hours.

A parent should contact the school nurse if a student has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or may have COVID-19.

A full list of conditions for which the school must exclude children can be obtained from the school nurse.

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

The district is also required to report certain contagious (communicable) diseases or illnesses to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) or our local/regional health authority. The school nurse can provide information from TDSHS on these notifiable conditions.

Contact the school nurse if you have questions or if you are concerned about whether your child should stay home.

## STEROIDS

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

## STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY WHEN BEHAVIOR IS A CONCERN

When a student displays behavior of concern in the school environment, it is the responsibility of Denton ISD to ascertain the nature of the behavior as quickly and objectively as possible, especially in the situation where students may be getting behind the wheel to drive or operating other machinery. There are many reasons why a student might be behaving in an "untoward" manner – lack of sleep, effects of prescription

medicine, emotional issues, mental illness, substance abuse or low blood sugar to name a few. Any of these reasons could cause that student and others to be in an unsafe situation if not acknowledged and addressed appropriately.

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, EHBG, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week. Students in middle or junior high school will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within each two-week period for at least four semesters.

For additional information on the district's requirements and programs regarding elementary, middle, and junior high school student physical activity requirements, please see the campus principal.

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS FROM PARTICIPATION

Students who are temporarily restricted from participation in physical education will not actively participate in skill demonstration but will remain in class to learn the concepts of the lessons.

#### PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS ATHLETICS PARTICIPATION (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

For certain extracurricular activities, a student must submit 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:

- A district athletics program.
- District marching band.
- Any district extracurricular program identified by the superintendent.

This examination is required in the first year of middle school competition and the first and third years of high school competition. During alternate years, the student must complete a medical appraisal form, and the results of this appraisal may prompt the district to require a physical examination.

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. A student may request an electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) to screen for such disorders, in addition to his or her required physical examination.

See the UIL's explanation of sudden cardiac arrest for more information.

#### PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENT

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

#### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT (ALL GRADE LEVELS)

The district 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.

In Denton ISD we employ a Multi-Tier Systems of Support framework to address the needs of the whole child. Specific programs utilized to support students' mental health include QPR, an evidenced based suicide prevention program; Mental Health First Aid, a national program to teach the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance abuse; Trust-Based Relational Intervention, an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention educational program; National Educators for Restorative Practices, a relationship building and positive behavior response program; and STOPit, an anonymous incident reporting system.

If a student has been hospitalized or placed in residential treatment for a mental health condition or substance abuse, the district has procedures to support the student's return to school. Please contact the district's mental health liaison for further information.

Teachers and other district employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they are not permitted to recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A psychotropic drug is a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication that is intended to alter perception, emotion, mood, or behavior.

A district employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. [See policy FFEB for more information.]

#### SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (SHAC)

Parents are encouraged to participate in this district advisory committee. The duties of the SHAC range from recommending educational resources to developing strategies for integrating resources into a coordinated school health program encompassing issues such as school health services, counseling services, a safe and healthy school environment, recess recommendations, improving student fitness, mental health concerns, and employee wellness. Additional information is available at [Student Health Advisory Committee](#). See policies at BDF and EHAA.

#### **HOMEWORK**

Homework may be any preparation, work, or activity that a pupil does on non-school time as requested by the teacher or with teacher consent. This definition is broad in meaning to allow for many different types of homework assignments. Homework may include the following categories:

- library research;
- make-up work when absent;
- limited remedial work;
- special reports and long-range study assignments;
- drill on basic skills;
- collections or "show and tell" materials;
- guided and recreational reading;
- creative writing;
- recommended TV programs, movies, plays;

- use of community resources; and
- unfinished work assigned in class.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### **STUDENT RESOURCE OFFICER**

Secondary campuses and some elementary campuses are staffed with a Student Resource Officer (SRO). Student Resource Officers are police officers licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) assigned to the schools in the Denton Independent School District. Each officer is a direct, full-time, employee of his or her respective Departments. As certified police officers, they have arrest powers endorsed by the State of Texas and are authorized to use the force necessary to effect arrests and protect third parties and themselves. They may be authorized by their department to carry the following equipment: firearms, Oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, impact batons, Tasers, handcuffs, and portable radios and body cameras.

Student Resource Officers are responsible for promoting a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff, reducing criminal offenses committed by juveniles and young adults by diversion or detention/arrest, and establishing rapport with students, faculty, administrative staff, and parents.

### **INTERVIEWING/QUESTIONING OF STUDENTS**

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

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

The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

### **STUDENTS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY**

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

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a law enforcement officer to obtain fingerprints or photographs for comparison in an investigation.
- 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.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services (CPS), 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 Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.
- To comply with a properly issued directive from a juvenile court to take a student into custody.



