



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2014-2015



Table of Contents

ABOUT IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS.....	6
Mission.....	6
Vision.....	6
History.....	6
REQUIRED LEGAL NOTICES.....	7
Nondiscrimination.....	7
Homeless Liaison and Title I Participants.....	7
Teacher Qualifications	7
Special Programs.....	8
Getting Permission to Video and Audio Record a Student	9
ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT	10
General Admissions and Enrollment Information	10
Exclusion from Admission	10
Admissions Application	10
Acceptance Procedures.....	10
Eligibility of Enrollment.....	10
Establishing Identification.....	11
Undocumented Students	11
Residency Verification	11
Food Allergy Information	11
Expulsions.....	12
Transfers.....	12
Withdrawals.....	12
Attendance.....	14
Tardiness	14
Texas Compulsory Attendance Law.....	14
Warning Notice	14
Required Documentation of Absences	15
Excused Absences	15
Unexcused Absences	15
Leaving Campus During School Hours.....	15
Tuition.....	16
Required Curriculum	17
Physical Education Requirements	17
Graduation Plan.....	17
Requirements for a Diploma for Students Enrolled in High School Prior to the 2014–2015 School Year	18
Requirements for a Diploma Beginning with the 2014–2015 School Year	18

Minimum, Recommended, and Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Graduation Programs.....	18
Foundation Graduation Program	19
Standardized Testing.....	19
Attendance Needed Per Class for Credit	21
Promotion and Retention Requirements	22
Re-doing Failed Assignments.....	23
HEALTH.....	24
Prohibition of Tobacco and Alcohol	24
Drug-Free School Notice	24
Emergency Medical Treatment	24
Immunizations	24
Reportable Diseases.....	26
Administration of Prescription Medication.....	26
Authorized Employees	27
Self-Administration of Prescription Asthma or Anaphylaxis Medicine.....	27
Psychotropic Medication	27
Bacterial Meningitis Information.....	28
Dyslexia and Related Disorders.....	29
Vision and Hearing Screenings.....	29
Spinal Screening	30
Fitness Testing	30
Pest Control	30
Asbestos Management Plan.....	30
Posting of Steroid Notice	30
STUDENT SAFETY.....	31
Student Code of Conduct.....	31
Child Abuse.....	31
Reporting Child Abuse.....	31
Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children	31
Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation.....	34
Freedom from Hazing, Bullying and Cyber-bullying	37
Interrogations and Searches	38
Desk and Locker Searches	39
Law Enforcement Agencies.....	39
Staff Notification	40
School Visitors.....	40
Registered Sex Offenders	40
Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs	41

Fireworks	41
Weapon and Concealed Handgun Prohibition	41
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS RELATING TO STUDENTS	42
Religious Expression	42
Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence	42
Recitation of the Declaration of Independence	42
School Calendar	42
School Day	42
Textbooks and Curriculum Materials	43
Transcripts	43
Fees	43
Displaying a Student’s Artwork, Projects, Photos, and Other Original Work	44
Distribution of Materials or Documents	44
Electronic Device Policy	45
Change of Address or Telephone Number	45
Uniform Requirements	45
Child Nutrition Program	46
Transportation	46
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND IMPORTANT NOTICES	47
Accommodations for Children of Military Families	47
Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns	47
Surveys and Activities	48
“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities	48
Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)	50
Student Acceptable Use Policy	51
REQUIRED FORMS	55
Directory Information Opt Out Form	56
Use of Student Work in School Publications	57
Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form	58
Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form	59
Food Allergy Notification Form	60
Photo/Videotape Release Form	61
Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook	62
APPENDIX	63

WELCOME LETTER

Dear IDEA Student & Parent,

Our faculty welcomes you to the 2014-2015 school year. We look forward to working with you to help your child be a successful college-bound student. At IDEA Public Schools, we strive to provide a safe learning environment for all children. We have high expectations of ourselves. In order to effectively meet our high expectations, we expect you to take an active role in your child's education by reading and following the requirements of the Student & Parent Handbook.

Sincerely,

Principal

IDEA Academy

Principal

IDEA College Preparatory

ABOUT IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Mission

IDEA Public Schools prepares students from underserved communities for success in college and citizenship.

Vision

To ensure the state of Texas reaches its fullest potential, IDEA Public Schools will become the region's largest creator of college graduates.

History

From the very beginning, IDEA Public Schools has focused on raising the achievement levels and expectations of underserved students so they have an opportunity to attend and succeed in college – once a far-fetched goal for many students in South Texas, but now possible for students who seek to improve their lives and their communities.

In 1998, Teach For America recruits Tom Torkelson and JoAnn Gama were working with the Donna Independent School District when they realized and became concerned about a lack of resources present in their community compared to schools in more affluent communities. Working alongside parents and students, they created a framework for student success built on discipline, hard work, and a commitment to excellence; the IDEA Academy after-school program was born.

Initially serving only 75 students in fourth and fifth grade, the program was immediately successful. This led the Texas Education Agency to grant a charter in the spring of 2000 to the IDEA Academy to help establish the program as an independent, state-sponsored public school. The IDEA Academy has since grown into the IDEA Public Schools system, operating both primary and secondary campuses in multiple locations around the Rio Grande Valley and elsewhere in the state of Texas. IDEA Public Schools recently celebrated its ten-year anniversary and continues to expand. IDEA Public Schools is fully committed to graduating 100% of its students and matriculating 100% of its students into a four-year college or university.

REQUIRED LEGAL NOTICES

Nondiscrimination

IDEA Public Schools does not discriminate in its educational programs and services, including its career and technology education programs, on the basis of sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or disability. IDEA Public Schools complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), as amended, which incorporates and expands upon the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and any other legally-protected classification or status protected by applicable law. Any questions or concerns about IDEA Public Schools’ compliance with these federal programs should be brought to the attention of the following persons designated as being responsible for coordinating compliance with these requirements:

The Title VI/Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of sex/gender, is Tricia Lopez, whose office is located at 505 Angelita Drive, Suite 9 in Weslaco, and who can be reached by telephone by calling (956) 377-8000.

The ADA/Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability, is Tricia Lopez, whose office is located at 505 Angelita Drive, Suite 9 in Weslaco, and who can be reached by telephone by calling (956) 377-8000.

The Age Discrimination Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of age, is [Lisa Cavazos], whose office is located at 505 Angelita Drive, Suite 9 in Weslaco, and who can be reached by telephone by calling (956) 377-8000.

All other concerns regarding discrimination may be directed to Tricia Lopez, whose office is located at 505 Angelita Drive, Suite 9 in Weslaco, and who can be reached by telephone by calling (956) 377-8000.

Homeless Liaison and Title I Participants

Tricia Lopez is our liaison for services to students who are determined to be homeless, as defined by federal law. If you believe your child may be eligible for services or assistance, contact her at (956) 377-8000.

Phillip Garza is our Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with families and children participating in Title I programs. If you have questions about the program or need assistance related to the program, contact him at (956) 377-8000.

Teacher Qualifications

At the beginning of each school year, IDEA Public Schools will notify the parent of each student attending with information regarding the professional qualifications of their student’s classroom teachers. IDEA Public Schools will also provide this information upon request from a parent. The notification will include, at a minimum:

- 1) Whether your child’s teacher(s) have met state qualification and licensing criteria for their grade levels and subject areas.
- 2) Whether your child’s teacher(s) are serving under emergency or other provisional status that is less than full state certification.

- 3) The bachelor's degree major of your child's teacher(s) and any graduate degrees held, and the field of certification or degree.
- 4) Whether your child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Special Programs

Bilingual/ESL Services

IDEA Public Schools offers Bilingual/English as a Second Language (“ESL”) services for English language learners who are limited to their English proficiency. The program is designed to assist students identified as having Limited English Proficiency with development in language – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The goal of this program is to provide additional English language assistance to students, enabling them to become academically successful in all classes. Students are assessed with state-approved Oral Language Proficiency and Norm-Referenced Test to qualify for placement in the program. If the test results indicate either limited oral or limited cognitive academic English ability, the student (with parent approval) is provided additional English language support.

Special Education Services

IDEA Public Schools has the responsibility of identifying, locating, and evaluating individuals with disabilities who are 5 to 21 years of age and who fall within the school's jurisdiction. If you know or suspect that your student has a disability, please contact the IDEA Public Schools Special Education Coordinator for information about available programs, assessments, and services.

Special education services are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities. Each student who receives special education services has an Individual Education Plan (“IEP”), which is developed by the student's Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee. The ARD Committee considers the student's disability and determines appropriate accommodations, supplementary aids, and/or services that are necessary for the student to participate in the general curriculum.

All special education services are provided in the least restrictive environment, which may be special education settings, general education settings, or a combination or both. All students receiving special education services are educated to the maximum extent appropriate with their non-disabled peers as well as participating in all school activities on the same basis as students who are not disabled.

The *Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*, can be obtained from the Special Education Coordinator or at the Texas Education Agency Special Education Website: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/>. For further information, please contact the Special Education Coordinator.

Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need Special Education Services

If a student is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the Special Education Coordinator to learn about IDEA Public Schools' overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students, including a process based on Response to Intervention (“RtI”). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on IDEA Public Schools' ability to meet the needs of all struggling students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services by presenting a written request to the Special Education Coordinator or an administrative employee. IDEA Public Schools must, within 15 school days of receiving the request, either (1) give the parent an opportunity to give written consent for the evaluation or (2) refuse to provide the evaluation and provide the parent with written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights if they disagree with IDEA Public Schools. Additionally, the parent will receive a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

If consent for evaluation is obtained, IDEA Public Schools must complete the evaluation and report within 45 school days of the date IDEA Public Schools receives the written consent. IDEA Public Schools must give a copy of the evaluation report to the parent.

Section 504 Services

IDEA Public Schools provides a free appropriate public education to each qualified student with a disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the student's disability. A "student with a disability" is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities, has a record of having such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. A student with a disability is "qualified" if he or she is between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive.

An appropriate education is the provision of regular or special education and related services that are (1) designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students who do not have disabilities are met; and (2) based on adherence to procedures that satisfy federal requirements for educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards.

