

My child and I have received a copy of the Student Handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct* for 2012–2013. I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

**Acknowledgment of Electronic Distribution of
Student Handbook**

My child and I have been offered the option to receive a paper copy or to electronically access at www.thorndale.txed.net the Thorndale Student Handbook and the Thorndale Middle School Student Code of Conduct for 2012–2013.

I have chosen to:

- Receive a paper copy of the Student Handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*.
- Accept responsibility for accessing the Student Handbook by visiting the Web address listed above.

I understand that the handbook contains information that my child and I may need during the school year and that all students will be held accountable for their behavior and will be subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in the *Student Code of Conduct*. If I have any questions regarding this handbook or the Code, I should direct those questions to the principal at 512/898/2670 or hlaywell@thorndale.txed.net.

Printed name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent's Response Regarding Release of Student Information

State law requires the district to give you the following information:

Certain information about district students is considered directory information and will be released to anyone who follows the procedures for requesting the information unless the parent or guardian objects to the release of the directory information about the student. If you do not want Thorndale ISD to disclose directory information from your child's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify the district in writing by September 10, 2012/within ten school days of child's first day of instruction for this school year.

This means that the district must give certain personal information (called "directory information") about your child to any person who requests it, unless you have told the district in writing not to do so. In addition, you have the right to tell the district that it may, or may not, use certain personal information about your child for specific school-sponsored purposes. The district is providing you this form so you can communicate your wishes about these issues. [See **Directory Information** on page 10 for more information.]

For the following school-sponsored purposes: list the uses that have been identified in FL (LOCAL), name of school district has designated the following information as directory information:

Student's name

Address

Telephone listing

E-mail address

Photograph

Date and place of birth

Major field of study

Degrees, honors, and awards received

Dates of attendance

Grade level

Most recent school previously attended

Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

Enrollment status

Student identification numbers or identifiers that cannot be used alone to gain access to electronic education records

Directory information identified only for limited school-sponsored purposes remains otherwise confidential and will not be released to the public without the consent of the parent or eligible student.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to use the information in the above list for the specified school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

For all other purposes, Thorndale I.S.D. has designated the following information as directory information:

Student's name

Address

Telephone listing

E-mail address

Photograph

Date and place of birth

Major field of study

Degrees, honors, and awards received

Dates of attendance

Grade level

Most recent school previously attended

Participation in officially recognized activities and sports

Weight and height, if a member of an athletic team

Enrollment status

Student identification numbers or identifiers that cannot be used alone to gain access to electronic education records

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to release the information in this list in response to a request unrelated to school-sponsored purposes.

Parent signature _____ Date _____

Consent/Opt-Out Form

Dear Parent:

The district is required by federal law to notify you and obtain your consent for or denial of (opt-out) for your child's participation in certain school activities. The activities include any student survey, analysis, or evaluation, known as "protected information survey" that concerns one or more of the following eight areas:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
- Sexual behavior or attitudes;
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- Critical appraisals of others with whom the student has a close family relationship;
- Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
- Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

This notice and consent/opt-out requirement also applies to the collection, disclosure, or use of student information for marketing purposes ("marketing surveys"), and to certain physical exams and screenings.

Following are activities requiring parental notice and consent or opt-out for the 2012–2013 school year. Please note that this notice and authority to consent transfer from the parent to the student when the student reaches 18 or is an emancipated minor under state law.

-

Date: On or about _____

Grades: _____

Activity: Surveys concerning private information_____

Summary: This is an anonymous survey that asks students questions

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If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any protected information survey, please submit a request to Dr. John Rueter, P.O. Box 870, Thorndale, TX 76577 . Dr. Rueter will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to a student.

Date: 2012–2013 School Year

Grades: 6-8

Activity: Student-Based Commercial Services

Summary: Thorndale ISD collects, or allows businesses to collect, use, and disclose personal information on students, including

_____. These
businesses provide student-based products and services _____.

To consent: A parent must sign and return the consent form no later than 9/1/10 if you would permit your child to participate in this activity.

Parent's signature

If you wish to review any survey instrument or instructional material used in connection with any marketing survey, please submit a request to Dr. John Rueter, P.O. Box 870, Thorndale, TX 76577. Dr. Rueter will notify you of the time and place where you may review these materials. You have the right to review a survey and/or instructional materials before the survey is administered to a student.

-

Date: _____

Grades: _____

Activity: _____

Summary: _____.

To opt out: Contact Dr. John Rueter at 512/898/2670 no later than 9/10/12 if you do not want your child to participate in this activity.

NOTICES TO PARENTS

Statement of Nondiscrimination

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Thorndale ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Jackie Oslick, Benefits, and Payroll, 300 N. Main, Thorndale, TX 76577, 512/898/2538

Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Lisa Moreland, High School Counselor, 106 E. Moerbe, Thorndale, TX 76577

All other concerns regarding discrimination: Contact the superintendent, Dr. Craig Spinn at 512/898/2538.

[See FB(LOCAL) and FFH(LOCAL)]

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations addressing asbestos, is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Craig Spinn.

Pest Management Plan

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

Additional Notices

Other important notices in the Student Handbook cover the following topics:

Student participation in a survey, analysis, or evaluation;

Opting out of surveys and data collection activities;

Requesting the professional qualifications of teachers and staff;

Requesting a transfer of your child to a safe public school;

Assistance to students who have learning difficulties;

Student records;

Bacterial meningitis;

Career and technology programs;

Homeless students; and

School lunch programs.

Please take some time to review these notices and other important information contained in the Student Handbook.

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PREFACE

To Students and Parents:

Welcome to school year 2012–2013! Education is a team effort, and we know that students, parents, teachers, and other staff members all working together can make this a wonderfully successful year for our students.

The Thorndale Middle School Student Handbook is designed to provide a resource for some of the basic information that you and your child will need during the school year. In an effort to make it easier to use, the handbook is divided into two sections:

Section I—REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS—with notices that the district must provide to all parents, as well as other information to assist you in responding to school-related issues. We encourage you to take some time to closely review this section of the handbook; and

Section II—INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS—organized alphabetically by topic for quick access when searching for information on a specific issue.

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

Both students and parents should become familiar with the Thorndale Middle School *Student Code of Conduct*, which is a document adopted by the board and intended to promote school safety and an atmosphere for learning. That document may be found as an attachment to this handbook or as a separate document sent home to parents and posted at www.thorndale.txed.net or available in the principal’s office.

The Student Handbook is designed to be in harmony with board policy and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Please be aware that the handbook is updated yearly, while policy adoption and revision may occur throughout the year. Changes in policy or other rules that affect Student Handbook provisions will be made available to students and parents through newsletters or other communications.

In case of conflict between board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* and any provisions of the Student Handbook, the current provisions of board policy or the *Student Code of Conduct* are to be followed.

After reading through the entire handbook with your child, keep it as a reference during this school year. If you or your child has questions about any of the material in this handbook, please contact a teacher, the counselor, or the principal.