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

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

## NOTIFICATION OF LAW VIOLATIONS

The district is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been taken into custody, arrested, or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors that occur in school, on school property, or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity on or off school property. These personnel will also be notified if the principal has reasonable grounds to believe the student has engaged in certain conduct.
- All appropriate district personnel regarding a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

[For further information, see policy GRAA (LEGAL).]

## LEAVING CAMPUS

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

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

- For students in elementary and middle school, a parent or otherwise authorized adult must come to the office and sign the student out. Please be prepared to show identification. Once an identity is verified, a campus representative will then call for the student or collect the student and bring him or her to the office. For safety purposes and stability of the learning environment, we cannot allow you to go to the classroom or other area unescorted to pick up the student. If the student returns to campus the same day, the parent or authorized adult must sign the student back in through the main office upon the student's return. Documentation regarding the reason for the absence will also be required.
- For students in high school, the same process will be followed if a parent picks the student up from campus. If the student's parent will authorize the student to leave campus unaccompanied, a note provided by the parent must be submitted to the main office in advance of the absence, no later than two hours prior to the student's need to leave campus. A phone call received from the parent may be accepted, but the school may ultimately require a note to be submitted for documentation purposes. Once the office has received information that the student's parent consents to the student leaving campus, a pass will be issued to the student to hand to his or her teacher with the necessary information. The student must sign out through the main office and sign in upon his or her return, if the student returns the same day.

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

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal. Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

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

## **MAKEUP WORK**

### **MAKE UP WORK DUE TO ABSENCE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements. A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher, usually the number of consecutive days missed plus one more day.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regard to the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit or final grade."

A student involved in an extracurricular activity must notify their teachers ahead of time about any absences. A student will be permitted to make up tests and turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence.

### **MAKEUP WORK DAEP (GRADES 9–12)**

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

## **MAKEUP WORK ISS AND OSS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

## **NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination and as required by law, Denton ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sex, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law, in providing education services, activities, and programs, including CTE programs, and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

In accordance with Title IX, the district does not and is required not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. The requirement not to discriminate extends to admission and employment. Inquiries about the application of Title IX may be referred to the district's Title IX Coordinator (see below), to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the Department of Education, or both.

Other federal laws that prohibit discrimination include Title VI, Section 504, the Age Discrimination Act, the Boy Scouts Act, and Title II.

Reports can be made at any time and by any person, including during non-business hours, by mail, phone, or email. During district business hours, reports may also be made in person. Upon the district receiving notice or an allegation of sex-based harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will promptly respond in accordance with the process described at FFH(LOCAL).

The following district representatives have been designated to address concerns or inquiries about other kinds of discrimination:

- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, see the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator: [Dr. Lacey Rainey, Area Superintendent, 940-369-0570].
- For concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment, see Title IX Coordinator: [Dr. Lesli Guajardo, Director of District & Student Support Services, 940-369-0585].
- For all other concerns regarding discrimination: Contact the superintendent's office at 940-369-0002.

[See policies FB, FFH, and GKD.]

## **PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT WORKING TOGETHER (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

- Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child every day to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.
- Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.

- Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.
- Discussing with the school counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.
- Reviewing the requirements and options for graduation with your child in middle school and again while your child is enrolled in high school.
- Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed.
- Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, school counselor, or principal, please call the school office for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school.
- Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policy GKG and Volunteers.]
- Participating in campus parent organizations.
- Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement.
- Serving on the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC), assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction and other wellness issues. [See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at School Health Advisory Council.]
- Being aware of the school's ongoing bullying and harassment prevention efforts.
- Contacting school officials if you are concerned with your child's emotional or mental well-being.
- Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. Regular board meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Dennis Stephens Central Administration Building, located at 1307 N. Locust St., in Denton. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

## **PARKING AND PARKING PERMITS (SECONDARY ONLY)**

A student must present a valid driver's license and proof of insurance to be eligible for a parking permit.

Students must request a parking permit for a fee to park in a school parking lot. So long as space is available, parking permits may be issued throughout the year.

Students will not be permitted to:

- Speed
- Double-park
- Park across a white or yellow line
- Park in a fire lane
- Sit in parked cars during school hours

Students may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these rules. The district may tow cars that are parked in violation of these rules.

## **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

State law requires that one minute of silence follow recitation of the pledges. Each student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity during that minute so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others.

In addition, state law requires that each campus provide for the observance of one minute of silence at the beginning of the first-class period when September 11 falls on a regular school day in remembrance of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. [See policy EC for more information.]