Qualified students with disabilities will be placed in the regular educational environment, unless IDEA Public Schools demonstrates that education in the regular environment with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Should an alternate educational environment be necessary, IDEA Public Schools will comply with all legal requirements regarding least restrictive environment and comparable facilities for students with disabilities. In providing or arranging for nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, IDEA Public Schools will ensure that a qualified student with a disability participates with students who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

To be eligible for services and protections against discrimination on the basis of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student must be determined, as a result of an evaluation, to have a "physical or mental impairment" that substantially limits one or more major life activities. If a student has or is suspected of having a disability, or requires special services, parents or teachers should contact the Principal for information concerning available programs, assessments, and services.

Getting Permission to Video and Audio Record a Student

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from IDEA Public Schools to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits IDEA Public Schools to make a video or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:

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

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT

General Admissions and Enrollment Information

Admission and enrollment of students shall be open to persons who reside within the geographic boundaries stated in the IDEA Public Schools' charter, and who are eligible for admission based on lawful criteria identified in the charter and in state law. The total number of students enrolled in IDEA Public Schools shall not exceed the number of students approved in the charter or subsequent amendments. Total enrollment may further be limited by IDEA Public Schools based on occupancy limitations, code compliance and staffing requirements as deemed necessary.

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

Exclusion from Admission

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

Admissions Application

Students wanting to attend IDEA Public Schools must submit an application by March 31. Applicants placed on our waitlist must re-submit an admissions application each school year between December 1 and March 31.

Acceptance Procedures

If IDEA Public Schools receives more applications than it has spots available, it will conduct a random lottery. Once all enrollment spots have been filled by the lottery, the lottery will continue and applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which they were drawn. If a vacancy arises before the commencement of the school year, the individual on the waiting list with the lowest number assignment will be offered admission and then removed from the waiting list.

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

Exceptions to Lottery Process: Federal guidelines permit IDEA Public Schools to exempt from the lottery students who are already attending IDEA Public Schools; siblings of students already admitted to or attending IDEA Public Schools; and children of IDEA Public Schools' founders, teachers, and staff, so long as the total number of students allowed under this exemption constitutes only a small percentage of the school's total enrollment.

Eligibility of Enrollment

IDEA Public Schools ensures that appropriate measures are taken to verify, on enrollment, that a student is entitled to enroll. Any student admitted to IDEA Public Schools must have records such as report card and/or transcript from the previous school attended to verify his or her academic standing. Verification of residency and current immunization records are also required. Every student enrolling in IDEA Public

Schools for the first time must present documentation of immunizations as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

No later than 30 days after enrolling in IDEA Public Schools, the parent and school district in which the student was previously enrolled shall furnish records that verify the identity of the student. These records may include the student's birth certificate or a copy of the student's school records from the most recently attended school.

Children will not be denied enrollment because they failed to meet this requirement.

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

Establishing Identification

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

Undocumented Students

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

Residency Verification

The Texas Education Code authorizes schools to obtain evidence that a person is eligible to attend public schools. To be eligible for continued enrollment in IDEA Public Schools, each student's parent must show proof of residency at the time of enrollment. Residency may be verified through observation, documentation, and other means, including, but not limited to:

1. A recently paid rent receipt,
2. A current lease agreement,
3. The most recent tax receipt indicating home ownership,
4. A current utility bill indication the address and name of the residence occupiers,
5. Mailing addresses of the residence occupiers,
6. Visual inspection of the residence,
7. Interviews with persons with relevant information, or
8. Building permits issued to a parent on or before September 1st of the school year in which admission is sought (permits will serve as evidence of residency for the school year in which admission is sought only).

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

Food Allergy Information

The parent of each student enrolled in IDEA Public Schools must complete a form provided by IDEA Public Schools that discloses (1) whether the child has a food allergy or a severe food allergy that should be disclosed to IDEA Public Schools to enable it to take any necessary precautions regarding the child's safety and (2) specifies the food(s) to which the child is allergic and the nature of the allergic reaction.

For purposes of this requirement, the term “severe food allergy” means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

IDEA Public Schools may also require information from a child’s physician if the child has food allergies.

Food allergy information forms will be maintained in the child’s student records, and shall remain confidential. Information provided on food allergy information forms may be disclosed to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only to the extent consistent with Board policy and as permissible under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (“FERPA”).

Expulsions

If a student commits an expellable offense, as outlined in the IDEA Public Schools’ Student Code of Conduct, administrators may expel the student only after due process has been afforded the student, and a committee has determined that expulsion is the appropriate consequence.

Transfers

Students must attend an IDEA Public Schools campus for one year before transferring to another campus, UNLESS there is a change in the student’s address since the student’s application date. Transfers are contingent upon space availability at the applicable campus.

Withdrawals

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student under 18 years of age may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. IDEA Public Schools requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. Parents may obtain a withdrawal form from the main office. The parent shall also provide the name of the new school in which the student will be enrolled, and must sign the withdrawal request to document that the student will continue to be enrolled in a school as required by compulsory attendance laws.

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

Withdrawing students and parents are expected to:

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

In all cases, withdrawal forms must be appropriately completed and signed before withdrawal is complete.

Involuntary Withdrawal

IDEA Public Schools may initiate withdrawal of a student under the age of 18 for non-attendance if:

- (1) the student has been absent 10 consecutive school days, and
- (2) repeated efforts by the school to locate the student have been unsuccessful.

Additionally, IDEA Public Schools may revoke the enrollment of a student 18 years of age or older who has more than five unexcused absences in one semester.

ATTENDANCE AND TUITION

Attendance

IDEA Public Schools' student attendance accounting system is in compliance with all laws, regulations, and Texas Education Agency rules governing attendance.

IDEA Public Schools shall ensure that attendance policies are distributed to staff, students, and parents/guardians.

Absenteeism unavoidably affects the quality of a student's work, interferes with normal instructional procedures in the classroom, and places additional demands on the teacher to provide remedial assistance. It negatively impacts the child who is absent as well as other students in the class.

Tardiness

Nearly all tardiness is avoidable and is excusable only in cases of illness or emergency. If a student arrives late to school, a parent must report to the school office to complete a tardy slip. **Warning letters will be given for excessive tardies and absences.**

Texas Compulsory Attendance Law

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 must attend school and school-required tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise legally exempted or excused. IDEA Public Schools staff must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent from school without permission from any class, from required special programs, or from required tutorials will be considered "truant" and subject to disciplinary action.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student 18 years of age or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, IDEA Public Schools may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

Notice to Parents: Under Texas Education Code § 25.095(a), you are hereby notified that if a student is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in any one school year or is absent for three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period, the parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.093 and the student is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code § 25.094, or to referral to a juvenile court in a county with a population of less than 100,000 for conduct that violates that section.

Warning Notice

IDEA Public Schools shall ensure that at the beginning of each school year the parents of students will receive notice that they and the student are subject to prosecution for violation of attendance laws. IDEA Public Schools will also notify the parent by mail when the student is absent from school, without excuse, on three days or parts of days within a four-week period. The notice will inform the parent that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school, the parent is subject to prosecution for contributing to nonattendance under Texas Education Code § 25.093, and that a conference between the parent and school officials is needed to discuss the absences.

Required Documentation of Absences

A student absent from school, upon his or her return, must provide a written note to the school that explains the absence. The note must either be signed by a parent, guardian, or the student if the student is over the age of 17 or emancipated.

Excused Absences

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

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk;
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus;
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state;
- Mental health or therapy appointments; or
- Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.

Students may be excused up to two absences in their junior year and two absences in their senior year when visiting an accredited institution of higher education for the purpose of determining their interest in attending that institution. Upon return to school, a student shall provide a written note to the school that explains the absence, along with documentation indicating that the student indeed visited the institution.

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 student notifies his or her teachers and receives approval from the Principal prior to the absence.

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

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

Unexcused Absences

Any absence not listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Vacations are not an acceptable cause for an excused absence from school.

Leaving Campus During School Hours

A student younger than 18 years old must have prior parent/guardian approval, either written or by a school documented phone call, before that student may leave the school campus during school hours.

Tuition

IDEA Public Schools may not charge tuition to an eligible student.

REQUIRED INSTRUCTION AND GRADUATION

IDEA Public Schools maintains compliance with all state laws and regulations governing curriculum and graduation requirements.

Required Curriculum

IDEA Public Schools offers the following required curriculum:

1. A foundation curriculum that includes:
 - a. English language arts;
 - b. Mathematics;
 - c. Science; and
 - d. Social studies, consisting of Texas, United States, and world history, government and geography; and
2. An enrichment curriculum that includes
 - a. Languages other than English, to the extent possible;
 - b. Health;
 - c. Physical education (“PE”);
 - i. Each open-enrollment charter holder shall establish specific objectives and goals the charter holder intends to accomplish through the PE curriculum.
 - d. Fine Arts;
 - e. Economics with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits;
 - f. Technology applications

Physical Education Requirements

All students in grades K–5 will engage in at least 135 minutes of physical activity each week as part of the physical education curriculum.

Students in grades 6-8 will engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters.

Physical Education Exemption

Short-term exemptions from physical education is possible for students who have physical handicaps, illnesses, or other incapacities that a physician deems severe enough to warrant exemption or severe enough to warrant modified activity in such classes. Each case is handled on an individual basis as follows:

1. Each request for exemption or for modified activity must be accompanied by a physician’s certificate. Such certificates are honored, but must be renewed each year.
2. When the certificate will allow modified activities in class, the student should remain in physical education class. The teachers adjust the activities of the student to the disability.
3. An exempted student may be admitted to regular physical education activities only upon presentation of a written statement from the same physician who signed the original exemption.

Graduation Plan

IDEA Public Schools shall ensure that each student enrolls in the courses necessary to complete the curriculum requirements identified by the State Board of Education (“SBOE”) for the foundation high school program, or the recommended or advanced high school program. As required by the IDEA Public Schools charter, a student may graduate and receive a diploma only if the student successfully completes the

curriculum requirements identified by the SBOE, has been accepted into a 4 year college or university, has completed a minimum of 125 hours of community service, and has performed satisfactorily on required end of course assessment instruments.