Also, please complete and return to your child’s campus the following required forms included in this handbook or provided in the forms packet accompanying this handbook:

1. Parental Acknowledgment Form;
2. Student Directory Information Form; and
3. Consent/Opt-Out Form.

[See **Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights** on page 4 and **Directory Information** on page 10 for more information.]

Please note that references to policy codes are included so that parents can refer to current board policy. A copy of the district's policy manual is available for review in the school office or online at www.thorndale.txed.net

SECTION I: REQUIRED NOTICES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This section of the Thorndale Middle School Student Handbook includes several notices that the district is required to provide to you, as well as other information on topics of particular interest to you as a parent.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In its efforts to promote nondiscrimination, Thorndale ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, or disability in providing education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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

Title IX Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of gender: Jackie Oslick, 300 North Main, Thorndale, TX 76577.

Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability: Lisa Moreland, High School Counselor, 106 E Moerbe, Thorndale, TX 76577.

All other concerns regarding discrimination: Contact the superintendent, Dr. Craig Spinn at 512/898/2538.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Working Together

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

Encouraging your child to put a high priority on education and working with your child on a daily basis to make the most of the educational opportunities the school provides.

Ensuring that your child completes all homework assignments and special projects and comes to school each day prepared, rested, and ready to learn.

Becoming familiar with all of your child's school activities and with the academic programs, including special programs, offered in the district.

Discussing with the counselor or principal any questions you may have about the options and opportunities available to your child.

Reviewing the requirements of the graduation programs with your child, if your child is entering eighth grade.

Monitoring your child's academic progress and contacting teachers as needed. See **Academic Counseling** on page 18 and **Academic Programs** on page 15.

Attending scheduled conferences and requesting additional conferences as needed. To schedule a telephone or in-person conference with a teacher, counselor, or principal, please call the school office at 512/898/2670 for an appointment. The teacher will usually return your call or meet with you during his or her conference period or before or after school. See **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page 35.

Becoming a school volunteer. [For further information, see policies at GKG and contact 512/898/2538

Participating in campus parent organizations. Parent organizations include: Ag Booster Club, Athletic Booster Club, Band Booster Club.

Serving as a parent representative on the district-level or campus-level planning committees, assisting in the development of educational goals and plans to improve student achievement. For further information, see policies at BQA and BQB, and contact 512/898/5070.

Serving on the School Health Advisory Council, assisting the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction. See policies at BDF, EHAA, FFA, and information in this handbook at **School Health Advisory Council** on page 288.

Attending board meetings to learn more about district operations. [See policies at BE and BED for more information.]

PARENTAL RIGHTS

Obtaining Information and Protecting Student Rights

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

Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student’s parent.

Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student’s family.

Sexual behavior or attitudes.

Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.

Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.

Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.

Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.

Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student’s eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation. [For further information, see policy EF (LEGAL).]

“Opting Out” of Surveys and Activities

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

Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.

School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.

Any 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 or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA.]

Inspecting Surveys

As a parent, you may inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.

Requesting Professional Qualifications of Teachers and Staff

You may request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether a teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.

Reviewing Instructional Materials

As a parent, you have a right to review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.

Displaying a Student's Artwork and Projects

The district will seek parental consent before displaying students' artwork, special projects, photographs taken by students, and the like on the district's Web site, in printed material, by video, or by any other method of mass communication.

Accessing Student Records

You may review your child's student records. These records include:

Attendance records,

Test scores,

Grades,

Disciplinary records,

Counseling records,

Psychological records,

Applications for admission,

Health and immunization information,
Other medical records,
Teacher and counselor evaluations,
Reports of behavioral patterns, and
State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.
[See **Student Records** on page 8.]

Granting Permission to Video or Audio Record a Student

As a parent, you may grant or deny any written request from the district to make a video or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school 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.

Removing a Student Temporarily from the Classroom

You may remove your child temporarily from the classroom if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate in conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags

As a parent, you may request that your child be excused from participation in the daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag. The request must be in writing. State law does not allow your child to be excused from participation in the required minute of silence or silent activity that follows. [See **Pledges of Allegiance and a Minute of Silence** on page 6 and policy EC (LEGAL).]

Excusing a Student from Reciting a Portion of the Declaration of Independence

You may request that your child be excused from recitation of a portion of the Declaration of Independence. State law requires students in social studies classes in grades 3–12 to recite a portion of the text of the Declaration of Independence during Celebrate Freedom Week unless (1) you provide a written statement requesting that your child be excused, (2) the district determines that your child has a conscientious objection to the recitation, or (3) you are a representative of a foreign government to whom the United States government extends diplomatic immunity. [See policy EHBK (LEGAL).]

Requesting Notices of Certain Student Misconduct

A non custodial parent may request in writing that he or she be provided, for the remainder of the school year, a copy of any written notice usually provided to a parent related to his or her child's

misconduct that may involve placement in a disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) or expulsion. [See policy FO (LEGAL) and the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Requesting Transfers for Your Child

As a parent, you have a right:

To request the transfer of your child to another classroom or campus if your child has been determined by the board or its designee to have been a victim of bullying as the term is defined by Education Code 25.0341. Transportation is not provided for a transfer to another campus. See the superintendent or designee for information. [See policy FDB.]

[See **Bullying** on page 15, and policy FFI (LOCAL).]

To request the transfer of your child to attend a safe public school in the district if your child attends school at a campus identified by TEA as persistently dangerous or if your child has been a victim of a violent criminal offense while at school or on school grounds. [See policy FDD (LOCAL).]

To request the transfer of your child to another campus or a neighboring district if your child has been the victim of a sexual assault by another student assigned to the same campus, whether that assault occurred on or off campus, and that student has been convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication for that assault. [See policies FDD (LEGAL) and (LOCAL).]

Requesting Classroom Assignment for Multiple Birth Siblings

As a parent, if your children are multiple birth siblings (e.g., twins, triplets, etc.) assigned to the same grade and campus, you may request that they be placed either in the same classroom or in separate classrooms. Your written request must be submitted no later than the 14th day after the enrollment of your children. [See FDB (LEGAL).]

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parents of students with learning difficulties or who may need special education services may request an evaluation for special education at any time. For more information, see **Special Programs** on page 39 and contact Dr. John Rueter at 512/898/2670.

Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

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

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

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of his or her rights if the parent disagrees with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the *Notice of Procedural Safeguards—Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities*.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is Suzanne Schwarz at 512/898/5070.

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

Services for Title I Participants

The Parent Involvement Coordinator, who works with parents of students participating in Title I programs is Lisa Moreland may be contacted at 12/898/2321 ext. 303.

Student Records

Both federal and state laws safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and eligible students certain rights of privacy. Before disclosing any personally identifiable information from a student's records, the district must verify the identity of the person, including a parent or the student, requesting the information. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

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

The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless the school is given a copy of a court order terminating parental rights or the right to access a student's education records.