## **PRAYER**

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

## **PROMOTION & RETENTION**

A student will be promoted only based on academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level.

The district considers:

- Teacher recommendation;
- Grades;
- The score received on any criterion-referenced or state-mandated assessment; and
- Any other necessary academic information as determined by the district.

[See policy EIE (LOCAL) for more information about promotion and retention.]

## **PRE-K - GRADE 3**

A parent may request in writing that a student repeat prekindergarten, kindergarten, or grade 1, 2, or 3. Before granting the request, the district may convene a retention committee to meet and discuss the request and will invite the parent to participate.

## **ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE GRADE LEVELS**

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

In grades 6-8, mastery of course standards shall be determined as follows:

- Course assignments and unit evaluation shall be given to determine student grades in a subject. An average of 70 or higher shall be considered a passing grade.
- Mastery of the skills necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments that may either be incorporated into unit, grading period, and final exams, or may be administered separately.

Mastery of at least 70 percent of the objectives shall be required.

Students in grades 6-8 must have an overall average of 70 or above and have grades of 70 or above in three of the four core subjects of English language arts, math, science, and social studies in order to be promoted to the next grade.

If a student in grades 3–8 is enrolled in a class or course intended for students above his or her current grade level in which the student will be administered a state-mandated assessment, the student will be

required to take an applicable state-mandated assessment only for the course in which he or she is enrolled, unless otherwise required to do so by federal law.

A student in grades 3–8 shall be assessed at least once in high school with the ACT or the SAT if the student completes the high school end-of-course assessments in mathematics, reading/language arts, or science prior to high school.

Parents of a student at or above grade level 3 who does not perform satisfactorily on his or her state-mandated exams will be notified that their child will participate in special instructional programs designed to improve performance. The student may be required to participate in this instruction before or after normal school hours or outside of the normal school year. Failure of a student to attend these programs may result in violations of required school attendance as well as the student not being promoted to the next grade level.

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

[For additional information, see the campus principal and policy EIF(LEGAL).] For a student receiving special education services, the student's IEP may serve as the student's PGP and would therefore be developed by the student's ARD committee.

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADE LEVELS

To earn credit in a course, a student must receive a grade of at least 70 based on course-level or grade-level standards.

A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned. [See **Grade Level Classification**.]

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments. [See **Graduation and Standardized Testing** for more information about EOC assessments.]

Students are usually re-classified at the beginning of each school year. The principal has the final authority to determine grade placement and reclassification. In extreme circumstances, students may be reclassified at mid-term. A student will be promoted only based on academic achievement or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level.

## REMOTE INSTRUCTION

The district may offer remote instruction when authorized by TEA. To ensure a positive and productive learning environment, students and guardians must adhere to the virtual learning expectations that include behaviors for students and privacy guidelines for guardians. Students shall not video record, audio record, photograph, live stream, or transmit any part of a virtual session, including posting on any social media platform. Confidential or identifiable information related to students during virtual sessions should not be collected, discussed, or shared.

## **REPORT CARDS, PROGRESS REPORTS & CONFERENCES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every grading period.

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

Elementary Progress Reports are sent home for students who are at-risk as identified by the following criteria:

- Has a 1 (beginning) in any core content area
- 2 (developing) "too long" students who receive a 2 for two consecutive nine-week grading periods

Secondary Progress Reports shall be issued in accordance with law for a student who demonstrates consistent unsatisfactory performance, EIA (Local).

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

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

The district may use an electronic program to communicate academic information about your child, including for report card and progress reporting purposes. An electronic signature of the parent will be accepted by the district, but you may also request the option to provide a handwritten signature of acknowledgment.

## **SAFETY (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

### **CAMPUS SAFETY**

Denton ISD takes the responsibility for student safety very seriously. Campus administrators are required to conduct safety drills including building and site evacuations, shelters in place, duck and cover exercises, lockdowns, and reverse evacuations for many different situations including fires, weather emergencies, intruders on campus, etc. The district's Emergency Operations Plan is developed with city and county emergency planners and responders and is reviewed annually.

For a variety of safety and logistical reasons, it is not the practice in Denton ISD to have late starts to the school day or unscheduled early closings due to emergency or weather-related events. Parents may, however, choose to pick up their children from school at any time during a critical event, if usual safety procedures are followed, and immediate access does not compromise overall campus or individual student safety.