Requirements for a Diploma for Students Enrolled in High School Prior to the 2014–2015 School Year

To receive a high school diploma, a student who was enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–2015 school year must successfully:

1. Complete the required number of credits established by the State and any additional credits required by IDEA Public Schools;
2. Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the State; and
3. Achieve passing scores on certain end-of-course (“EOC”) assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law.

Requirements for a Diploma Beginning with the 2014–2015 School Year

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 in the 2014–2015 school year, as well as any currently-enrolled high school student who decides to graduate under the new foundation graduation program, a student must meet the following requirements to receive a high school diploma:

1. Complete the required number of credits established by the State and any additional credits required by IDEA Public Schools;
2. Complete any locally required courses in addition to the courses mandated by the State;
3. Achieve passing scores on certain EOC assessments or approved substitute assessments, unless specifically waived as permitted by State law; and
4. Demonstrate proficiency, as determined by IDEA Public Schools, in the specific communication skills required by the State Board of Education.

Testing Requirements for Graduation

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

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

Minimum, Recommended, and Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Graduation Programs

For students who were enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–2015 school year, IDEA Public Schools offers Minimum, Recommended, and Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Graduation programs.

Students enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–2015 school year also have the option to pursue the foundation graduation program as described below.

Please note that participation to enroll in the Minimum High School Program will be granted only if a written agreement is reached between the student, a parent or person standing in parental relation, and an appropriate school administrator. In order for a student to take classes under the Minimum Program, the student must be at least 16 years of age; have completed at least two credits each in English language arts, math, science, and social studies courses that are required for graduation; or have failed grade 9 on one or more times.

Foundation Graduation Program

Every student in a Texas public school who enters grade 9 in the 2014–2015 school year and thereafter will graduate under a new program called the “foundation school 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 and diploma. The foundation graduation program also involves the term “distinguished level of achievement,” which reflects the completion of at least one endorsement and Algebra II as one of the required advanced mathematics credits. State law and rules prohibit a student from graduating solely under the foundation graduation program without an endorsement unless, after the student’s sophomore year, the student and the student’s parent are advised of the specific benefits of graduating with an endorsement and submit written permission to an appropriate school administrator 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 acknowledgements” that will be acknowledged on a student’s diploma and transcript. Performance acknowledgements are available for outstanding performance in bilingualism and biliteracy, in a dual credit course; on an AP or IB exam; on the PSAT, ACT-Plan, SAT, or ACT exam; or for earning a nationally or internationally recognized license or certificate. The criteria for earning these performance acknowledgements are prescribed by state rules, and the Principal can provide more information about these acknowledgments.

A student enrolled in high school prior to the 2014–2015 school year has the option of graduating under the foundation graduation program rather than the programs identified above that would otherwise be applicable to the student. See the Principal for additional information.

Standardized Testing

STAAR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness)

In addition to routine tests and other measures of achievement, students in grades 3–8 will take state-mandated assessments, such as the STAAR, in the following subjects:

- Mathematics, annually in grades 3–8.
- Reading, annually in grades 3–8.
- Writing, including spelling and grammar, in grades 4–7.

- Science in grades 5 and 8.
- Social Studies in grade 8.

Successful performance on the reading and math assessments in grades 5 and 8 is required by law, unless the student is enrolled in a reading or math course intended for students above the student's current grade level, in order for the student to be promoted to the next grade level.

STAAR Modified and STAAR Alternative, for students receiving special education services, will be available for eligible students, as determined by the student's ARD committee.

STAAR-L is a linguistically accommodated assessment that is available for certain limited English proficient students, as determined by the student's Language Proficiency Assessment Committee. A Spanish version of STAAR is also available to students in grade 5 who need this accommodation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

STAAR-L, which is a linguistically accommodated assessment, will be available for students who have been determined to be limited English proficient and who require this type of testing accommodation.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment

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

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (“TELPAS”)

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

Attendance Needed Per Class for Credit

A student cannot miss more than 10% of the total number of days a class is offered in a school year in order to receive credit or earn a final grade. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered may be referred to the Attendance Committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or earn a final grade.

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

1. All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered, with consideration given to special circumstances as defined by the Texas Education Code.
2. For a student transferring into IDEA Public Schools after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
3. In reaching consensus about a student’s absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
4. The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or parent could exercise control.
5. The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documentation expressing reasons for the student’s absences.
6. 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.
7. The student, parent or other representative will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to discuss ways to earn or regain credit.

If credit is lost because of excessive absences, the attendance committee will decide how the student may regain credit or earn a final grade. If the committee determines there are no extenuating circumstances and that credit or a final grade may not be earned, the student or parent may appeal the committee’s decision to the Board of Directors by filing a written request with the Superintendent. The appeal notice must be postmarked to the following address within 30 days following the last day of instruction in the semester for which credit was denied:

IDEA Public Schools
Notice of Appeal: Class Credit
Attn: Superintendent
505 Angelita Drive, Suite 9
Weslaco, Texas 78599

The appeal will then be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Superintendent or designee shall inform the student or parent of the date, time, and place of the meeting.

Promotion and Retention Requirements

A student may be promoted on the basis of academic achievement and/or demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter of the course or grade level. To earn credit in a course, a student must demonstrate mastery on grade level standards and meet School requirements for attendance. A student in grades 9–12 will be advanced a grade level based on the number of course credits earned.

In addition, at certain grade levels a student – with limited exceptions – will be required to pass the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (“STAAR”), if the student is enrolled in a public Texas school on any day between January 1 and the date of the first administration of the STAAR.

- In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 5 grade assessment exam in English or Spanish.
- In order to be promoted to grade 9, students enrolled in grade 8 must perform satisfactorily on the Mathematics and Reading sections of the grade 8 assessment exam in English.

If a student in grade 5 or 8 is enrolled in a course that earns high school credit and for which an end-of-course (“EOC”) assessment will be administered, the student will not be subject to the promotion requirements described above for the relevant grade 5 or 8 assessment.

If a student in grade 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.

Parents of students who do not perform satisfactorily on their STAAR or EOC assessments will be notified that their child will participate in an Accelerated Instructional Program designed to improve performance. A student in grade 5 or 8 will have two additional opportunities to take a failed assessment. If a student fails a second time, a grade placement committee, consisting of the Principal or designee, the student’s teacher, and the student’s parent will determine the additional special instruction the student will receive.

Students will also have multiple opportunities to retake EOC assessments.

If a student fails after a third attempt, the student will be retained at his or her current grade level. The parent, however, may appeal this decision to the Committee. A decision to promote a student to the next grade level must be unanimous. Regardless of whether the student is retained or promoted, an educational plan for the student will be designed to enable the student to perform at grade level by the end of the next school year.

Students with Disabilities: Upon the recommendation of the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (“ARD”) Committee, a student with disabilities who is receiving special education services may be promoted and/or permitted to graduate under the provisions of his or her Individualized Education Program (“IEP”).

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

he or she may remain enrolled to complete the IEP and earn his or her high school diploma; however, the student will only be allowed to participate in one graduation ceremony.

In addition to the requirements listed above for students in grades 5 and 8, a student may be considered for retention if they have met any of the following criteria:

- 1) failed one or more core subject areas;
- 2) failed one or more state assessments
- 3) is below level in one or more core subject areas;
- 4) missed more than 10% of instructional days in an academic year. The decision must be made by a committee, which is comprised of the child's core subject area teachers, the counselor and the principal.

Re-doing Failed Assignments

A teacher cannot give a zero unless the school principal gives prior approval.

HEALTH

Prohibition of Tobacco and Alcohol

Smoking (including electronic cigarettes, cigars, and pipes) using tobacco products is prohibited on IDEA Public Schools property at all times, and at school-related or school-sanctioned activities, on or off school property. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

In order to provide a safe and alcohol-free environment for students and employees, all alcoholic beverages are prohibited on IDEA Public Schools property at all times, and at all school-sanctioned activities occurring on or off school property. Student violators are subject to possible prosecution, as allowed by law, as well as the disciplinary terms of the Student Code of Conduct.

Drug-Free School Notice

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

IDEA Public Schools shall ensure compliance with immunization laws and regulations and complies with laws and regulations regarding reportable diseases.

Emergency Medical Treatment

If a student has a medical emergency at school or a school-related activity and the parent cannot be reached, IDEA Public Schools staff will seek emergency medical treatment unless the parent has previously provided a written statement denying this authorization. Parents are asked each year to complete an “Emergency Care” consent form, which includes information about their student’s allergies to medications, etc. Parents should keep emergency contact information current (e.g., name of doctor, emergency phone numbers, allergies, etc.).

Immunizations

The State of Texas requires that every child in the state be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with an established immunization schedule.

To determine the specific number of doses that are required for your student, please read “2014–2015 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Students Grades K–12.” For specific immunization requirements, please visit the www.ideapublicschools.org/health or visit the Texas Department of State Health Services at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/>.

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

Provisional Enrollment

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

A student may be enrolled provisionally if the student has an immunization record that indicates the student has received at least one dose of each specified age-appropriate required vaccine. To remain enrolled, the student must complete the required subsequent doses in each vaccine series on schedule and as rapidly as is medically feasible and provide acceptable evidence of vaccination to the school. IDEA Public Schools shall review the immunization status of a provisionally enrolled student every 30 days to ensure continued compliance in completing the required doses of vaccination. If at the end of the 30-day period, a student has not received a subsequent dose of vaccine, then the student is not in compliance and IDEA Public Schools shall exclude the student from school attendance until the required dose is administered.

A student who is homeless, as defined by the McKinney Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302), shall be admitted temporarily for 30 days if acceptable evidence of vaccination is not available. IDEA Public Schools shall promptly refer the student to appropriate public health programs to obtain the required vaccinations.

Exclusions from Immunization Requirements

Exclusions from immunization requirements are allowable on an individual basis for medical reasons, reasons of conscience (including a religious belief), and active duty with the armed forces of the United States.