Federal law requires that, as soon as a student becomes 18, is emancipated by a court, or enrolls in a post-secondary institution, control of the records goes to the student. The parents may continue to have access to the records, however, if the student is a dependent for tax purposes and under limited circumstances when there is a threat to the health and safety of the student or other individuals.

District school officials who have what federal law refers to as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. School officials would include trustees and employees, such as the superintendent, administrators, and principals; teachers, counselors, diagnosticians, and support staff; a person or company with whom the district has contracted or allowed to provide a particular service or function (such as an attorney, consultant, auditor, medical consultant,

therapist, or volunteer); a parent or student serving on a school committee; or a parent or student assisting a school official in the performance of his or her duties. “Legitimate educational interest” in a student’s records includes working with the student; considering disciplinary or academic actions, the student’s case, or an individualized education program for a student with disabilities; compiling statistical data; reviewing an educational record to fulfill the official’s professional responsibility; or investigating or evaluating programs.

Various governmental agencies.

Individuals granted access in response to a subpoena or court order.

A school or institution of postsecondary education to which a student seeks or intends to enroll or in which he or she is already enrolled.

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

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

Records may be inspected by a parent or eligible student during regular school hours. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records.

A parent or eligible student who provides a written request and pays copying costs of ten cents per page may obtain copies. If circumstances prevent inspection during regular school hours and the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the district will either provide a copy of the records requested or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review these records. The address of the superintendent’s office is 300 North Main Street, Thorndale, TX 76577.

The address of the principals’ offices is: 102 E. Moerbe, Thorndale, TX 76577.

A parent (or eligible student) may inspect the student’s records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. A request to correct a student’s record should be submitted to the principal. The request must clearly identify the part of the record that should be corrected and include an explanation of how the information in the record is inaccurate. If the district denies the request to amend the records, the parent or eligible student has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the parent or eligible student has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student’s record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student’s grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process found in policy FNG (LOCAL). A grade issued by a classroom teacher can be changed only if, as determined by the board of trustees, the grade is arbitrary, erroneous, or inconsistent with the district’s grading policy. [See FINALITY OF GRADES at FNG(LEGAL), **Report Cards/Progress Reports and Conferences** on page , and **Student or Parent Complaints and Concerns** on page 35 for an overview of the process.]

The district’s policy regarding student records found at FL (LEGAL) and (LOCAL) is available from the principal’s or superintendent’s office or on the district’s Web site at www.thorndale.txed.net

The parent’s or eligible student’s right of access to and copies of student records do not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as a teacher’s personal

notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

Please note:

Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the district is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The complaint may be mailed to:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U. S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-5901

Directory Information

The law permits the district to designate certain personal information about students as “directory information.” This “directory information” will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it.

However, release of a student’s directory information may be prevented by the parent or an eligible student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of your child’s first day of instruction for this school year,[See the Notice Regarding Directory Information and Parent’s Response Regarding Release of Student Information” included in this handbook OR included in the forms packet.

Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes

The district often needs to use student information for the following school-sponsored purposes: graduation activities, honor rolls, awards list, school programs, and all other school sponsored events,

For these specific school-sponsored purposes, the district would like to use your child’s name, address, telephone listing, email address, photograph, date of birth, major field of study, degrees, honors, awards received, dates of attendance, grade level, most recent school attended, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, enrollment status; height and weight on athletic team rosters. This information will not be used for other purposes without the consent of the parent or eligible student, except as described above at Directory Information.

Unless you object to the use of your child’s information for these limited purposes, the school will not need to ask your permission each time the district wishes to use this information for the school-sponsored purposes listed above.

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

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

Bacterial Meningitis

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

What is meningitis?

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

What are the symptoms?

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

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

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

How serious is bacterial meningitis?

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

How is bacterial meningitis spread?

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

The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

How can bacterial meningitis be prevented?

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

While there are vaccines for some other strains of bacterial meningitis, they are used only in special circumstances. These include when there is a disease outbreak in a community or for people traveling to a country where there is a high risk of getting the disease. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side

effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

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

You should seek prompt medical attention.

Where can you get more information?

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Department of State Health Services office to ask about a meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the Web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov>, and the Department of State Health Services, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>.

SECTION II: INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Topics in this section of the handbook contain important information on academics, school activities, and school operations and requirements. Take a moment with your child to become familiar with the various issues addressed in this section. It is conveniently organized in alphabetical order to serve as a quick-reference when you or your child has a question about a specific school-related issue. Should you be unable to find the information on a particular topic, please contact Dr. John Rueter at 512/898/2670.

ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

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

Compulsory Attendance

State law requires that a student between the ages of 6 and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

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

Students enrolled in pre kindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school.

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

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

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

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

Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

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

Attendance Policy for Truancy

1. Letters sent out by attendance clerk to make the parent/guardian aware of attendance issues.
2. When a student reaches five unexcused absences in any class, Dr. Rueter will contact the parent personally.
3. When the student reaches 10 unexcused absences in any class, the school district will begin the truancy process. The student then also risks the chance of losing credit unless they attend Saturday school or make other arrangements to make up missing time.

Attendance for Credit

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

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

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

All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for religious holy days and documented health-care appointments will be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policies at FEB.]

A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.

In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.

The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.

The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.

The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.

The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

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

Excused Absences/Notes from Parent Procedure

Excused absences allow the student to make up their work that they missed while they were absent. A student will be given one day for each absence to make up missing work unless other arrangements are made between the student and teacher. Excused absences do not count toward truancy but they do count against the student in relationship to the exemption policy. A parent/guardian will be contacted by the school if your student is absent, but a note will still have to be filed with Mrs. Hinistrosa in the school office within three school days upon the student's return for the absence to be recorded as excused. After three school days the absence will be recorded as unexcused.

Doctor's Note after an Absence for Illness

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than 3 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school within 7 calendar days after their return to school. [See FEC (LOCAL).]

Driver License Attendance Verification

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

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The school counselor provides students and parent's information regarding academic programs to prepare for higher education and career choices. [For more information, see the counselor and policies at EIF.]

[See Academic Counseling on page 18.]

BULLYING

Upon receipt of an allegation of bullying from either a student or parent, a TISD campus Principal will conduct a preliminary investigation with 24 hours of administrative notification of bullying allegations. If the campus principal determines that bullying has occurred, as defined in Policy FFI (Local) below, the campus administration will:

- Take action to end the bullying
- Determine appropriate corrective and disciplinary measures
- Prepare a report of the investigation (Form TISD-B2)

If it is determined that bullying did not occur, as defined below, campus administration will determine if any further measures are necessary and will prepare a report (Form TISD-B3)

Definition of Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in written or verbal expression or physical conduct that:

1. 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
2. Is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student.

Examples of Bullying

Bullying of a student may include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name calling, rumor spreading, and ostracism.

CAPS

Caps are not allowed to be worn in the building at any time. That includes before school, after school, or upon entering the building. Caps can be worn in an educational setting such as Ag, Band, and Athletics. Caps can be worn outside during lunch or activity. Other than that, they should remain in the lockers.