In an event when an emergency or weather-related circumstance causes the need for an early dismissal, the district shall inform families whose children receive district transportation of any changes in those measures through email. Announcements will also be made through the district website and through social media channels. Families are also highly encouraged to register for additional efforts provided by their

respective campus(es) to contact them as Denton ISD will only use district-wide communication measures if an emergency or weather- related event affects all of the district's students.

For emergency situations affecting only an individual student or family, the campus will attempt to contact authorized parents or guardians first. If an authorized parent or guardian cannot be reached, the campus will attempt to reach any authorized persons as listed by the parent or guardian during the registration process. Families are welcome to add additional authorized persons as emergency contacts at their respective campus(es) at any time but must do so in person for security reasons.

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

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

Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other district employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

## ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The school district is not liable for costs associated with accidents or injuries at school. Information about low-cost student accident insurance that could help meet medical expenses in the event of injury is available at <https://www.dentonisd.org/>.

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

## EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION

All parents are asked each year to complete a medical care authorization form, providing written parental consent to obtain emergency treatment and information about allergies to medications or drugs.

The district may consent to medical treatment, which includes dental treatment, if necessary, for a student if:

- The district has received written authorization from a person having the right to consent;
- That person cannot be contacted; and
- That person has not given the district actual notice to the contrary.

The emergency care authorization form will be used by the district when a student's parent or authorized designee is unable to be contacted. A student may provide consent if authorized by law or court order.

Regardless of parental authorization for the district to consent to medical treatment, district employees will contact emergency medical services to provide emergency care when required by law or when deemed necessary, such as to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Please keep emergency care information up to date (name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.) with the school and contact the school nurse to update any information that the nurse or the teacher needs to know.



## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS DRILLS

Occasionally, students, teachers and other district employees will participate in preparedness drills of emergency procedures including evacuations, severe weather, and other emergencies. When the command is given or alarm is sounded, students need to follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS TRAINING CPR AND STOP THE BLEED

The district will annually offer instruction in CPR at least once to students enrolled in grades 7–12. The instruction can be provided as part of any course and is not required to result in CPR certification.

The district 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.

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

### AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Denton Independent School District offers the best possible after school program for all our elementary students. Our Extended School Day (ESD) program allows elementary students to remain at the school (between 3-6 p.m. Monday-Friday) in a structured program that provides academic, enrichment and recreational activities. This is an ideal situation for working or busy parents. For information about the Extended School Day program, please contact the ESD office at 940-369-0080.

### ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT PLAN

The district works diligently to maintain compliance with federal and state law governing asbestos in school buildings. A copy of the district's Asbestos Management Plan is available at each district facility. If you have any questions or would like to examine the district's plan in more detail, please call the district's designated asbestos coordinator at (940) 369-0200.

### BICYCLES AND SKATEBOARDS

Please make sure that your child crosses the street at the crosswalks. In addition, students should walk their bicycles at the crosswalks and on school grounds. Students are encouraged to wear an approved bicycle helmet while riding a bicycle. All bicycles must be locked and kept at the bicycle racks. No skateboards, scooters, skates, or shoes with skates will be allowed on campus or in the buildings.

### CAFETERIA SERVICES

Denton ISD participates in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. These programs offer students nutritionally balanced meals daily in accordance with USDA and TDA standards.

Free and reduced-price meals will be available based on financial need for the 2023-2024 school year. Applications can be found at your school, the Child Nutrition office or may be completed at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com). Questions regarding program benefits can be directed to the Child Nutrition Office at 1303 N. Elm Street, or by calling 940-369-0270.

Parents can monitor the following from [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com):

- Apply for meal benefits
- Pay for meals online
- Set up automated payments
- View and print student purchase activity
- Receive low balance reminders

- Receive immediate email confirmation of all transactions

Daily menu and price information is found on [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) or [Meal & A La Carte Prices](#).

Child Nutrition allows students to charge meals in conjunction with Texas Department of Agriculture policies. Each student can charge up to 5 breakfast meals and 5 lunch meals. Ala carte items are not available to charge. Low balance notifications will begin after the second charged meal to update households of their student's account balance.

## CLOSED CAMPUS

Students are not authorized to leave campus during regular school hours for any other reason, except with the permission of the principal. Students who leave campus in violation of these rules will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## CONDUCT BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

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

## HALLWAY USE DURING CLASS TIME

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

## MEETINGS OF NON-CURRICULUM-RELATED GROUPS (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)

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

## PEST MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

All pesticides used are registered for their intended use by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and are applied only by certified pesticide applicators. Except in an emergency, signs will be posted 48 hours before indoor application. All outdoor applications will be posted at the time of treatment, and signs will remain until it is safe to enter the area.

Parents who have further questions may contact the district's IPM coordinator, at (940) 369-0200.