To claim exclusion for medical reasons, the student must present a statement signed by the student's physician (M.D. or D.O.), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the student, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's household. Unless it is written in the statement that a lifelong condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

To claim an exclusion for reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, a signed DSHS affidavit must be presented by the student's parent, stating that the student's parent declines vaccinations for reasons of conscience, including because of the person's religious beliefs, the affidavit will be valid for a two-year period. The form affidavit may be obtained by writing the TDSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347, or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/default.aspx>. The form must be submitted to the Principal within 90 days from the date it is notarized. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student. Students who have not received the required immunizations for reasons of conscience, including religious beliefs, may be excluded from school in times of emergency or epidemic declared by the commissioner of public health.

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

Immunization Records Reporting

IDEA Public Schools' record of a student's immunization history, while private in most instances, may be inspected by the Texas Education Agency, local health departments, and TDSHS and transferred to other schools associated with the transfer of the student to those schools.

Reportable Diseases

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. Parents of students with a communicable or contagious disease should notify the Principal or designee so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

School authorities, including Headquarters staff, a Principal, teacher, school health official, or counselor will report those students who are suspected of having a reportable condition. A list of reportable conditions can be found on the Department of State Health Services website at:

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

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

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

Administration of Prescription Medication

Medication should be administered at home whenever possible. If necessary, medication can be administered at school under the following circumstances:

- Prescription medication brought to school must be submitted by a parent, along with a written request. The medication must also be in the original and properly labeled container.
- Prescription medications administered during school hours must be prescribed by a physician or advanced nurse practitioner ("ANP") and filled by a pharmacist licensed in the State of Texas. **According to the Nurse Practice Act, school nurses cannot administer medications prescribed or fulfilled in Mexico.**
- Prescription medications must be submitted in a labeled container showing the student's name, name of the medication, reason the medication is being given, proper dosage amounts, the time the medication must be taken, and the method used to administer the medication. Medications sent in plastic baggies or unlabeled containers will NOT be administered.
- If the substance is herbal or a dietary supplement, it must be provided by the parent and will be administered only if required by the student's Individualized Education Program ("IEP") or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- Only the amount of medication needed should be delivered to the school, i.e., enough medication to last one day, one week, etc. In cases of prolonged need, send in the amount for a clearly specified period. Extra medication will not be sent home with the student.
- In certain emergency situations, IDEA Public Schools may administer a nonprescription medication to a student, but only in accordance with the guidelines developed by IDEA Public Schools' medical advisor and when the parent has previously provided written consent for emergency treatment.

Authorized Employees

Employees authorized by IDEA Public Schools to administer prescription medication include: School Health Aide, office personnel, and anyone designated by the Director of Health Services.

Self-Administration of Prescription Asthma or Anaphylaxis Medicine

The Health Aide of each campus shall ensure that a student with asthma may possess and self-administer prescription asthma medication if the student has physician's orders and parent permission. The medication must have been prescribed for the student and be in a container so labeled. If a student experiences a severe allergic reaction, the health aide or supervising adult is authorized to administer the appropriate anaphylaxis drug. A student may self-administer the drug if he/she meets the requirements below.

Before a student may be allowed to self-administer asthma or anaphylaxis medication, the parent must provide:

- signed, written authorization for the student to self-administer the prescription medicine while on school property or at a school-related activity; and
- a written statement signed by the child's physician or provider that states that the student has asthma and/or anaphylaxis and is capable of self-administering the prescription medication;
- the name and purpose of the medicine;
- the prescribed dosage of the medicine;
- the time(s) at which or circumstances under which the medicine may be administered; and
- the period for which the medicine is prescribed.

Written authorizations to self-administer asthma or anaphylaxis medication should be updated annually unless otherwise indicated by the student's physician.

Medication in a student's possession must be in an original container with a prescription label. Please note that most pharmacies will place a label on the inhaler device upon request.

Psychotropic Medication

An employee may not:

- 1) Recommend that a student use a psychotropic drug;
- 2) Suggest any particular diagnosis; or
- 3) Preclude a student from attending class or participating in a school related activity if the parent refuses to consent to the administration of a psychotropic drug to a student or to a psychiatric evaluation or examination of the student.

This does not prevent an employee from:

- 1) Making an appropriate referral under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act;
- 2) Recommending that a child be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner if the employee is a registered nurse, advance nurse practitioner, physician, or certified/credentialed mental health professional
- 3) Discussing any aspect of a student's behavior or academic progress with the student's parent/guardian or another IDEA Public Schools employee.

Bacterial Meningitis Information

State law requires IDEA Public Schools to provide the following information:

What is meningitis?

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord--also called the meninges. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral (aseptic) meningitis is common; most people recover fully. Medical management of viral meningitis consists of supportive treatment and there is usually no indication for the use of antibiotics. Parasitic and fungal meningitis are very rare. Bacterial meningitis is very serious and may involve complicated medical, surgical, pharmaceutical, and life support management.

There are two common types of bacteria that cause meningitis: - *Strep pneumoniae* causes pneumococcal meningitis; there are over 80 subtypes that cause illness - *Neisseria meningitidis*—Meningococcal meningitis; there are 5 subtypes that cause serious illness—A, B, C, Y, W-135

What are the symptoms?

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms, but any of the following are possible. Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have:

- Severe headache
- High temperature
- Vomiting
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Neck stiffness, joint pains
- Drowsiness or confusion

In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots or bruises caused by bleeding under the skin. These can occur anywhere on the body. They are a sign of blood poisoning (septicemia), which sometimes happens with meningitis, particularly the meningococcal strain.

What is the risk of getting bacterial meningitis?

The risk of getting bacterial meningitis in all age groups is about 2.4 cases per 100,000 population per year. However, the highest risk group for the most serious form of the disease, meningococcal meningitis, is highest among children 2 to 18 years old. Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes).

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability, such as deafness, blindness, amputations or brain damage (resulting in mental retardation or paralysis) even with prompt treatment.

How is bacterial meningitis spread?

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes). The germ **does not** cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become **carriers** of the germ for days, weeks or even months. Being a carrier helps to stimulate the body's natural defense system. The bacteria rarely overcomes the body's immune system and causes meningitis or another serious illness.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss. Vaccines against pneumococcal disease are recommended both for young children and adults over 64. A vaccine against four meningococcal serogroups (A, C, Y, W-135) is available. These four groups cause the majority of meningococcal cases in the United States. This vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85-90%). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within 7 to 10 days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to 5 years.

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

Seek prompt medical attention.

How is bacterial meningitis diagnosed?

The diagnosis is usually based on a combination of clinical symptoms and laboratory results from spinal fluid and blood. Spinal fluid is obtained by a lumbar puncture (spinal tap).

For more information

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

Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov and the Texas Department of Health: www.tdh.state.tx.us.

Dyslexia and Related Disorders

From time to time, students may be tested and, where appropriate, treated for dyslexia and related disorders in accordance with programs, rules and standard approved by the state. Parents will be notified should IDEA Public Schools determine a need to identify or assess their student for dyslexia and related disorders.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

All children enrolled in Texas schools must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems in accordance with regulations issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Students in certain grade levels identified by state regulations shall be screened for vision and hearing problems annually.

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

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

Spinal Screening

All children in grades 6–9 must be screened for abnormal spinal curvature before the end of the school year. The screening requirement for students entering grade six or nine may be met if the child has been screened for spinal deformities during the previous year.

A parent who declines participation in the spinal screening provided by IDEA Public Schools must submit to the Principal or designee documentation of a professional examination which includes the results of a forward-bend test. This documentation must be submitted to IDEA Public Schools during the year the student is scheduled for screening or, if the professional exam is obtained during the following summer, at the beginning of the following school year.

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

Fitness Testing

According to requirements under state law, IDEA Public Schools will annually assess the physical fitness of students. IDEA Public Schools is not required to assess a student for whom, as a result of disability or other condition identified by rule or law, the assessment exam is inappropriate.

Excuses from Physical Education: Any child who is to be excused, for reasons of health, from physical education or other normal school activities must bring a note from home to IDEA Public Schools stating the reason why and the duration of the excuse.

Pest Control

Periodically, IDEA Public Schools buildings and grounds are treated by licensed or trained individuals to control unwanted pests, such as insects and rodents. We will post notices of those treatment dates as required by law, and will schedule treatment times when students or employees are least likely to be in the building or on the grounds.

Asbestos Management Plan

IDEA Public Schools' Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations addressing asbestos that may have been used in school facilities, is available in the APO's office during regular business hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please contact Dan Cantu, at (956) 377-8000.

Posting of Steroid Notice

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

STUDENT SAFETY

Student Code of Conduct

IDEA Public Schools has adopted a Student Code of Conduct in accordance with law.

The Principal shall ensure that the student code of conduct is distributed to each student at the beginning of the year. Transfer students shall receive a student code of conduct upon enrollment.

Students with disabilities: any change in placement and/or any disciplinary action regarding a student with a disability, who needs or is believed to need special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities and Education Act, shall be in compliance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Child Abuse

Using resources developed by the Texas Education Agency, IDEA Public Schools provides child abuse anti-victimization programs and cooperates with official child abuse investigators as required by law. IDEA Public Schools also provides training to its teachers and students in preventing and addressing incidents of abuse and other maltreatment of students, including knowledge of likely warning signs indication that a student may be a victim of abuse or maltreatment. Assistance, interventions, and counseling options are also available.

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

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

Reporting Child Abuse

Any IDEA Public Schools' employee, volunteer, or agent that believes a child has been adversely affected by physical or mental abuse or neglect shall make a report within 48 hours of first suspecting such abuse or neglect. The report shall be made to law enforcement or the Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Protective Services.

Plan for Addressing Sexual Abuse and Other Maltreatment of Children

What is Sexual Abuse of a Child?

The Texas Family Code defines "sexual abuse" as any sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare as well as, in certain circumstances, failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child.

What is Other Maltreatment of a Child?