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS

The district offers career and technology programs in agriculture, business, and home economics. Admission to these programs is based on student request.

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

CLASS SCHEDULES

REGULAR SCHEDULE

1 ST Period	8:00-8:49
2 nd Period	8:53-9:39
UIL/Activity	9:43-10:03
3 rd Period	10:07-10:52
4 th Period	10:56-11:41
LUNCH	11:41-12:11
5 th Period	12:15-1:00
6 th Period	1:04-1:49
7 th Period	1:53-2:38
8 th Period	2:42-3:27

PEP RALLY SCHEDULE

1 st Period	8:00-8:49
2 nd Period	8:53-9:39
UIL/Activity	9:43-10:03
3 rd Period	10:07-10:52
4 th Period	10:56-11:41
LUNCH	11:41-12:11
5 th Period	12:15-12:53
6 th Period	12:56-1:34
7 th Period	1:37-2:15
8 th Period	2:18-2:56
PEP RALLY	3:00-3:27

COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed by a phone call or a conference with the teacher or principal. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the district has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG (LOCAL) in the

district's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's or superintendent's office or on the district's Web site at www.thorndale.txed.net.

In general, the student or parent should submit a written complaint and request a conference with the campus principal. If the concern is not resolved, a request for a conference should be sent to the superintendent. If still unresolved, the district provides for the complaint to be presented to the board of trustees.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

To prepare students for an increasingly technological society, the district has made an investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these computer resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. Students and parents will be asked to sign a user agreement (separate from this handbook) regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.

Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using district computers are not private and will be monitored by district staff. [For additional information, see policies at CQ.]

CONDUCT

Applicability of School Rules

As required by law, the board has adopted a *Student Code of Conduct* that prohibits certain behaviors and defines standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of these standards. The district has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students and parents should be familiar with the standards set out in the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as campus and classroom rules.

Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment—spanking or paddling the student—may be used as a discipline management technique in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct* and policy FO(LOCAL) in the district's policy manual.

Disruptions

As identified by law, disruptions include the following:

Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a district building without authorization from an administrator.

Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.

Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.

Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.

Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to district property.

Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving district property without authorization from an administrator.

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

Interference with the transportation of students in vehicles owned or operated by the district

Social Events

School rules apply to all school social events. Guests attending these events are expected to observe the same rules as students, and a student inviting a guest will share responsibility for the conduct of his or her guest.

A student attending a social event will be asked to sign out when leaving before the end of the event; anyone leaving before the official end of the event will not be readmitted.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES / CONDITIONS

To protect other students from contagious illnesses, students infected with certain diseases are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a contagious disease, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Department of State Health Services regarding these diseases.

CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

The district permits high school students to take correspondence courses—by mail or via the Internet—for credit toward high school graduation.

[For further information, see policies at EEJC.]

COUNSELING

Academic Counseling

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn more about course offerings, graduation requirements, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 8 through 11 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next school year and other information that will help them make the most of academic and vocational opportunities.

To plan for the future, each student should work closely with the counselor in order to enroll in the high school courses that best prepare him or her for attendance at a college, university, or training school, or for pursuit of some other type of advanced education. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and application deadlines, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

Personal Counseling

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community resources to address these concerns. A student who wishes to meet with the counselor should make an appointment with our secondary school counselor.

Psychological Exams, Tests, or Treatment

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

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

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Taken the Course

A student who has previously taken a course or subject—but did not receive credit for it—may, in circumstances determined by the teacher, counselor, principal, or attendance committee, be permitted to earn credit by passing an exam on the essential knowledge and skills defined for that course or subject. Prior instruction may include, for example, incomplete coursework due to a failed course or excessive absences, home schooling, correspondence courses, or independent study supervised by a teacher.

The counselor or principal would determine if the student could take an exam for this purpose. If approval is granted, the student must score at least 70 on the exam to receive credit for the course or subject.

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

A student may not use this exam, however, to regain eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities.

[For further information, see the counselor and policies EEJA.]

CREDIT BY EXAM—If a Student Has Not Taken the Course

A student will be permitted to take an exam to earn credit for an academic course for which the student has had no prior instruction. Please contact the secondary counselor, to schedule a date on which to take the exams.

A student will earn credit with a passing score of at least 90 on the exam.

If a student plans to take an exam, the student (or parent) must register with the principal no later than 30 days prior to the scheduled testing date. The district will attempt to honor a request by a parent to administer a test on a date other than the published dates. If the district agrees to administer a test other than the one chosen by the district, the parent must purchase a test from a university approved by the State Board of Education. [For further information, see EEJB (LOCAL).]

DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

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

The board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

Dating Violence

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship uses physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate, or control the other person in the relationship. This type of conduct is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance.

Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belonging to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors.

Discrimination

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

Harassment

Harassment, in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile, or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. A copy of the district's policy is available in the principal's office and in the superintendent's office or on www.thorndale.txed.net.

Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color, or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic, or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited.

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and district employees are prohibited, even if consensual.

Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

Retaliation

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

Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

Reporting Procedures

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

Investigation of Report

To the extent possible, the district will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The district will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the district.

In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the district will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy.

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

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

DISCRIMINATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.]

DISTANCE LEARNING

Thorndale High School can offer Distance Learning courses through the use of the Distance Learning Lab. Detailed information can be obtained in the library or from the counselor's office.

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS

School Materials

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

The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students.

All school publications are under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

[See **Directory Information for School-Sponsored Purposes** on page 10.]

Non-school Materials...from students

Students must obtain prior approval from the principal before posting, circulating, or distributing written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring person or organization. The decision regarding approval will be made within two school days.

The principal has designated the foyer in front of the high school office as the location for approved non-school materials to be placed for voluntary viewing by students. [See policies at FNAA.]

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

Non-school Materials...from others

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

Prior review will not be required for:

Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a school-sponsored meeting intended for adults and held after school hours.

Distribution of materials by an attendee to other attendees of a community group meeting held after school hours in accordance with policy GKD (LOCAL) or a non-curriculum related student group meeting held in accordance with FNAB (LOCAL).

Distribution for electioneering purposes during the time a school facility is being used as a polling place, in accordance with state law.

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

DRESS AND GROOMING

The district's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, prevent disruption, and minimize safety hazards. Students and parents may determine a student's personal dress and grooming standards, provided that they comply with the following.

The following are deemed unacceptable:

- NO Clothing that is designed to be worn as an undergarment.
- NO Pajamas/pajama style clothing.
- NO Excessively tight or body form fitting clothing (I.E. tights worn under dress code violation shorts or skirts)
- NO visible undergarments.
- NO clothing that is full of holes or otherwise in such a state of disrepair that it fails to provide proper modesty or creates a distraction in the classroom.
- NO Half-length, bare-midriff, or revealing garment
- NO Shorts, skirts, and dresses above the knee.
- NO Shirts with straps less than three inches at the shoulder, and sleeveless shirts must have fitted armholes and not reveal undergarments or torso.