## USE BY STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL

To ensure the comfort and safety of all students, all district-owned and operated facilities shall be used applicably as the facility was designed as it relates to purpose, function, and/or birth certificate assigned gender. Any request for accommodations or variations from this practice must be discussed with the campus principal before any such accommodations can be arranged.

## **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 an activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

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

## **VENDING MACHINES**

The district has adopted and implemented the state and federal policies and guidelines for food service, including the guidelines to restrict student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines, see the campus principal. [See policies at CO and FFA].

## **SCHOOL SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The district periodically takes students on field trips for educational purposes. A parent provides permission, during the PowerSchool enrollment process, for a student to participate in a field trip.

The district may ask the parent to provide information about a student's medical provider and insurance coverage and may also ask the parent to electronically sign a waiver allowing for emergency medical treatment in the case of a student accident or illness during the field trip.

The district may require a fee for student participation in a field trip to cover expenses such as transportation, admission, and meals; however, a student will not be denied participation because of financial need. The district is not responsible for refunding fees paid directly to a third-party vendor.

## **SEARCHES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, district officials may occasionally conduct searches.

District officials may conduct searches of students, their belongings, and their vehicles in accordance with law and district policy. Searches of students will be conducted without discrimination, based on, for example, reasonable suspicion, voluntary consent, or pursuant to district policy providing for non-suspicious security procedures, including the use of metal detectors/wands.

In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, students are responsible for prohibited items found in their possession, including items in their personal belongings or in vehicles parked on district property.

If there is reasonable suspicion to believe that searching a student's person, belongings, or vehicle will reveal evidence of a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, a district official may conduct a search in accordance with law and district regulations.

Searches will be conducted out of view of other students. A person of the same gender will always conduct the search with a witness present in the room. Administrators and teachers have the duty to question students regarding their conduct or the conduct of others outside of the presence of parents.

## **DISTRICT PROPERTY (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

Students' desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items are school property and remain

under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

Students are fully responsible for the security and contents of their assigned desks and lockers and cubicles. Students must be certain that their lockers are locked, and that the combinations are not available to others.

Searches of desks, lockers, district-provided technology, and similar items may be conducted at any time there is reasonable suspicion to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present. Students are responsible for any prohibited items found in their lockers, desks, cubicles, or vehicles parked on district property. A parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in a student's desk, locker, cubicle, or vehicle.

#### **METAL DETECTORS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

To maintain a safe learning environment, the district reserves the right to subject students to metal detector searches when at a district campus and at off-campus, school-sponsored activities.

The District employs hand-held metal detectors at all campuses and walk-through metal detectors at secondary campuses. Walk-through detectors are used regularly on a random basis throughout the year. The hand-held detectors are used after an alert is sounded by the walk-through device to pinpoint the location of the item that is triggering the detector.

#### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

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

#### **TRAINED DOGS**

The district will use trained dogs to screen for concealed or prohibited items, including drugs and alcohol. Screenings conducted by trained dogs will not be announced in advance. The dogs will not be used with students, but students may be asked to leave personal belongings in an area that is going to be screened, such as a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. If a dog alerts to an item or an area, it may be searched by district officials.

#### **VEHICLES ON CAMPUS (SECONDARY GRADE LEVELS ONLY)**

A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle parked on district property and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the Student Code of Conduct.] Vehicles parked on district property are under the jurisdiction of the district.

School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable suspicion to do so, with or without the permission of the student. If a vehicle subject to search is locked, the student will be asked to unlock the vehicle. If the student refuses, the student's parent will be contacted. If a search is also refused by the student's parent, the district will turn the matter over to law enforcement. The district may, in certain circumstances, contact law enforcement even if permission to search is granted.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The district provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, students in foster care, migrant students, students with limited English proficiency or who are emergent bilinguals, students diagnosed with dyslexia, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the district or by other organizations. If you have questions about these programs, contact the coordinators of these programs at (940) 369-0000.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission's Talking Book Program provides audiobooks free of charge to qualifying Texans, including students with visual, physical, or reading disabilities such as dyslexia.

### **DYSLEXIA PROGRAM**

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders in the following way: "Dyslexia" means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity. "Related disorders" include disorders similar to or related to dyslexia, such as developmental auditory imperception, dysphasia, specific developmental dyslexia, developmental dysgraphia, and developmental spelling disability.

The International Dyslexia Association defines "dyslexia" in the following way: Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

Denton Independent School District provides a multisensory, systematic, explicit, evidence-based dyslexia intervention program in English to students in grades K-12 and in Spanish to students in grades K-5 who meet eligibility criteria.