Under State law, "other maltreatment" of a child includes "abuse" or "neglect," as defined by Texas Family Code sections 261.001 and 261.401.

Reporting Obligation

Anyone who suspects that a child has been or may be abused or neglected has a legal responsibility, under state law, for reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to law enforcement or to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Reports may be made by contacting one of the following:

- Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or, in non-emergency situations only, <http://www.txabusehotline.org>.
- Your local police department.
- Call 911 for emergency situations.

IDEA Public Schools has established a plan for addressing child sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children (the “Plan”). The Plan is addressed in this section of the Handbook.

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

For Staff: IDEA Public Schools annually trains staff in all content areas addressed in the Plan. Training is provided by campus staff, administrative staff, or outside agencies as determined by the campus administration.

For Students: School counseling staff will address issues to increase awareness regarding sexual abuse and other maltreatment of children and anti-victimization programs with age appropriate conversation and materials no less than once per school year. These discussions will occur in classroom group settings.

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

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

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

The Principal or designee will provide information regarding counseling options available in your area for you and your child if your child is a victim of sexual abuse or other maltreatment. The DFPS also provides early abuse intervention through counseling programs. Services available in your county can be accessed at the following web address:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp.

These websites are also helpful:

- Texas Education Agency – Prevention of Child Abuse Overview:
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=2820>
- Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/programs/types/sexualabuse.cfm>
- Promoting Healthy Families in Your Neighborhood:
http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/res_packet_2008/
- Signs of Child Abuse:
http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/welcome/commonproblems/child_abuse.html
- DFPS – Prevent Child Abuse (HelpandHope.org)
<http://helpandhope.org>
DFPS – How to Report Child Abuse or Neglect
http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_us/report_abuse.asp
- Texas Attorney General – What Can We Do About Child Abuse?
https://www.oag.state.tx.us/AG_Publications/txts/child_abuse.shtml
- Prevent Child Abuse.org – Texas Chapter
www.preventchildabusetexas.org
- Texas Council on Family Violence – Abuse Prevention Links
<http://www.tcfv.org/>

Likely Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment

Psychological and behavioral signs of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment may include:

- Nightmares, sleep problems, extreme fears without an obvious explanation.
- Sudden or unexplained personality changes; becoming withdrawn, angry, moody, clingy, “checking out” or showing significant changes in eating habits.
- Depression or irritability.
- An older child behaving like a young child, for example, bedwetting or thumb sucking.
- Developing fear of certain places or resisting being alone with an adult or young person for unknown reasons.
- Resistance to routine bathing, toileting, or removing clothes, even in appropriate situations.
- Play, writing, drawings, or dreams of sexual or frightening images.
- Refusal to talk about a secret he or she has with an adult or older child.
- Leaving clues that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues.
- Using new or adult words for body parts.
- Engaging in adult-like sexual activities with toys, objects or other children.
- Developing special relationships with older friends that may include unexplained money, gifts, or privileges.
- Intentionally harming him or herself, for example, drug/alcohol use, cutting, burning, running away, and sexual promiscuity.
- Thinking of self or body as repulsive, dirty, or bad.
- Becoming increasingly secretive about Internet or telephone use.

Physical symptoms of possible sexual abuse or other maltreatment include:

- Stomachaches or illness, often with no identifiable reason.
- Difficulty in walking or sitting.
- Stained or bloody underwear.
- Genital or rectal pain, itching, swelling, redness, or discharge.
- Bruises or other injuries in the genital or rectal area.
- Unexplained soreness, pain or bruises around mouth, sexually transmitted disease, or pregnancy.

Any one sign does not necessarily mean that a child has been sexually abused or maltreated, but the presence of several signs is the time you should begin asking questions and seeking help. Often signs first emerge at other times of stress, such as during a divorce, death of a family member or pet, problems at school or with friends, or other traumatic or anxiety-inducing events.

Actions That a Child Who Is a Victim of Sexual Abuse or Other Maltreatment Should Take

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

Available Counseling Options

A list of counseling providers can be found at:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/

Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation

Statement of Nondiscrimination

IDEA Public Schools prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religions, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. IDEA Public Schools also prohibits dating violence, as defined by this Handbook. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of school policy.

Discrimination

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

Prohibited Harassment

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

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

- Otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities.

Examples of prohibited harassment may include offensive or derogatory language directed at another person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes; name calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; display of graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Sexual Harassment and Gender-Based Harassment

In compliance with the requirements of Title IX, IDEA Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities. Sexual harassment of a student, including harassment committed by another student, includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; or sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct when the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it:

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

Examples of sexual harassment of a student may include sexual advances; touching intimate body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

IDEA Public Schools also does not tolerate sexual harassment of a student by school employees. Romantic or inappropriate social relationships between students and school employees are prohibited. Any sexual relationship between a student and a school employee is always prohibited, even if consensual.

Sexual harassment of a student by a school employee includes both welcome and unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; sexually motivated physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct; or other conduct or communication of a sexual nature when:

- A school employee causes the student to believe that the student must submit to the conduct in order to participate in a school program or activity, or that the employee will make an educational decision based on whether or not the student submits to the conduct; or
- 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, or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities; or
 - Creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or abusive educational environment.

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

Examples of gender-based harassment directed against a student, regardless of the student's or the harasser's actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, may include, but not be limited to, offensive jokes,

name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; threatening or intimidating conduct; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Dating Violence

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 partner. Examples of dating violence against a student may include physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engaged in these behaviors.

For purposes of this Handbook, dating violence is considered prohibited harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that the conduct:

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

Retaliation

IDEA Public Schools prohibits retaliation against a student alleged to have experienced discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, or another student who, in good faith, makes a report, serves as a witness, or otherwise participates in an investigation. 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.

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

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced prohibited harassment or believes that another student has experienced prohibited harassment should immediately report the alleged acts to a teacher, counselor, the Principal or designee, or other school employee. Alternatively, a student may report prohibited harassment directly to the appropriate Coordinator identified in this Handbook.

A student shall not be required to report prohibited harassment to the person alleged to have committed the conduct. Reports concerning prohibited conduct, including reports against the Title IX Coordinator or ADA/Section 504 Coordinator may be directed to the Board of Directors. If a report is made directly to the Board, the Board shall appoint an appropriate person to conduct an investigation.

After receiving a complaint of prohibited discrimination or harassment, IDEA Public Schools may require the student to prepare a written report. Oral complaints will be reduced to written form. Upon receipt of a complaint, the appropriate Coordinator or other authorized school official shall promptly authorize and undertake an investigation. When appropriate, IDEA Public Schools may take interim action to avoid additional opportunities for discrimination or harassment. The investigation may consist of personal

interviews with the person making the report, the person against whom the report is filed, and any others with knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the allegations. If the results of the investigation establish that prohibited discrimination or harassment occurred, IDEA Public Schools shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the discrimination or harassment and prevent its recurrence. IDEA Public Schools may take disciplinary action based on the results of an investigation, even if it concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of harassment prohibited by law or policy.

Confidentiality

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

Appeal

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the IDEA Public Schools' grievance procedure. A student shall be informed of his or her right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

Freedom from Hazing, Bullying and Cyber-bullying

IDEA Public Schools prohibits hazing, bullying, and cyber-bullying as defined by this Handbook, as well as retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process.

Hazing occurs when a student or group of students engages in conduct, on or off school property, directed against a student that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of a student for the purpose of pledging, being initiated into, affiliating with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization. The term includes, **but is not limited to:**

- Any type of physical brutality;
- Any type of physical activity that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- Any activity involving consumption of a food, liquid, alcoholic beverage, liquor, drug, or other substance that subjects the student to an unreasonable risk of harm or that adversely affects the mental or physical health or safety of the student;
- Any activity that intimidates or threatens the student with ostracism; subjects the student to extreme mental stress, shame, or humiliation that adversely affects the mental health or dignity of the student; discourages the student from entering or remaining enrolled in the school; or may reasonably be expected to cause the student to leave the school; or
- Any activity that induces, causes, or requires the student to perform a duty or task that involves a violation of the Texas Penal Code.

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression, expression through electronic means, or physical conduct that occurs on school property at a school-related activity, or in a vehicle operated by the school 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; or

- Is sufficiently severe, persistent, and pervasive enough the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Conduct described above is considered bullying if that conduct:

- Exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
- Interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of the school.

Bullying can include hazing, threats, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor spreading, or ostracism. In some cases, bullying can occur through electronic methods called "cyber-bullying."

Reporting Procedures

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced any form of hazing and/or bullying or believes that another student has experienced hazing and/or bullying should immediately report the alleged acts to the Principal or designee, a teacher, counselor, or other school employee. A report may be made orally or in writing. Any school employee who receives notice that a student has or may have experienced hazing and/or bullying shall immediately notify the Principal or designee.

Investigation of Report

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

The Principal or designee shall prepare a written report of the investigation, including a determination of whether hazing and/or bullying occurred. If the results of an investigation indicated that hazing and/or bullying occurred, the school shall promptly respond by taking appropriate disciplinary or corrective action reasonably calculated to address the conduct in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. IDEA Public Schools may take action based on the results of an investigation, even if the school concludes that the conduct did not rise to the level of hazing and/or bullying under this policy.

Confidentiality

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

Appeal

A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal through the IDEA Public Schools grievance procedure.

Interrogations and Searches

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

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

Students shall be free from unreasonable searches and seizures by school officials. School officials may search a student's outer clothing, pockets, or property by establishing reasonable cause or securing the student's voluntary consent.

A search is reasonable if (1) the school official has reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will uncover evidence of a rule violation or a criminal violation and (2) the scope of the search is reasonably related to the circumstances justifying the search, such as the extent of the search, the objectives of the search, the age and sex of the student, and the nature of the infraction.

Desk and Locker Searches

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

Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers and desks, and shall be held responsible for any prohibited items found therein. A student's parent shall be notified if any prohibited articles or materials are found in a student's locker or desk, or on the student's person.

Law Enforcement Agencies

Questioning of Students

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

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

When the investigation involves allegations of child abuse, special rules apply.