- NO Bare backs, bare shoulders or bare midriffs (including when arms are raised above the head).
- NO Cleavage will be permitted.
- NO Sleeveless shirts for guys
- NO Sagging pants. Pants must be worn at the natural waist.

Facial Hair/Hair Length (Male Students)

- NO Hair shall be longer than the top of the shoulders and it shall be groomed in such a way that the eyes will be clearly visible.
- NO Facial hair at all is accepted.
- NO Sideburns below the bottom of the ear.

Footwear

- NO Bare feet.
- NO House shoes/slippers. Flip flops are acceptable except when there is safety issue such as Ag shop or a lab situation.

Headwear

- NO Caps, hats, bandannas, visors, sweatbands, or any head covering will be allowed during the school day inside the school building. That means before or after school. You also are not allowed to wear your hoodie over your head inside the building. Wearing these items could lead to them being confiscated. Headwear can only be worn during the school day when it is part of the educational setting such as athletics, band practice, and ag shop. Otherwise headwear should be kept in their locker or vehicle during the school day. It can wear worn at lunch and activity as long as it not worn in the building

Piercing and Tattoos

- NO Visible body piercings other than the exception of the ears and one small nose stud will be allowed.

- NO Clothing, tattoos, and jewelry that possess' pictures, emblems, or writings that:
 - A. Are lewd, vulgar, morbid, slanderous, offensive, obscene, contain sexual innuendo, incite disruptive behavior, or depict violence/death/dismemberment.
 - B. Advertise or depict tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, weapons, or any other substance prohibited under Board Policy FNCF.
 - C. Refer to satanic, cult, gang or drug-related activity or behavior.

*** Shirts do not have to be tucked in as long as they are of an acceptable length such as not longer than mid thigh.

DRINKS IN THE BUILDING

Drinks are allowed in the building as long they have a screw on lid. Drinks that have no lid or only a plastic lid will not be allowed in the building or if they are found in the building will be

asked to be thrown away. This includes before and after school. Our maintenance staff does a tremendous job please do not add to their workload.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

Participation in school-sponsored activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law and the rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL)—a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class—other than an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course; or an honors or dual credit course in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, economics, or a foreign language—may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.

A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.

An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.

A student is allowed in a school year up to 15 absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the board, are subject to these restrictions.

An absence for participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

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

[For further information, see policies at FM and FO. For student-organized, student-led groups, see **Meetings of Non-curriculum Related Groups** on page 38.]

EXEMPTION POLICY

1st Semester

1. Only elective classes can be exempted.

2. You must have an overall average of 80 for the first three six weeks.
3. You must have 3 or fewer absences for the semester. The only two types of absences that will not count against you are those absences that you have medical notes from a doctor and extracurricular absences. All other forms of absences will count as an absence for exemption purposes. Doctor's notes must be turned in 3 school days after the return of the student to school.
4. Also be aware that starting with the 2012-2013 school year, tardies will count toward absences in regard to exemptions. Three tardies equals one absence, six tardies equals two absences, and nine tardies equals 3 absences. These tardies will count in every class in regards to absences. For example, you can not have 10 tardies in first period and still be exempt in your second period class.
5. Office records are the determining factor for exemptions if there is a concern.

2nd Semester

1. Exemptions can apply to all classes the second semester.
2. You must have an overall average of 80 for the 4th, 5th, and 6th six weeks.
The exception is if we receive EOC'S or TAKS results before the end of school.
You can be exempt in classes where EOC'S are given if you attain the Level II Standard or if you receive a passing standard on the TAKS Test.
3. You must have 3 or fewer absences for the semester. The only two types of absences that will not count against you are those absences that you have medical notes from a doctor and extracurricular absences. All other forms of absences will count as an absence for exemption purposes. Doctor's notes must be turned in 3 school days after the return of the student to school.
4. Also be aware that starting with the 2012-2013 school year, tardies will count toward absences in regard to exemptions. Three tardies equals' one absence, six tardies equals two absences, and nine tardies equals 3 absences. These tardies will count in every class in regards to absences. For example you cannot have 10 tardies in first period and still be exempt in your second period class.
5. Office records are the determining factor for exemption if there is a concern.

FEES

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

Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.

Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.

Security deposits.

Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.

Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.

Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.

Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the district.

Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.

Parking fees and student identification cards.

Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.

Fees for driver training courses, if offered.

Fees for optional courses offered for credit that requires the use of facilities not available on district premises.

Summer school for courses that are offered tuition-free during the regular school year.

A reasonable fee for providing transportation to a student who lives within two miles of the school. [See **Buses and Other School Vehicles** on page 40.]

A fee not to exceed \$80 for costs of providing an educational program outside of regular school hours for a student who has lost credit because of absences and whose parent chooses the program in order for the student to meet the 90 percent attendance requirement. The fee will be charged only if the parent or guardian signs a district-provided request form.

Any required fee or deposit may be waived if the student and parent are unable to pay.

Application for such a waiver may be made to the principal. [For further information, see policies at FP.]

FUND-RAISING

Student groups or classes and/or parent groups may be permitted to conduct fund-raising drives for approved school purposes. An application for permission must be made to the principal at least 5 days before the event. [For further information, see policies at FJ and GE.]

Grading Guidelines

In grades 6-8, achievement is reported using the following administrative guidelines concerning the grading system:

1. Six-week exams and semester exams are each worth 25% of the semester grade. Semester grades averaged together determine the yearly average.
2. In computing six weeks grades, daily work will count 40% and can be distributed in any fashion that the teacher desires. Tests and other major assignments will make up the other 60% of the six weeks grades.
3. Any class or course taught will be composed of a minimum of 10 daily grades in a six-week grading period and a minimum of three major grades/tests.
4. Pre-AP classes will receive a no pass, no play exemption with of 65% or better. A grade below 60% will result in the removal from the class.

GRADUATION

Requirements for a Diploma

To receive a high school diploma from the district, a student must successfully complete the required number of credits and pass a statewide exit-level exam.

The exit-level test, required for students in grade 11, covers English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and requires knowledge of Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, Integrated Chemistry and Physics, English III, and early American and United States History, World History, and World Geography. A student who does not pass the exit-level assessment will have additional opportunities to take the test.

Graduation Programs

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

Subject Area:	Minimum	Recommended	Distinguished*
English	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Math	3 credits	4 credits begin w/algebra	4 credits begin w/algebra
Science	2 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Social Studies	2 ½ credits	3 ½ credits	3 ½ credits
Economics	½ credit	½ credit	½ credit
Phys. Ed. Or Athletics	1 ½ credits	1 ½ credits	1 ½ credits
Technology	1 credit	1 credit	1 credit
Fine Art		1 credit	1 credit

Other language		2 credits	3 credits
Electives*	7 ½ credits	3 ½ credits	Option 1
			Math/Science 3 ½ credits
			Option 2
			Career 3 ½ credits
			Option 3
			College Prep 3 ½ credits
Speech	½ credit	½ credit	½ credit
Academic Elective	3 credits	3 credits	3 credits

*** Distinguished Achievement Plan requires additional criteria such as the completion of four advanced measures. See the secondary counselor for on this and other requirements.**

Students who entered the ninth grade during the 2006–2007 school year must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

Minimum Program	24 credits
Recommended Programs	26 credits
Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Programs	28 credits

Beginning with the 2007–2008 school year, a student entering the ninth grade must meet the following credit requirements for graduation:

Minimum Program	24 credits
Recommended Program	26 credits
Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program	28 credits

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

Certificates of Coursework Completion

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

Students with Disabilities

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

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

[See FMH (LEGAL).]