Students in the English program are instructed using an Orton-Gillingham based program, Alphabetic Phonics through the Dyslexia Teaching Program, which uses multi-sensory techniques to teach the structure of the English language. Students in the Spanish program are instructed using the Esperanza reading program, which uses multi-sensory techniques to teach the structure of the Spanish language. Students in the Esperanza program solidify reading in their native language then transition into the English dyslexia classes.

Both programs utilize small-group instruction that is intensive, systematic, sequential, and cumulative. The critical, evidence-based components of the dyslexia instruction program include: Phonological Awareness, Sound-symbol association, Syllabication, Orthography, Morphology, Syntax, Reading comprehension and Reading fluency.

Students in the dyslexia program are served through Section 504 or IDEA and are supported with appropriate accommodations and/or modifications to ensure academic success.

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 mandates all Kindergarten students be screened at the end of their Kindergarten school year and all 1st grade students be screened no later than January 31 of their 1st grade school year to support early interventions and identification of students who may be at risk for reading difficulties or dyslexia.

## **EXPO PROGRAM FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS**

A special program is provided for academically talented students in all grades who have demonstrated Exceptional Potential. Teachers, who have received extensive training, work with the students in developing higher level thinking skills and creative problem-solving abilities. Referrals may come from faculty/staff, parents, community members, or by self-referral. Please refer to the EXPO website for referring and testing windows. Persons referring students must complete a Referral Form which is found on the following website: <http://https://www.dentonisd.org/expo>.

## **READING RECOVERY/DESCUBRIENDO LA LECTURA (DLL)**

Denton ISD offers a short-term intervention for English-speaking or Spanish-speaking first graders who are struggling with the acquisition of literacy skills. In Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura, individual students receive a half-hour lesson each school day for 12 to 20 weeks with a specially trained Reading Recovery/DLL teacher. As soon as students reach grade-level literacy expectations and demonstrate that they can continue to learn through their own efforts, their lessons are discontinued, and new students begin individual instruction. The Reading Recovery/DLL teacher also works with small groups of kindergarten, first and second grade students needing supplemental literacy instruction.

## **READING & MATH INTERVENTION**

State law requires a student in kindergarten–grade 2 to attend any assigned accelerated reading instruction program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program based on a diagnostic reading instrument.

Reading and Math intervention will be provided for students performing below proficient levels in grades 3-8. Scientifically based research methods will be utilized to provide fast-paced lessons to help students accelerate their academic growth.

## **SECTION 504**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that the Denton Independent School District not discriminate based on disability in any District program or activity. The District will identify, evaluate, and provide appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability under Section 504.

For additional information about the rights of parents of eligible children or for answers to any questions you might have about identification, evaluation or placement into Section 504 program, please contact the Denton ISD Coordinator of Intervention Services at 940-369-0443, or the campus principal.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTING**

### **LOCALLY ADOPTED ASSESSMENTS (ELEMENTARY LEVEL ONLY)**

Students will be assessed through TX-KEA (Kindergarten) and TPRI/Tejas LEE (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) throughout the year. These early literacy inventories have been locally adopted to meet Texas Education Agency (TEA) requirements. Primary Numeracy Assessment (K-2) and school ability test are also locally adopted and will be offered to select grades. These assessment results are shared with parents after each administration and are used to guide classroom instruction, as well as provide data for consideration of placement in special programs.

### **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 school counselor 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 school counselor.

Note: 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 SUCCESS INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT 2.0 (TSIA2)

Prior to enrollment in a Texas public college or university, most students must take a standardized test called the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA2). In some instances, Denton ISD provides this assessment to high school students. The purpose of the TSIA2 is to assess the reading, mathematics, and writing skills that entering freshmen-level students should have if they are to perform effectively in undergraduate certificate or degree programs in Texas public colleges and universities. This assessment may be required before a student enrolls in a dual credit course offered through the district as well. Achieving certain benchmark scores on this assessment for college readiness may also waive certain end-of-course assessment requirements in limited circumstances.

#### STAAR (STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENTS OF ACADEMIC READINESS) (GRADES 3–8)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students at certain grade levels are required to take the state assessment, called STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8
- Science in grades 5 and 8
- Social Studies in grade 8

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

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

#### HIGH SCHOOL END-OF-COURSE (EOC) ASSESSMENTS

STAAR end-of-course (EOC) assessments are administered for the following courses:

- Algebra I
- English I and English II
- Biology
- U.S. History

Satisfactory performance on the applicable assessments will be required for graduation, unless otherwise waived or substituted as allowed by state law and rules. There are three testing windows during the year in which a student may take an EOC assessment, which will occur during the fall, spring, and summer months. If a student does not meet satisfactory performance, the student will have additional opportunities to retake the assessment.