Students Taken into Custody

State law requires IDEA Public Schools to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

1. Pursuant to an order of the juvenile court;
2. Pursuant to the laws of arrest;
3. By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in conduct that violates a penal law, delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision, or conduct that violates a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court;

4. By a probation officer if there is a probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court;
5. Pursuant to a properly issued directive to apprehend;
6. By an authorized representative of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (“TDFPS”), a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in Section 262.104 of the Texas Family Code relating to the student’s physical health or safety; or
7. To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

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

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

Staff Notification

IDEA Public Schools is required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.
- All appropriate School personnel in regards to a student who is required to register as a sex offender.

School Visitors

All visitors to IDEA Public Schools must sign-in at the school campus administrative office. A sign at the entrance to the campus will direct visitors to the appropriate location.

All visitors must present a form of identification or at a minimum their name and date of birth. IDEA Public Schools personnel process each visitor through the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Sex Offender Registry Search or other database system which checks for sex offender status. All approved visitors will be issued a badge that is to be worn at all times while visiting the school campus. Upon their departure they must sign-out at the central administrative office and return the visitor’s badge.

Visitors who do not submit a form of identification or their name and date of birth for the purpose of checking sex offender status shall not be allowed on school grounds. A parent of a student enrolled at IDEA Public Schools who does not provide identification or name and date of birth shall follow the same policy.

Registered Sex Offenders

Registered sex offenders are prohibited from entering school grounds.

Exception: A parent/guardian registered sex offender may enter school grounds for the following limited purposes:

1. To attend a conference at the school with school personnel to discuss the academic and/or social progress of the parent/guardian's child;
2. When the Principal has requested the parent/guardian's presence for any other reason concerning the parent/guardian's child; or
3. To pick up their child from school.

Requirements for the Exception to Apply:

1. The parent/guardian must notify the Principal of the purpose of the visit and when the visit will occur, including date and time, before the parent/guardian enters the school grounds.
2. The Principal shall notify the administrative offices of the parent/guardian's intent to visit.
3. The parent/guardian must check in at the campus administrative office upon arrival and departure from the school.
4. The parent/guardian must remain under the direct supervision of staff at all times.

Procedures for Use of Restraint and Time-Outs

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

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

At no time, however, may a student be placed in seclusion.

A student with a disability may not be confined in a locked box, locked closet or other specially designated locked space as either a discipline management practice or a behavior management technique.

Fireworks

A person may not explode or ignite fireworks within 600 feet of any IDEA Public Schools campus unless that person receives authorization in writing from that school.

Weapon and Concealed Handgun Prohibition

IDEA Public Schools prohibits the use or possession of any firearm, illegal knife, club, or other weapon while on the premises of the school or any school grounds or building in which a school activity is being conducted.

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS RELATING TO STUDENTS

Religious Expression

IDEA Public Schools prohibits discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of religion. A student enrolled has the right to silently pray or meditate at IDEA Public Schools, so long as it does not disrupt the instructional day or other activities of the school.

IDEA Public Schools shall not require, encourage, or coerce any student to engage in or to refrain from prayer or meditation during any school activity.

Pledges of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

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

State law requires that one minute of silence will 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 IDEA Public Schools 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.

Recitation of the Declaration of Independence

State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during “Celebrate Freedom Week.” A student will be exempted from this requirement if a parent provides a written statement requesting that the student be excused, IDEA Public Schools determines that the student has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or the parent is a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States extends diplomatic immunity.

School Calendar

IDEA Public Schools operates according to the school calendar adopted annually by the Board of Directors. Holidays may be used as school make-up days for days lost due to bad weather. The latest changes to the calendar will be available on the IDEA Public Schools’ website.

School Day

The school day is Monday to Friday 7:45AM to 3:45PM. Students should be in their classrooms ready for instruction to begin at 7:45 AM. Any student not in class at 7:45 will be marked tardy.

Students must leave campus immediately after school dismisses in the afternoon, unless they are involved in an activity under the supervision of a teacher or sponsor. If a student is involved in an after-school activity, he or she must remain in the area where their activity is scheduled to take place. The student may not go to another area of the school without permission by the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity.

During the school day, students may not loiter or stand in the halls between classes. Students must have a pass to be outside the classroom during class time. Failure to obtain a pass will result in disciplinary action.

Textbooks and Curriculum Materials

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

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

Transcripts

IDEA Public Schools maintains an academic achievement record (transcript) for each student enrolled. Transcripts list complete personal student data, give complete scholastic grades, and report student activities, honors, and scores on standardized achievement tests.

Fees

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

1. A fee for materials for a class project that the student will keep, if the fee does not exceed the cost of materials;
2. Membership dues in voluntary student clubs or organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities;
3. A security deposit for the return of materials, supplies or equipment;
4. A fee for personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel, although a student may provide the student's own equipment or apparel if it meets reasonable requirements and standards relating to health and safety;
5. A fee for voluntarily purchased items, such as student publications, class rings, pictures, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.;
6. A fee for voluntary student health and accident benefit plan;
7. A reasonable fee, not to exceed the actual annual maintenance cost, for the use of musical instruments and uniforms owned or rented by the school;
8. A fee for items of personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that become the property of the student;
9. A parking fee
10. A fee for replacement of a student identification card;
11. If offered, a fee for a driver training course, not to exceed the actual cost per student in the program for the current school year;
12. A fee for an optional course offered for credit that requires the use of facilities not available on campus or the employment of an educator who is not part of the school's regular staff;
13. A fee for summer school courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year;

14. A reasonable fee, not to exceed \$50, for costs associated with an educational program offered outside of regular school hours through which a student who was absent from class receives instruction voluntarily for the purpose of making up the missed instruction and meeting the level of attendance required for class credit, so long as the fee would not create a financial hardship or discourage the student from attending the program;
15. A fee for lost, damaged, or overdue library book; or
16. A fee specifically permitted by any other statute.

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

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

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

Distribution of Materials or Documents

School Materials

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

Non-School Materials

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

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

- The materials are obscene, vulgar, or otherwise inappropriate for the age and maturity of the audience.
- The materials endorse actions endangering the health or safety of students.
- The materials promote illegal use of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances.
- The distribution of such materials would violate the intellectual property rights, privacy rights, or other rights of another person.
- The materials contain defamatory statements about public figures or others.
- The materials advocate imminent lawless or disruptive action and are likely to incite or produce such action.
- The materials are hate literature or similar publications that scurrilously attack ethnic, religious, or racial groups or contain content aimed at creating hostility and violence, and the materials would materially and substantially interfere with school activities or the rights of others.
- There is reasonable cause to believe that distribution of the non-school literature would result in material and substantial interference with School activities or the rights of others.

Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without approval will be removed.

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials over which IDEA Public Schools does not exercise control shall not be sold, circulated, or distributed by persons or groups not associated with IDEA Public Schools or a school support group on school premises unless the person or group obtains specific prior approval from the Superintendent or designee. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring organization or individual.

Electronic Device Policy

All electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, mp3 players, iPods or iPads, camcorders and cameras, tape recorders, computers, or electronic devices or games) must be **turned off** between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. Such devices may not be visible in the pocket of a jacket or pants; item must be completely put away and out of sight.

If an IDEA Public Schools employee observes a student using any electronic or telecommunication device (including a cell phone) during the school day or at a school-related activity, or if such item is visible during the school day, the employee will confiscate the device. If the student and parent have executed a waiver permitting the student to possess an electronic communication device at school, IDEA Public Schools officials may power on and search the device if there is reasonable cause to believe that the device has been used in the transmission or reception of communications prohibited by law, policy, or regulation. Any disciplinary action will be in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. These guidelines apply even if the item in use is not the property of the student found in violation of the policy.

IDEA Public Schools reserves the right to dispose of a confiscated paging device in any reasonable manner, or charge the owner of the device or the student's parent an administrative fee not to exceed \$15 before releasing the device.

Change of Address or Telephone Number

Parents are responsible for notifying IDEA Public Schools when a student's address or telephone number changes. Proof of residency at the new address may also be required.

Uniform Requirements

As authorized by state law and the IDEA Public Schools charter, students are required to wear uniforms to school. The IDEA Public Schools' uniform policy and grooming standards are designed to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, minimize safety hazards, and provides a dress standard that offers flexibility for the parent and student. Students must come to school cleanly and neatly groomed and wearing clothing that will not be a health or safety hazard to the student or others and that will not distract from the educational atmosphere of IDEA Public Schools.

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

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

Students who do not follow IDEA Public Schools' guidelines for personal attire and appearance may be subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct, and may be sent home from school.

Newly enrolled students may be provided with a grace period of up to two weeks to obtain appropriate IDEA Public Schools uniforms. Students must comply with IDEA Public Schools' remaining dress and grooming standards upon enrollment.

See appendix for uniform standards and requirements.

Child Nutrition Program

IDEA Public Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced lunches are available to students that qualify. You must pay for lunch unless you qualify for the free and reduced program. Breakfast is served in the classroom and is free to all students. For more information regarding our Child Nutrition Program, visit our school website at www.ideapublicschools.org.

Transportation

IDEA Public Schools makes school bus transportation available to all students. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. For more information regarding transportation, visit our school website at www.ideapublicschools.org.

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

1. Follow the driver's directions at all times;
2. Enter and leave the vehicle in an orderly manner;
3. Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle;
4. Not deface the vehicle or its equipment;
5. Not put head, hands, arms, legs, or an object out of any window; and
6. Wait for the driver's signal in order to leave or cross in front of the vehicle.

Only designated students are allowed to ride in the vehicle. Students may neither ride the vehicle to a different location nor have friends ride the vehicle to participate in after-school activities.

If a special needs student is receiving bus transportation as a result of an Individual Education Plan ("IEP"), the Admission Review and Dismissal ("ARD") Committee will have the discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary consequences related to inappropriate behavior in a school vehicle.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND IMPORTANT NOTICES

Accommodations for Children of Military Families

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

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

In addition, absences related to a student visiting with his or her parent, including a stepparent or legal guardian, who has been called to active duty for, is on leave from, or is returning from a deployment of at least four months will be excused by IDEA Public Schools. IDEA Public Schools 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.

Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns

Students or parents who have a complaint should request to meet with the individual involved to try and resolve any concerns informally. If an informal resolution is not reached, student and/or parental complaints shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by IDEA Public Schools. Copies of documents that support the complaint shall be attached to the complaint form or presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted unless their existence was unknown to the complainant before the Level One conference. A complaint that is incomplete may be dismissed.

For purposes of this policy, "days" shall mean calendar days and announcement of a decision in the student's or parent's presence shall constitute communication of the decision.

Level One

The student or parent shall request in writing a conference with the Principal or designee within seven days from the time the event(s) causing the complaint were or should have been known. Following a conference, the Principal or designee shall have seven days to respond.

Level Two

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level One decision, or if no decision is provided, the student or parent may appeal the Level One decision to the Superintendent or designee by filing written notice on a form provided by the school. The request must be filed within seven days of the Level One decision or the response deadline if no decision is made. The Superintendent or designee will hold a conference within seven days of the appeal. The student or parent shall submit all documentation provided prior to the Level 1 conference, and the date and results of the conference with the Principal or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall have seven days following the conference to respond.

Level Three

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the Level Two decision, or if no timely decision is provided, the student or parent may submit to the Superintendent or designee in writing a request for a hearing before the Board of Directors. The request must be filed within seven days of the Level Three decision or the response

deadline if no decision is made. The student or parent shall be informed of the date, time, and place of the hearing.

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

The Board of Directors shall communicate its decision, if any, orally or in writing before or during the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. If no decision is made by the end of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting, the Level Two decision shall be upheld. The Board may not delegate its authority to issue a decision, and any decision by the Board of Directors is final and may not be appealed.

If the complaint involves concerns or charges regarding an employee, it shall be heard by the Superintendent in closed meeting unless the employee to whom the complaint pertains requests that it be heard in public.

Surveys and Activities

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

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

Parents will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

Parents have the right to receive notice of and deny permission for their student’s participation in:

1. Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding;
2. School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from their student for the purpose of marketing or selling that information;
3. A non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student (exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam of screening permitted or required under state law.)

Notice of Parent and Student Rights (Annual FERPA Confidentiality Notice)

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) affords parents and students over 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to the student’s educational records. These rights include the following:

The Right to Inspect and Review

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records within 45 days of the day the school receives an access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Principal or designee a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. IDEA Public Schools will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student for the time and place where the records may be inspected.

If circumstances effectively prevent the parent or eligible student from exercising the right to inspect and review the student’s educational records, IDEA Public Schools shall provide the parent or eligible student with a copy of the records requested to make arrangements for the parent or eligible student to inspect and review the requested records.

If the student’s educational records contain information on more than one student, the parent or eligible student may inspect and review or be informed of only the specific information about that student.

The Right to Seek Amendment of the Student’s Educational Records

Parents or eligible students may ask IDEA Public Schools to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights. Parents or eligible students should submit to the Principal or designee a written request that clearly identifies the part of the record they want changed, and specifies why it is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights. IDEA Public Schools will decide whether to amend the record as requested within a reasonable time after receiving the request. If IDEA Public Schools decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent of eligible student, IDEA Public Schools will notify the parent of eligible student of the decision and advise them to their right to a hearing to challenge the content of the student’s education records on the grounds that the information contained in the educational records is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights.

If, as a result of the hearing, IDEA Public Schools decides that the information in the educational record is not inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights, it shall inform the parent or eligible student of the right to place a statement in the record commenting on the contested information in the record or stating why he or she disagrees with the decision of IDEA Public Schools, or both. If IDEA Public Schools places an amended statement in the student’s educational records, IDEA Public Schools is obligated to maintain the amended statement with the contested part of the record for as long as the record is maintained and disclose the statement whenever it discloses the portion of the record to which the statement relates.

The Right to Consent Prior to Disclosure

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student’s educational records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interest. A “school official” is a person employed by IDEA Public Schools as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit

personnel); a person serving on the Board of Directors; a person or company with whom IDEA Public Schools has outsourced services or functions it would otherwise use its own employees to perform (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks.

A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an educational record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, IDEA Public Schools discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled, so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

The Right to File a Complaint

Parents and/or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education ("Office") concerning alleged failures by IDEA Public Schools to comply with the requirements of FERPA. These complaints should be addressed as follow:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, D.C. 20202

Access to Medical Records

Parents are entitled to access their student's medical records.

Notice for Directory Information

Under FERPA, IDEA Public Schools must, with certain exceptions, obtain written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records. However, IDEA Public Schools may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless a parent or eligible student has advised IDEA Public Schools, in writing, to the contrary. The primary purpose of directory information is to allow IDEA Public Schools to include this type of information from a student's education records in certain school publications.

IDEA Public Schools has designated the following categories of information as directory information for the purpose of disclosure relating to school-related purposes:

- Student name;
- Date and place of birth;
- Major field of study
- Degrees, honors, and awards received;
- Dates of attendance;
- Grade level;
- Most recent educational institution attended;
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports; and
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams.

School-related purposes are those events/activities that IDEA Public Schools conducts and/or sponsors to support the school's educational mission. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Extracurricular programs or events (school plays, concerns, athletic events, graduation ceremony, etc.).
- Publications (newsletters, yearbook, etc.).
- Honor roll and other student recognition lists.
- Marketing materials of IDEA Public Schools (print media, website, videos, newspaper, etc.).

IDEA Public Schools has designated the following categories of information as directory information for purposes of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education, but only for secondary students:

- Student's name, address, and telephone number.

IDEA Public Schools shall not release directory information except for the purposes indicated above, namely, disclosure relating to school-sponsored/school-affiliated purposes or for the purposes of disclosure to military recruiters and institutions of higher education for secondary students.

A PARENT OR ELIGIBLE STUDENT MAY OPT OUT OF THE RELEASE OF DIRECTORY INFORMATION FOR EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE PURPOSES BY SUBMITTING A WRITTEN OBJECTION TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITHIN 15 DAYS AFTER RECEIVING THIS "NOTICE OF PARENT AND STUDENT RIGHTS (ANNUAL FERPA CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE)."

Student Acceptable Use Policy

Computer Resources

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, IDEA Public Schools has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of those resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved proposed only. Students with access to IDEA Public Schools computers and their parents agree to follow the following user agreement regarding use of these resources. Violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of computer privileges and other disciplinary action. Electronic communications, such as e-mail using IDEA Public Schools computers, are not private and may be monitored by school staff.

Technology Mission Statement

IDEA Public Schools is committed to utilizing the maximum potential of technology to enhance student learning and increase teacher effectiveness by providing students with technology-related experiences. Recognizing the ever-changing influences of technology on all aspects of our lives, IDEA Public Schools is dedicated to providing an integrated technological curriculum for all students and staff. Students will have access to the technology necessary to produce, manage, communicate, and retrieve information in an efficient manner for educational use. In the attainment of both present and future goals, IDEA Public Schools will provide a continually evolving staff development program oriented toward the integration of technology in areas of curriculum.

Instructional Resource

IDEA Public Schools is proud to bring network and Internet access to school staff and students. IDEA Public Schools believes the Internet offers many diverse and unique resources to both student and staff.

IDEA Public Schools' goal in providing these services to staff and students is to promote educational excellence by facilitating resource sharing innovative teaching, and communication skills.

Students and staff have access to numerous research oriented and instructional resources via the Internet. Online encyclopedias, professional journals, and databases filled with timely information on thousands of topics are just a few of the resources provided. School computers have the technology necessary to support student research and to promote academic achievement.

Student Safety

IDEA Public Schools is aware that resources which are inappropriate or not designed for use in the educational setting may be accessed on the Internet. To protect students and staff from such inappropriate material, the school's Internet access is filtered with one of the highest rated Internet filtering systems available. However, users must recognize that it is impossible for IDEA Public Schools to restrict access to all controversial material and individuals must be responsible for their own actions in navigating the network.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school-level compliance with all procedures and regulations regarding the local area network and Internet usage. All students, parents, teachers, administrators, and school staff who obtain their Internet access through the school are expected to use these services appropriately.

User Responsibilities

The use of the Internet is a privilege. Abusive conduct will lead to the privilege being revoked. IDEA Public Schools is providing Internet resources for educational purposes only. Student/staff use of Internet resources must be related to an expressed educational and/or administrative goal or objective.

1. The use of the school's Internet and computer network must be in support of educational goals, research, and class assignments and be consistent with the educational objectives of IDEA Public Schools.
2. Users must have a valid, authorized account to access the network, and use only those computer resources that are authorized. Accounts may be used only in accordance with authorized purposes.
3. Individual accounts may be used only by the owner of the account except where specifically authorized by administrators. In the case of class accounts, all use must be under the supervision of the sponsoring teacher/supervisor.
4. The user is responsible for safeguarding the computer account. Users are expected to protect access to accounts by periodically changing the password and keeping it confidential. They must respect the privacy of others by not tampering with their files, passwords, or accounts.

Policy Terms and Conditions

Acceptable Use

Users are to properly use IDEA Public Schools network resources for educational and/or administrative purposes. Respectful and responsible network etiquette and behavior should be in keeping with the school's mission statement. Students and staff are expressly prohibited from accessing obscene, profane, vulgar, or pornographic sites or materials.

Students are prohibited from sending or posting electronic messages that are abusive, obscene, sexually oriented, threatening, harassing, damaging to another's reputation or illegal. This prohibition applies to conduct off school property if it results in a substantial disruption to the educational environment.

Any person taking, disseminating, transferring or sharing obscene, sexually oriented, lewd or otherwise illegal images or other content, commonly referred to as "sexting," will be disciplined according to the Student Code of Conduct and may, in certain circumstances, be reported to law enforcement. Because engaging in this type of behavior can lead to bullying or harassment, students involved in "sexting" or the sharing of inappropriate images or other content may also be disciplined for violating the school's anti-harassment and bullying policies. Accordingly, we strongly encourage you to review with your child <http://beforeyoutext.com>, a state-developed program that addresses the consequences of engaging in inappropriate behavior using technology.