Graduation Activities

Graduation activities will include:

Senior awards night

Graduation Practice

Commencement

Community sponsored activities such as baccalaureate

Graduation Expenses

Because students and parents will incur expenses in order to participate in the traditions of graduation—such as the purchase of invitations, senior ring, cap and gown, and senior picture—both student and parent should monitor progress toward completion of all requirements for graduation. The expenses often are incurred in the junior year or first semester of the senior year. [See **Student Fees** on page 24.]

State Scholarships and Grants

Under the Texas Early High School Graduation Scholarship Program, students who complete the Recommended or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement High School Program may earn financial credits in varying amounts to apply toward college tuition. The amounts depend on the number of consecutive months in which the student completed graduation requirements and the number of early college credits earned and may be used at public or private higher education institutions within the state. The counselor can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements.

Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete the Recommended High School Program or Advanced/Distinguished Achievement Program may be eligible under the T.E.X.A.S. Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy EJ (LEGAL).]

HARASSMENT

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 28.]

HEALTH-RELATED MATTERS

Physical Activity for Students in Elementary and Middle School

In accordance with policies at EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the district will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate or vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week.

Students in middle or junior high school shall engage in 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within a two-week period for at least four semesters.

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

School Health Advisory Council

During the preceding school year, the district's School Health Advisory Council held periodic meetings. Additional information regarding the district's School Health Advisory Council is available from the school nurse. [See also policies at BDF and EHAA.]

Physical Fitness Assessment

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

Vending Machines

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

Other Health-Related Matters

Tobacco Prohibited

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

Asbestos Management Plan

The district's Asbestos Management Plan, designed to be in compliance with state and federal regulations, and is available in the superintendent's office. If you have any questions, please contact Casey Callahan at 512/898/2538.

Pest Management Plan

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

HOMELESS STUDENTS

For more information on services for homeless students, contact the district's Liaison for Homeless Children and Youths at 512/898/2538.

HOMEWORK

Homework counts as one third of a six-week grade. Students should follow the guidelines set forth by each individual teacher. Each teacher is permitted to set their own policy on acceptance of late work.

IMMUNIZATION

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical reasons or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Immunization Branch, can be honored by the district. This form may be obtained by writing the DSHS Immunization Branch (MC 1946), P.O. Box 149347, Austin, Texas 78714-9347; or online at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or school nurse within 90 days of notarization. If the parent is seeking an exemption for more than one student in the family, a separate form must be provided for each student.

The immunizations required are: diphtheria, rubeola (measles), rubella (German measles), mumps, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis (polio), hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox). The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Department of State Health Services. Proof of immunization may be established by personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

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

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>.]

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:

The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.

The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.

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

Students Taken Into Custody

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

To comply with an order of the juvenile court.

To comply with the laws of arrest.

By law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.

By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.

By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.

To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.

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

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

Notification of Law Violations

The district is required by state law to notify:

All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.

All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who is required to register as a sex offender or who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication, or was adjudicated for delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policies FL (LEGAL) and GRA (LEGAL).]

MAKEUP WORK

Routine and In-depth Makeup Work Assignments

For any class that is missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements.

A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student who misses classes due to extra curricular activities will be expected to turn in work at the same time as the rest of the class unless the teacher specifically gives an alternative date that they will accept the work and this is up to the discretion of the teacher. [For further information, see policy EIAB (LOCAL).]

A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student will be permitted to make up tests and to turn in projects due in any class missed because of absence. Teachers may assign a late penalty to any long-term project in accordance with time lines approved by the principal and previously communicated to students.

DAEP Makeup Work

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

In-school Suspension Makeup Work

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

MEAL PRICES

Breakfast

Elementary	\$1.00
Middle School	\$1.00
High School	\$1.00
Adult Staff	\$1.50
Visitor	\$2.00

Lunch

Elementary	\$2.00
Middle School	\$2.25
High School	\$2.25
Adult Staff	\$3.50
Visitor	\$3.75

MEDICINE AT SCHOOL

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

Only authorized employees, in accordance with policies at FFAC, may administer:

Prescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent, along with a written request.

Prescription medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified district employee from the original, properly labeled container.

Nonprescription medication, in the original, properly labeled container, provided by the parent along with a written request.

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

In certain emergency situations, the district will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:

In accordance with the guidelines developed with the district's medical advisor; and

When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the district's form.

A student with asthma or severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may be permitted to possess and use prescribed asthma or anaphylaxis medication at school or school-related events only if he or

she has written authorization from his or her parent and a physician or other licensed health-care provider. The student must also demonstrate to his or her physician or health-care provider and to the school nurse the ability to use the prescribed medication, including any device required to administer the medication.

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

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

Psychotropic Drugs

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

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

NATIONAL JUNIOR HONOR SOCIETY

Qualifications adopted beginning 2012-2013 School Year

Students must meet all 10 qualifications:

Scholarship

- GPA of 90 or above
- Passed all Standardized Testing
- Currently involved in 2 or more extra curricular activities
One of the activities must be an UIL Academic Activity

(UIL Coach must verify their attendance at practice and that they participated in at least two practice meet plus the District Academic Meet)

Character

- Attitude towards teachers, students, and others per teacher surveys
(Average of 25 or above on the surveys filled out by the teachers)
- Has never been assigned ISS during the school year they apply for NJHS
- Three or less unexcused absences per semester
(Three tardies per semester equals one unexcused absence)
- Completed application submitted by due date

Leadership

- Holds or held at least one leadership position

Service

- Has participated in volunteer community service during the past calendar year.**(For example January 1-December 31, 2012)**

NONTRADITIONAL ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

[See **Requirements for a Diploma** on page 26.]

Please see the principal and the counselor about the viability of these programs.

PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Phones and electronic devices can be used at any time except when the student is in a classroom. If the student leaves their class during the period they will be required to give their electronic device to the teacher before they leave. They will get it back upon their timely return to the classroom. This is to ensure that instructional time is maximized. The teacher has discretion over the use of electronic devices in their own classroom. They will have their policy clearly in place the first day of school. If a student uses an electronic device without the authorization from the teacher it will be picked up. These are the consequences dealing with electronic devices. These consequences are based on the year not semester, in other words it doesn't start over at semester:

1st offense-Parent will have to pick up the electronic device.

2nd offense-Parent will have to pick up the electronic device and pay a \$10.00 fee for its return.

3rd offense-Parent will have to pick the electronic device, pay a \$20.00 fee for its return, and the student will have to serve one day ISS which also counts as an absence as far as exemptions go.

*Should a student not give the phone up on request they will get 1 day of ISS for insubordination plus another day if it is their 3rd offense.

*Fees that are received will go into a fund which will help support our incentive programs.

*Headphones should be used in all locations at all times when listening to electronic devices.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS / HEALTH SCREENINGS

Athletes will have to undergo physical examinations in accordance with athletic department policy.

PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE

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

excuse their child from reciting a pledge. [See **Excusing a Student from Reciting the Pledges to the U.S. and Texas Flags** on page 6.]

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

PRAYER

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

PROMOTION AND RETENTION

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

In grades 6-8 students are promoted or retained based upon the number of core classes passed.

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

In order to be promoted to grade 4, students must perform satisfactorily on the reading section of the grade 3 assessment in English or Spanish.

In order to be promoted to grade 6, students enrolled in grade 5 must perform satisfactorily on the mathematics and reading sections of the grade 5 assessments 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 assessments in English.

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

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

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

RELEASE OF STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning and follow the campus sign-out procedures before leaving the campus. Otherwise, a student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day. Unless the principal or superintendent has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the student should receive permission from the teacher before reporting to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

REPORT CARDS / PROGRESS REPORTS AND CONFERENCES

Report cards with each student's grades or performance and absences in each class or subject are issued to parents at least once every 6 weeks.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents will be given a written progress report if their child's performance is near or below 70, or is below the expected level of performance. If the student receives a grade lower than 70 in any class or subject at the end of a grading period, the parent will be requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject. [See **Working Together** on page 3 to schedule a conference.]

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

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

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

RESTROOMS

Teachers have been instructed to allow students to go to the restroom during the first five minutes and last five minutes of each period in order to have uniformity between each classroom and to cut down the amount of traffic in the hall. It will be at the teacher's discretion to allow student to use the restroom at other times during the period.

RETALIATION

[See **Dating Violence, Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation** on page 20.]

SAFETY

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

Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.

Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the *Student Code of Conduct*, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.

Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal any safety hazards, such as intruders on campus or threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.

Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.

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

Accident Insurance

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

Drills: Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergencies

From time to time, students, teachers, and other district employees will participate in drills of emergency procedures. When the alarm is sounded, students should follow the direction of teachers or others in charge quickly, quietly, and in an orderly manner.

Fire Drill Bells

- 3 bells leave the building
- 1 bell halt; stand at attention
- 2 bells return to the classroom

Tornado Drill Bells

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 continuous bell | move quietly but quickly to the designated locations |
| 2 bells | return to the classroom |

Emergency Medical Treatment and Information

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

Emergency School-Closing Information

Parents should monitor local radio and/or television stations for emergency school closing information. The school website will be updated as needed informing parents of the need for school closing.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Use By Students Before and After School

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

The following areas are open to students before school, beginning at 7:30a.m.

Cafeteria

Library

Classroom under adult supervision.

Hallways of the high school

Unless the teacher or sponsor overseeing the activity gives permission, a student will not be permitted to go to another area of the building or campus.

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

Conduct Before and After School

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

Use of Hallways during Class Time

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

Cafeteria Services

The district participates in the National School Lunch Program and offers students nutritionally balanced lunches daily. Free and reduced-price lunches are available based on financial need. Information about a student's participation is confidential. See Jeni Anders to apply.

The district follows the federal and state guidelines regarding foods of minimal nutritional value being served or sold on school premises during the school day. [For more information, see policy CO (LEGAL).]

Breakfast

Students \$1.10

Staff \$1.60

Visitor \$2.10

Lunch

Elem \$2.10

MS & HS \$2.35

Staff \$3.60

Visitor \$3.85

Library

The library is a learning laboratory with books, computers, magazines, and other materials available for classroom assignments, projects, and reading pleasure. Internet access is available at all computer workstations providing a gateway to educational database subscriptions. Our libraries afford the opportunity to develop both information and digital technology literacy for staff and students.

The library hours are from 7:45-4:00 Monday and Friday with extended hours before and after school by request. The library is open for student use during the instructional day with a teacher's permission. Students who are not on task with their permission slip or disrupting others will be asked to leave and will be subject to others forms of discipline. Repeated poor behavior will lead a student to being banned from the library. The library may be reserved by teachers, staff, and students for research, study groups, and meetings with prior scheduling to determine space and resource requirements.

Circulation of material: Non-reference materials have a circulation period of two weeks. Magazine and some reference materials are available overnight. Our libraries do not impose fines for late returns. However, lost or damaged materials bear replacement costs and circulation privileges may be withheld or modified until the account is cleared.

Printing and copier privileges: the library allows printing and copier privileges for five cents per copy.

Meetings of Non-curriculum Related Groups

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

A list of these groups is available in the principal's office.

SEARCHES

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

Students' Desks and Lockers

Students' desks and lockers are school property and remain under the control and jurisdiction of the school even when assigned to an individual student.

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

Searches of desks or lockers may be conducted at any time there is reasonable cause to believe that they contain articles or materials prohibited by policy, whether or not a student is present.

The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker.

Vehicles on Campus

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the permission of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. [See also the *Student Code of Conduct*.]

Student Incentives

- 1. Students will be eligible for drawings held each six weeks if they have don't have any absences (remember doctors notes and extra curricular absences don't count against them, everything else does in this instance) and they don't have any tardies that six weeks.**
- 2. All students having perfect attendance and no tardies as described in #1 listed above will receive a pizza party at lunch in the high school.**
- 3. Students who receive All A'S will have an off campus lunch which we will provide transportation for, the student will pay for his/her own lunch.**

- 4. All Students who make All A'S or have perfect attendance and no tardies for the semester will be taken to Austin Park and Pizza.**

Class Incentives

Thorndale Middle School will have a variety of incentive programs with the purpose of rewarding students and grade levels for achievement, attendance, and participation in school-sponsored events.

Trained Dogs

The district will use trained dogs to alert school officials to the presence of prohibited or illegal items, including drugs and alcohol. At any time, trained dogs may be used around lockers and the areas around vehicles parked on school property. Searches of classrooms, common areas, or student belongings may also be conducted by trained dogs when students are not present. An item in a classroom, a locker, or a vehicle to which a trained dog alerts may be searched by school officials.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

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

STEROIDS

State law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use.

Body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

Students participating in UIL athletic competition may be subject to random steroid testing. More information on the UIL testing program may be found on the UIL Web site at http://www.uil.utexas.edu/athletics/health/steroid_information.html.

SUMMER SCHOOL

Thorndale High A+ based summer school. A+ is a self-paced and computer based system that will provide students an opportunity to regain lost credit.

Summer school will be held from 8:00 a.m. through noon on Monday through Friday for four weeks. The first 12 students to pay the tuition of \$80 will be enrolled in summer school.

TARDIES

1. 3 Tardies in a six weeks equals 1 lunch detention
2. 6 Tardies in a six weeks equals 1 day ISS
3. 9 Tardies in a six weeks equals 1 Saturday School
4. Reminder that three tardies in a semester equals one absence for exemption purposes, six tardies in a semester equals two absences for exemption purposes, nine tardies in a semester equals three absences for exemption purposes.

*** Teachers will record tardies when they take attendance, there is no need to make out a referral or email, they will be kept up with electronically in the office. Teachers will use their own discretion if there is concern over whether a student is tardy or not. Examples coming from a class where they were held, coming from a building that the clocks are not in sync, late from lunch, and late from TC. The examples are too numerous to list all of them. Just note that the teacher will consider these types of situations.

*** This is the total number of tardies not per class.

TEXTBOOKS

State-approved textbooks are provided to students free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent; however, the student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day.

TRANSFERS

[See **Requesting Transfers for Your Child**, on page 7, and **Options and Requirements for Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education**, on page 7, for other transfer options.]

TRANSPORTATION

School-Sponsored Trips

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

Buses and Other School Vehicles

The district makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school.

A parent may also designate a child-care facility or grandparent's residence as the regular pickup and drop-off location for his or her child. The designated facility or residence must be on an approved stop on an approved route. For information on bus routes and stops or to designate an alternate pickup or drop-off location, you may contact Hank Laywell at 512/898/5070 .

See the *Student Code of Conduct* for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP).

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

Follow the driver's directions at all times.

Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop.

Keep feet, books, instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.

Not deface the bus, van, or its equipment.

Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus or van.

Not possess or use any form of tobacco on school buses.

Observe all usual classroom rules.

Be seated while the vehicle is moving.

Fasten their seat belts, if available.

Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus or van and before crossing in front of the vehicle.

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

VANDALISM

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

VIDEO CAMERAS

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

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

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

General Visitors

Parents and others are welcome to visit district schools. For the safety of those within the school and to avoid disruption of instructional time, all visitors must first report to the principal's office and must comply with all applicable district policies and procedures.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time are permitted only with approval of the principal and teacher and only so long as their duration or frequency does not interfere with the delivery of instruction or disrupt the normal school environment.

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

WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared. The parent may obtain a withdrawal form from the principal's office.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student, and a copy will be placed in the student's permanent record.

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

GLOSSARY

Accelerated instruction is an intensive supplemental program designed to address the needs of an individual student in acquiring the knowledge and skills required at his or her grade level.

ACT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the American College Test. The test may be a requirement for admission to certain colleges or universities.

ARD is the admission, review, and dismissal committee convened for each student who is identified as needing a full and individual evaluation for special education services. The eligible student's parents are part of the committee.

Attendance Review Committee is sometimes responsible for reviewing a student's absences when the student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Under guidelines adopted by the board, the committee will determine whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences and whether the student needs to complete certain conditions to master the course and regain credit lost because of absences.

DAEP stands for disciplinary alternative education program, a placement for students who have violated certain provisions of the *Student Code of Conduct*. Students in the DAEP will be separated from students not assigned to the program. The DAEP will focus instruction on English language arts, mathematics, science, history, and self-discipline, and provide for students' educational and behavior needs, as well as supervision and counseling.

FERPA refers to the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act that grants specific privacy protections to student records. The law contains certain exceptions, such as for directory information, unless a student's parent or a student 18 or older directs the school not to release directory information.

IEP is the written record of the Individualized Education Program prepared by the ARD committee for a student with disabilities who is eligible for special education services. The IEP contains several parts, such as a statement of the student's present educational performance; a statement of measurable annual goals, with short-term objectives; the special education and related services and supplemental aids and services to be provided, and program modifications or support by school personnel; a statement regarding how the student's progress will be measured and how the parents will be kept informed; accommodations for state or district wide tests, etc.

ISS refers to in-school suspension, a disciplinary technique for misconduct found in the *Student Code of Conduct*. Although different from out-of-school suspension and placement in a DAEP, ISS removes the student from the regular classroom.

LAT stands for Linguistically Accommodated Testing, which is an assessment process for recent immigrant English language learners who are required to be assessed in certain grades and subjects under the NCLB Act.

NCLB Act is the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Personal Graduation Plan (PGP) is recommended for all students entering grade 9 and is required by state law for any student in middle school or higher who fails a section on a state-mandated test or is identified by the district as not likely to earn a high school diploma before the fifth school year after he or she begins grade 9.

SAT refers to one of the two most frequently used college or university admissions exams: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The test may be a requirement for admissions to certain colleges or universities.

Section 504 is the federal law that prohibits discrimination against a student with a disability, requiring schools to provide opportunities for equal services, programs, and participation in activities. Unless the student is determined to be eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), general education with appropriate instructional accommodations will be provided.

State-mandated assessments are required of students at certain grade levels and in specified subjects. Successful performance sometimes is a condition of promotion, and passing the grade 11 exit-level test is a condition of graduation. Students have multiple opportunities to take the tests if necessary for promotion or graduation.

Student Code of Conduct is developed with the advice of the district-level committee and adopted by the board; identifies the circumstances, consistent with law, when a student may be removed from the classroom or campus. It also sets out the conditions that authorize or require the principal or another administrator to place the student in a DAEP. It outlines conditions for out-of-school suspension and for expulsion, and states whether self-defense is a consideration in suspension, DAEP placement, or expulsion. The *Student Code of Conduct* also addresses notice to the parent regarding a student's violation of one of its provisions.

TAKS is the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, the state's standardized achievement test currently given to students in certain subjects in grades 3–11.

TAKS-Accommodated is a state mandated assessment based on the same grade-level academic achievement standards of TAKS available to certain students who receive special education services who need specific accommodations, as determined by the student and his or her ARD committee.

TAKS-Alternate is an alternate state mandated assessment designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities receiving special education services who meet the participation requirements, as determined by the student and his or her ARD committee.

TAKS-Modified is an alternate state mandated assessment based on modified achievement standards and is administered to eligible students receiving special education services, as determined by the student and his or her ARD committee.

TELPAS stands for the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System, which assesses the progress that English language learners make in learning the English language, and is administered for those who meet the participation requirements in kindergarten–grade 12.

UIL refers to the University Interscholastic League, the statewide voluntary nonprofit organization that oversees educational extracurricular academic, athletic, and music contests.

APPENDIX I:
Acknowledgment Form—Amendment

My child and I have received a copy of the Thorndale Middle School *Student Handbook* Amendment # ____ dated _____.

Print name of student: _____

Signature of student: _____

Signature of parent: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX II:
Use of Student Work in District Publications

Occasionally, Thorndale Middle School will wish to display or publish student artwork or special projects on the district's Web site and in district publications. The district agrees to only use these student projects in this manner.

Parent: Please circle one of the choices below:

I, parent of _____ (student's name), **(do give) (do not give)** the district permission to use my child's artwork or special project on the district's Web site and in district publications.

Parent signature: _____

Date: _____