STAAR Alternate 2 is available for eligible students receiving special education services who meet certain criteria established by the state as determined by the student's ARD committee.

An admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee for a student receiving special education services will determine whether successful performance on the EOC assessments will be required for graduation within the parameters identified in state rules and the student's personal graduation plan (PNP). [See **Graduation** for additional information.]

## **PARTICIPATION IN FEDERALLY REQUIRED, STATE MANDATED, & DISTRICT ASSESSMENTS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) does not include a federal right to opt-out of standardized assessments. Because an opt-out policy is not applicable in the state of Texas, it is not necessary for school districts in Texas to provide parents with information regarding an opt-out policy. Districts must, however, provide parents with information regarding their child's participation in the assessment.

Texas Education Code 26.010 addresses the fact that students may not opt-out of standardized or any other tests.

All eligible students present at school on a testing date must be included in the test administration. Campus officials must return a test booklet for every student, in accordance with TEA test administration guidelines.

**Note:** It is important to note that missing school on a single designated test date will not necessarily cause the student to have missed his or her testing opportunity. Most tests are administered from a testing window set by TEA. If a student who has been absent returns to school during the testing window, he or she may be asked to sit for the exam at that time. Makeup test dates that extend beyond the test window are in place for most STAAR tests.

In accordance with ESSA, a parent may request information regarding any federal, state, or district policy related to his or her child's participation in required assessments. Contact the campus principal for more information.

## **STUDENT ID CARD**

For security reasons, all Denton ISD students are required to wear a school issued ID badge in a visible manner on or above the waist. To properly identify the student whom the ID badge belongs to, the ID should clearly display the campus name, student name, and student photo.

## **STUDENT SPEAKERS**

The district provides students the opportunity to introduce a number of school events. If a student meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to introduce a school event, the student should submit his or her name in accordance with policy FNA(LOCAL).

## **STUDENT TUTORIAL PROGRAM**

The district offers tutoring services for any student not meeting grade level academic standards or earning less than 75 on the report card in integrated language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies. A student may also receive tutoring if the regular schoolwork has been changed to meet individual needs. This is a program where students may choose to receive extra help at least twice a week. Each school will provide more information.

## **SUMMER SCHOOL**

The district offers several summer learning opportunities for students.



The Jump Start program is offered for elementary students, middle school students, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders enrolling in Algebra I as an opportunity to pre-learn concepts important for success in the coming school year.

Other programs available include a emergent bilingual/ESL PreK/K program, a high school credit recovery program, and ESL credit recovery program, an extended school year program, and an AP Boost program.

High school students wishing to earn original credit have options including TWU Dual Credit, TTU ISD, UT High School, and TxVSN. A special course offering is available for seniors who still need to earn their state-required world language credits for graduation.

Please call the school for more information.

## **SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS**

Courses taken in Denton ISD do not have required assignments and/or readings during the summer months; this includes advanced academics courses such as honors, AP, dual credit. The district encourages students to engage in activities that enrich their lives and pursue their passions. Denton ISD campuses and teachers are encouraged to promote learning throughout the summer by recommending reading, study aids (including websites), and/or content and skills-based learning. Please contact the campuses for summer programming which includes “boost” camps or suggestions for summer enrichment learning. Denton ISD believes this approach will help students stay engaged with learning while pursuing success in their future honors, Advanced Placement, and dual credit courses.

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

Textbooks and other district-approved instructional materials are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Any books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. Electronic textbooks and technology may also be provided to students, depending on the course and course objectives.

A student who is issued a damaged item should report the damage to the teacher.

Any student failing to return an item in acceptable condition loses the right to free textbooks and technology until the item is returned or the damage paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided the necessary alternative instructional resources and equipment for use at school during the school day.

## **TOBACCO AND E-CIGARETTES PROHIBITED AND ALL OTHERS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**

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

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

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **BUSES AND OTHER SCHOOL VEHICLES (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school (not including transfer students), and by ARD or Section 504 Committee decision, for Special Education or Section 504 students who require transportation as an educational need.

Bus routes and stops will be designated annually and will be posted to the student's Home Access Center (HAC) Account. For the safety of the operator of the vehicle and all passengers, students must board buses or other vehicles only at authorized stops, and drivers must unload passengers only at authorized stops.

All items carried on the bus must fit in the student's lap or under the seat. Items such as large gym bags, book bags, or musical instruments must follow those rules and cannot take a seat space from another student. Bus drivers oversee student behavior on the bus and their instructions must be followed. Disciplinary action, including temporary or permanent removal from the bus may be taken against any student violating bus rules. To register and determine eligibility for transportation services and secure routing information, contact DISD Transportation at 940-369-0300.

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

- Always follow the driver's directions.
- Maintain their assigned student ID card on their person when boarding or off-loading a district school bus.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.
- Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.
- Observe all usual classroom rules.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Fasten their seat belts, if available.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.
- Follow any other rules established by the operator of the vehicle

When riding in district vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct; bus riding privileges may be suspended.

### **SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRIPS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. As approved by the principal, a coach or sponsor of an extracurricular activity may establish procedures related to making an exception to this requirement when a parent requests that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

### **VANDALISM (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

Littering, defacing, or damaging school property is not tolerated. Students will be required to pay for damages they cause and will be subject to criminal proceedings as well as disciplinary consequences in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **VIDEO CAMERAS (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

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

The principal will review the video and audio recordings routinely and document student misconduct. Discipline will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

Video recordings obtained from surveillance cameras that contain images of students may be student records, which are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Requests for such video records shall be processed with respect to FERPA requirements. [See FL(LEGAL)]

Videos that contain images of multiple students shall be released only with written consent from the parents of all students whose images are included. If the District determines that it is unable to release a video record to a parent/guardian requestor, the District shall provide an oral or written summary of the students' behavior or actions recorded in the video. [See FL(LEGAL), and 2017 Letter to Wachter]

In accordance with state law, a parent of a student who receives special education services, a staff member (as this term is defined by law), a principal or assistant principal, or the board may make a written request for the district to place video and audio recording equipment in certain self-contained special education classrooms. The district will provide notice before placing a video camera in a classroom or other setting in which your child receives special education services. For more information or to request the installation and operation of this equipment, speak with the campus principal. [See EHBAF(LOCAL).]

## **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL (ALL GRADE LEVELS)**

### **GENERAL VISITORS**

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. Classroom visits should be scheduled through the principal and teacher at least one day in advance and are typically limited to one class period or 45 minutes in length. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the main office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures. When arriving on campus, all parents and other visitors should be prepared to show identification.

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

Visits by school-age friends are not allowed and deliveries for students will not be accepted.

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

**Note:** Denton ISD may limit school visitors and or volunteers to help ensure that students and staff have a safe and healthy learning environment. If a visit is necessary, visitors and or volunteers must adhere to Denton ISD requirements regarding safety protocols and social distancing. Please contact the school principal (or appointed designee) to determine if your visit is deemed necessary prior to traveling to the campus.

### **UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS**

In accordance with Education Code 37.105, a school administrator, student resource officer (SRO), or district police officer has the authority to refuse entry or eject a person from district property if the person refuses to leave peaceably on request and:

- The person poses a substantial risk of harm to any person; or
- The person behaves in a manner that is inappropriate for a school setting and the person persists in the behavior after being given a verbal warning that the behavior is inappropriate and may result in refusal of entry or ejection.

Appeals regarding refusal of entry or ejection from district property may be filed in accordance with FNG(LOCAL) or GF(LOCAL).

## **BUSINESS, CIVIC, AND YOUTH GROUPS**

The district may invite representatives from patriotic societies listed in Title 36 of the United States Code to present information to interested students about membership in the society.

## **SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS**

As part of our college and career preparation efforts, the district invites representatives from colleges and universities and other higher education institutions, prospective employers, and military recruiters to present information to interested students throughout the year.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

We appreciate so much the efforts of parents, grandparents, and community volunteers that are willing to serve our district and students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact any campus principal or the Student Support Services Office at 940-369-0431 for more information and to complete an application. Comprehensive background checks will be completed before volunteer assignments can be provided.

**Note:** Denton ISD may limit school visitors and or volunteers to help ensure that students and staff have a safe and healthy learning environment. If a visit is necessary, visitors and or volunteers must adhere to Denton ISD requirements regarding safety protocols and social distancing. Please contact the school principal (or appointed designee) to determine if your visit is deemed necessary prior to traveling to the campus.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION**

A student who is eligible to vote in any local, state, or federal election may obtain a voter registration application at the main campus office.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

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

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book and equipment clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the school counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. For secondary students, a copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record. However, if a student did not hear high school credits, the withdrawal form will be placed in their non-permanent file, which is kept for 5 years after the date of withdrawal.

A student who is 18 or older, who is married, or who has been declared by a court to be an emancipated minor may withdraw without parental signature.