Monitored Use

Electronic mail transmissions and other use of the electronic communications system by students and employees shall not be considered confidential and may be monitored at any time by designated IDEA Public Schools staff to ensure appropriate use for educational or administrative purposes. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic mail messages is prohibited. Only the school's authorized IT Manager may read, delete, copy or modify the electronic mail of other system users.

Vandalism

Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm, disrupt or destroy data of another user of the IDEA Public Schools' network or any other agencies or networks that are connected to the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses. Any of these actions may be viewed as violations of school policy, administrative regulations and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. Users must respect the privacy of other users, and will not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify any file, data, or password belonging to another user, or represent themselves as another user unless explicitly authorized. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance and/or degrade, disrupt or bypass system security are violations of school policy and administrative regulations, and may constitute criminal activity under applicable laws.

Any prohibited behavior under this policy will result in the cancellation of technology privileges. IDEA Public Schools will, in accordance with school policy, cooperate with local, state, or federal officials in any investigation concerning or relating to misuse of the school's network.

Network Etiquette

Each network user is expected to:

- Be polite (i.e., an all-caps message implies shouting);
- Use appropriate language;
- Refrain from any activity that may be considered "cyber bullying," including but not limited to threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing messages, harassment, stalking, child pornography, and sexual exploitation;
- Maintain confidentiality of the user, colleagues, and students;
- Respect copyright laws; and
- Be respectful in all aspects of network use.

Consequences

Violation of IDEA Public Schools policies and procedures concerning use of the computer on the network will result in the same disciplinary actions that would result from similar violations in other areas of school policy, including the Student Code of Conduct. Any or all of the following consequences may be enforced if a student violates the terms of this policy:

- Loss of computer privileges/Internet access, with length of time to be determined by campus administration.
- Any disciplinary consequence, including suspension or expulsion, as deemed appropriate by the administration.
- Suspension may be considered for flagrant violations or violations that corrupt the educational value of the computers or the Internet.
- Expulsion may be considered in instances where students have used the school's Internet access to engage in conduct that constitutes felony criminal mischief, and/or have deliberately attempted to bypass installed security software or copy/modify another student's work files.

Violations of law may also result in criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the school.

REQUIRED FORMS

Remainder of Page Intentionally Left Blank

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

Directory Information Opt Out Form

“Directory Information” means information contained in an educational record of a student that would not generally be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if disclosed. The law permits IDEA Public Schools to designate certain personal information as “directory information,” which may be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting it as proscribed in school policy.

To prohibit IDEA Public Schools from releasing your student’s directory information, you must circle NO adjacent to the appropriate statement(s) below, sign the form, and return it to your student’s school. **Completion of this form is optional. However, if you do not circle NO or return this form, directory information about your student may be released** in accordance with School policy.

If you have more than one student enrolled, you must complete a separate for each student.

PLEASE CIRCLE YES OR NO

For all students:

YES	NO	I give permission for my student’s name and photograph to be included in the IDEA Public Schools’ yearbook.
YES	NO	I give permission for my student to be videoed, photographed, or interviewed at school by local media or IDEA Public Schools personnel for use in educational purposes.
YES	NO	I give permission for my student’s artwork, projects, photographs, etc. to be used or displayed in any IDEA Public Schools communication devices. Examples include media coverage, printed materials, marketing, and websites.

For secondary students only:

YES	NO	I give permission to release my student’s directory information to institutions of higher education.
YES	NO	I give permission to release my student’s directory information to military recruiters.

PRINT Student’s Full Legal Name

Student’s Date of Birth

PRINT Parent/Guardian Full Legal Name
or Eligible Student Full Legal Name

Parent/Guardian Signature
or Eligible Student Signature

Date

Use of Student Work in School Publications

Occasionally, IDEA Public Schools wishes to display or publish student artwork, photos taken by the student, or other original work on the school's website, a website affiliated or sponsored by the school (such as a classroom website), and in school publications. IDEA Public Schools agrees to use these student projects in this manner.

Parents: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), (**do give**) (**do not give**) IDEA Public Schools permission to use my child's artwork, photos, or other original work in the manner described above.

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**Acceptable Use Agreement Acknowledgment Form**

I have read and agree to abide by the IDEA Public Schools' Student Acceptable Use Policy. I further understand that any violation of this policy may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my Internet and computer access privileges may be revoked, and disciplinary action and/or appropriate legal action may be taken.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

(If you are under the age of 18 a parent or guardian must also read and sign this agreement.)

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the IDEA Public Schools' Student Acceptable Use Agreement. I understand that this access is designed for educational purposes. IDEA Public Schools has taken precautions to eliminate controversial material. However, I also recognize it is impossible for IDEA Public Schools to restrict access to all controversial materials and I will not hold IDEA Public Schools responsible for materials transmitted on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for supervision if and when my child's use is not in a school setting. I hereby give permission to issue an account for my child and certify that the information contained on this form is correct.

Parent/Guardian

Date

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form

Electronic communications at school and at school-related functions are subject to regulation by IDEA Public Schools.

This Electronic Communication Device Commitment Form grants authority and permission to IDEA Public Schools to regulate electronic communication devices when these devices are brought to and/or used while on school property or when attending school related functions and events. Such communication devices include but are not limited to cellular phones, pagers, PDAs, and pocket computers. These regulations are made necessary in light of the unique opportunities these devices create for violations of law, school policies and to perpetrate conduct disruptive of an educational environment essential to the school's educational program. These concerns are exacerbated by electronic security protections and the personal size of these devices, which are often carried concealed in pockets and purses.

Therefore, all students who would possess or use such devices on school property or at school-related activities are required to sign this form together with their parent, guardian or other adult person having the authority of a parent for school purposes.

Each of you, by your signature below, agrees to the following:

- The possession and use of cellular phones, pagers, PDAs and other electronic communication devices by a student on school property or at school-related events is prohibited.
- If a student possesses such devices on school property or while attending school-related events, IDEA Public Schools is authorized and has my full consent to confiscate, power on or off, manipulate and do all things necessary to search my device and recover or intercept communications (including but not limited to text messaging) when reasonable suspicion exists that such device has been used to transmit or receive communications in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation.
- I further understand, agree and consent that an electronic communication device used or possessed in violation of law, the Student Code of Conduct, school policy or regulation is subject to confiscation and that IDEA Public Schools is not liable for any loss of or damage to confiscated devices.

SIGNATURE LINES AND DATES

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of student)

(Printed name of student)
_____ Date: _____
(Signature of parent/guardian)

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Food Allergy Notification Form

Dear Parents,

IDEA Public Schools is required by law to request, at the time of enrollment, that the parent or guardian of each student attending an IDEA Public Schools campus discloses the student’s food allergies. This form will satisfy this requirement.

This form allows you to disclose whether your child has a food allergy or severe food allergy that you believe should be disclosed in order for IDEA Public Schools to take necessary precautions for your child’s safety.

“Severe food allergy” means a dangerous or life-threatening reaction of the human body to a food-borne allergen introduced by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact that requires immediate medical attention.

Please list any foods to which your child is allergic or severely allergic, as well as the nature of your child’s allergic reaction to the food. IDEA Public Schools will contact you for a note from your physician if your child has food allergies. **Your child must have an EpiPen prescribed to help in the event of an emergency.**

Food:	Nature of allergic reaction to the food:

IDEA Public Schools will maintain the confidentiality of this form and the information provided above, and may disclose the information to teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other appropriate school personnel only within the limitations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”) and Board policy. **IDEA Public Schools will maintain this form as part of your child’s student record.**

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Grade: _____ Parent Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date form received by IDEA Public Schools: _____

IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**Photo/Videotape Release Form**

Throughout the school year, there may be times when IDEA Public Schools staff, the media, or other organizations (with the approval of the Principal), may take photographs of students, audiotape and/or videotape students, or interview students for school-related stories in a way that would individually identify a specific student. Those photographs, audio recordings, and/or videotaped images or interviews may appear in school publications; in school video productions; on the school website; in school advertisements, fundraising, and/or recruitment materials; in the news media; or in other nonprofit, education-related organizations' publications.

In order to release student photos, video footage, comments and/or post on the school website, we need written permission. To give your consent, please complete the form below.

_____ I hereby give permission for IDEA Public Schools to use my child's voice and/or likeness in its publications for the purposes mentioned above. I authorize the use and reproduction by IDEA Public Schools of any and all photographs and/or audio or video recordings taken of my child, without compensation to my child or to me. All photographs and recordings shall be the sole property of IDEA Public Schools. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs, audio or video recordings, and/or reproduced materials that may be used in conjunction with them. I understand and agree that IDEA Public Schools may use my child's voice and/or likeness in subsequent school years unless I revoke this authorization by notifying the Principal in writing. I further grant unto IDEA Public Schools permission to permit my child to be photographed, audio/videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or other approved organizations for school-related stories or articles. I release IDEA Public Schools and those acting pursuant to its authority from liability for any violation of any personal or proprietary right I may have in connection with the purposes mentioned above.

_____ IDEA Public Schools may not use my child's voice and/or likeness in its publications for the purposes mentioned above. I further decline permission for IDEA Public Schools to permit my child to be photographed, audio/videotaped, or interviewed by the news media or other approved organizations for school-related stories or articles.

Student's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

* Students 18 years of age or older may sign this release form for themselves *

Acknowledgement and Approval of Student/Parent Handbook

My signature below acknowledges that IDEA Public Schools has made its Student and Parent Handbook available to me; that I have been given notice of the rules, responsibilities and consequences outlined in the Student Code of Conduct; that I have been informed that when I or my child is enrolled in IDEA Public Schools, all information herein is applicable to me, my child, and all school staff; and that I have expressed intent to review this Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct contained within and to abide thereby.

Printed Name of Student: _____ Grade: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Signature of Parent: _____

Homeroom Teacher: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX